

Statement of Purpose and Function

Purpose:

The purpose of Burren Sonas Kindergarten is to provide quality, affordable early years education and care to children aged 2 1/2 to 6 years of age. It is a community Sessional service as determined under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. The kindergarten is open 5 days per week, 38 weeks per year, beginning the end of August/beginning September until the end of June. Funding for children is available through the ECCE and National Childcare Scheme (NCS) programmes. We cater for up to 20 children, with a ratio of 1:9 (adults:children) in the kindergarten, and 1:3 on outside walks. The session runs from 9:30am to 13:00pm daily.

Principle:

This policy is underwritten by the Childcare Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Rationale:

The basis of the kindergarten is the Steiner ethos which provides an unhurried approach to childhood by providing a safe and caring environment for each child to develop at his/her own pace. The curriculum of the kindergarten is designed to support each child in her/his holistic development and respect her/his uniqueness. The healthy forming of community is intrinsic to the kindergarten both as recommended by Rudolf Steiner and its status as a community based preschool service. Families are welcomed and encouraged to become involved in the kindergarten, and with each other, to create a strong web of support for the children.

The Mission of the Service:

Burren Sonas Kindergarten was created by a parent's initiative in order to provide a Steiner based preschool for the local community. In accordance to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, each child's voice is heard, respected, and included in creating the programme. The aim of the service is to provide a healthy environment which supports the whole child's development and bridges a child's experience from home life to school life. The purpose of the service is to create a community that welcomes a diversity of families and supports each child's growth within it. Burren Sonas Kindergarten provides a caring place for children that fosters respect within each child and adult for her/himself, each other, the community, and the natural world around us.

Setting Details:

Name of Setting	Burren Sonas Kindergarten
Address	Main Street, Kilfenora, Co Clare
Eircode	V95 WOHA
Contact Person	Deirdre Riffel
Position in Setting	Manager
Contact Telephone Number	877131590
Email address	burrensonas@yahoo.ie and burrensonas@gmail.com

Description of Setting :

Type of Setting	Sessional Preschool
Community or Private	Community
Curriculum being followed	Steiner, Aistear and Siolta
Number of weeks open	38
Opening hours	9:30 am to 1:00 pm

Person Responsible: Deirdre Riffel

This policy was adopted by Burren Sonas Kindergarten on: _____

Signed by: _____ Chairperson on behalf of Management

Review date:

Review date:

Review date:

Risk Management Policy Updated to Include Information on Covid 19

Policy Statement

At Burren Sonas Kindergarten we are committed to safeguarding children, parents, staff, and visitors to our service. We have policies, procedures, and practices in place to ensure we are caring for the wellbeing and safety of all people who enter our service. This policy has been updated in line with current guidance from the HSP Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Services Providing Childcare During the Covid 19 Pandemic, the DCYA's Return to Work Protocol, and Tusla's Children Services Regulation Guidance Document for Early Years Services: Covid 19.

Principle

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 and the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Quality Regulatory Framework.

Guidelines:

We at Burren Sonas Kindergarten are committed to supporting each child's health, welfare, and development. We do this by observing each child's individual needs and assessing how best to fulfill them. While there are potential risks that are universal in any setting involving children we recognise that each child may be at risk in different ways depending on her/his temperament, behaviour, and interests. In the interest of encouraging children in creative play we support children in experimenting with materials and furniture in their play activities, observing but rarely prohibiting their activities unless they are dangerous. We recognise children need to learn by their actions and should be allowed as often as possible to use what is available in the kindergarten environment for creative play. Free play by its nature provides children the opportunity to enjoy creating and trying new ways to explore and utilise their environment. Without some chance to experiment children are not able to learn to assess risk for themselves. Therefore the staff support children in their play while observing and assisting at the same time mitigating dangerous risks.

We are committed to teaching children how to use tools, such as : knives, needles, scissors, and hammers. We feel that mastering the use of tools at an early age is a necessary and valuable skill children need to learn through experience. Staff minimise risk by observing and teaching respect for tools, and demonstrating proper use of tools. Children are monitored and assisted by teachers while using tools.

We recognise there are additional risks in our service due to the Covid 19 virus. We have assessed our service and endeavour to minimise risks through extra cleaning, rigorous hygiene including frequent hand washing, and less social contact between adults. We have provided hand sanitisers inside the kindergarten and for outside play. We have instructed staff and children of proper hand washing procedures. We have alerted everyone to common symptoms of the virus and advised people who may have symptoms to stay home and recover.

What is risk management?

Risk is a part of everyday life in the early childhood setting and is something our staff are well accustomed to responding to. For example, all staff ensure they have considered all potential hazards that may occur on an outing or during children's play activities. Undertaking a risk assessment leads to a safer environment for children, staff and parents. This document assists in developing a procedure for assessing any potential risks to the safety of the pre-school children

attending the service, and identifying the steps taken to either eliminate or mitigate those risks.

RISK MANAGEMENT

This policy should be read in conjunction with the COVID-19 Policy and Response Plan during the COVID-19 Emergency Period

See also Health and Safety Statement and Risk Assessment Sheets

Document Title:	Risk Management
Document Author:	Deirdre Riffel
Document Approved:	01/09/20
Person(s) responsible for developing, distributing and reviewing Policy	Board of Management
Person responsible for approving Policy	Martin Harold, Chairperson
Method of communication of policies to staff (email / hard copy / induction training)	Hard copy to read on premises
Method of communication of policies to parents/guardians (full policies via email, hard copy)	Available on website
Date the Document is Effective	1 st September, 2020
From:	
Scheduled Review Date:	Annually

This policy has been communicated to parents/guardians.

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

Statement of Intent:

To ensure the health, safety and welfare of all children and adults on the premises or while engaged in off-site activities. Risk will be managed through a range of assessments. The Risk Management Strategy is included in the Service's Safety Statement.

Definitions

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

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

A **Risk Assessment** is '... a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.' [A Guide to Risk Assessments and Safety Statements](#) Health and Safety Authority, 2016

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

Identifying the hazards in the workplace(s) under your control.

Assessing the risks presented by these hazards.

Putting control measures in place to reduce the risk of these hazards causing harm.

A further two steps are also required:

Recording findings and implementing them.

Reviewing the assessment and updating it if necessary

Risk Assessments give details of the following:

The potential hazard or risk being assessed

The current controls

Assessing the risk

Additional controls if required

The person responsible for implementing controls

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

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

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

Annual/Quarterly/Monthly Risk Assessment, as appropriate, of the entire building and operations.

Daily Risk assessment of classrooms, sanitary areas, sleep areas and outdoors.

The risk assessment following any accident or incident.

The risk assessment of outings and/or travel.

Risk assessment of individual children

The risk assessment of children with specific illnesses, conditions and allergies through the development of medical care plans.

The risk assessment of pregnant employees.

The risk assessment of any Garda vetting disclosures.

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

Risk Assessment of Individual Children

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

The Risk Assessment Procedure

Risk Assessment is where you examine the service to find out what could cause harm to children, workers or visitors. The purpose is to identify the risks and then eliminate or control the risk:

- STEP 1: Identify the risks
- STEP 2: Decide who might be harmed
- STEP 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- STEP 4: Record your findings
- STEP 5: Review and update

When thinking about risk assessment, remember:

A **hazard** is anything that can cause harm for example:

Sockets left uncovered

No first aider on premises

A worker lifting sleep mattresses against manual handling advice

Food being served without gloves

A **risk** is the chance (high or low) that the hazard will cause harm.

Identify Hazards:

Walk around the service (outside and inside).

Use a risk assessment checklist.

Ask employees in each room if they can identify hazards as they may have noticed something.

Check manufacturer's instructions to ensure workers are using equipment or materials properly.

Check accident and incident forms – you may identify hazards this way.

What to do when you identify risk:

Get rid of the hazard (e.g. removing a mat that is a tripping hazard).

Control the risk so that harm is unlikely (e.g. covering a socket).

Risk Assessment of Employees, volunteers and others.

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

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

Safety:

Employees Shall:

Take reasonable care of their own Safety, Health and Welfare and that of any other person or children in their care that may be affected by their acts or omissions while at work.

Familiarise themselves with and always conform to the Service's Safety, Health and Welfare policies.

Observe all safety rules and co-operate with their employers to comply with any of the relevant statutory regulations and directives.

Use any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience or equipment in such a manner as to provide the protection intended for securing their Safety, Health and Welfare while at work.

Conform to all instructions given by the management and others who have a responsibility for Safety, Health and Welfare.

Use only as intended the correct equipment for the jobs with all appropriate safety devices and keep tools in good condition.

Direct any suggestions or concerns on matters of Safety, Health and Welfare to the Health and Safety Officer.

Report to the Health and Safety Officer, without delay, all accidents, damage, defects or issues of safety. This includes accidents or near misses, whether persons are injured or not.

Carry out hazard checks in their own area of work daily.

Participate in statutory training as required (Paediatric First Aid, Manual Handling, Food Hygiene and Fire Safety).

Employees shall not:

Intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or other means or things provided in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing the Safety, Health and Welfare of persons arising out of work activities.

Carry out any tasks, which they feel they are not competent to carry out, or which involves unreasonably high risks.

Be under the influence of any intoxicants likely to affect their ability to work safely or to supervise children.

Staff members must report any medical issue likely to affect their safety or that of the children or their colleagues as soon as possible to management.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Name: Martin Harold, Chairperson

Procedures of Risk Factors:

Assessment Area/Activity	Potential Risk/Hazard	Risk Level	Control Measures	Revised Risk Levels	Action	Date
All new electrical installations and all extensions are tested and certified as safe, by a competent qualified electrician.	Electrocution of children, staff, or visitors	High	Checks by certified electricians	Low		
Testing, certifying and repairs are carried out in accordance with appropriate NSAI standards	Electrocution of children, staff, or visitors	High	Employing certified electricians	Low		
Enclosures / covers are in place to prevent contact with live electrical equipment / parts	Electrocution of children, staff, or visitors	High	Ensuring covers are in place at all times, especially after hoovering/steam cleaning	Low	Weekly checks during Friday cleaning that all covers are in place	
Damaged extension leads are repaired or removed from use	Electrocution of children, staff, or visitors	High	Minimal use of leads and immediate removal when used	Low		
Means of cutting off power to electrical installations and equipment are provided and employees are aware of their locations	Electrocution of staff or volunteers	High	All staff shown where trip switches are located and proper use of them	Low		
Fire extinguishers that are suitable	Danger of fire	High	Staff are shown location of extinguishers	Medium		

for fighting electrical fires are provided			and taught how to use them			
Any scorch marks associated with an electrical appliance or electrical wiring is checked urgently by a competent person	Danger of fire	High	Staff are instructed to immediately stop use of appliance, to remove it, and alert the manager	Low		
Electrical equipment and fittings are suitable for the work environment	Danger of fire and injuries to staff	High	Staff are instructed in proper use of equipment and fittings	Low		
Fire alarm, manual call points and smoke / heat detectors are in place where necessary, kept in good working order and checked regularly	Danger of fire and injuries to staff and children	High	Staff are instructed where these things are located, checking happens monthly and is recorded by manager	Low		
Emergency routes and exits are clearly marked, kept clear at all times and lead directly outside or to a safe area	Danger of injuries to staff and children	High	Main thoroughfares are kept clear even during playtime, exit signs are always in place	Low		
Fire drills are held regularly Emergency lights are installed on escape routes where necessary, at	Danger of fire, and injuries to staff and children	High	Fire drills are held monthly with children and staff and recorded, lights are checked weekly during Friday cleaning	Low		

and outside exits and near call points and are tested regularly			to ensure they are in working orderLo			
Fire extinguishers are accessible, kept in good working order and inspected regularly	Danger of fire, and injuries to staff and children	High	Fire extinguishers are inspected annually by a certified service	Low		
Employees are trained in how to raise the alarm, what to do in the event of an alarm sounding, emergency evacuation procedures and in the use of fire extinguishers	Danger or injury to staff or children	High	Training of staff in procedures Regular monthly fire drills with staff and children Fire safety training	Low		
Emergency evacuation procedures are in place	Danger or injury to staff or children	High	Regular monthly fire drills with staff and children	Low		
Appropriate fire safety signs are in place	Danger or injury to staff or children	High	Monthly monitoring that signs are in good order	Low		
Stairs and steps are clearly visible, handrails are suitable, and distractions are avoided	Injury to adults or children from tripping or falling	Medium	Daily assistance to children who need it Monthly inspection of handrails	Low		
Walking areas are slip resistant, kept clear and clean and are properly maintained	Injury to adults or children from tripping or falling	Medium	Daily continuous inspection and tidy up	Low		

Floors around entrances are slip resistant when wet	Injury to adults or children from slipping or falling	Medium	Daily continuous inspection and cleaning	Low		
Floors are wet cleaned when the workplace is closed or quiet	Injury to adults or children from slipping or falling	Medium	Wet mopping happens when facility is closed	Low		
Spills are cleaned up immediately and absorbent materials are available	Injury to adults or children from slipping or falling	Medium	All spills wiped dry immediately	Low		
Trailing cables and leads are re-routed, removed or secured and other good-housekeeping practices are in place to avoid trip hazards	Injury to adults or children from tripping or falling	Medium	No trailing wires are left trailing on floor of main room	Low		
Toys and play materials are cleared from main thoroughfares during play times	Injury to adults or children from tripping or falling	Medium	Main thoroughfares kept clear throughout the day	Low		
Bending, twisting and unstable postures are avoided	Physical injury to staff	High	Daily awareness of movement	Medium		
Staff should avoid lifting children unless absolutely necessary for safety reasons	Physical injury to staff	Medium	Daily awareness of movement Manual handling course for staff	Medium		
Tools used for	Physical	Medium	Adults and	Low		

maintenance are in good working order and properly guarded where necessary	injury to staff, and children	m	children are taught to use tools properly and with care Tools inspected regularly			
All medicines are handled, stored, dispensed, labelled and disposed of in accordance with the supplier's Data sheet and in accordance with legal requirements where relevant	Physical injury to children, poisoning	High	Medicines stored out of reach of children and labelled properly Individual care plans for children stored with medicines	Low		
Medicines are stored safely, protected from unauthorised access	Physical injury to children, poisoning	High	Medicines stored out of reach of children and labelled properly	Low		
Dishwasher is installed, used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's manual	Electrocution or injury to adults	High	Certified electricians installation Manual available for consultation at all times	Low		
Hot water cycle of dishwasher stops automatically if door is opened	Injury to adults	Medium	Automatic stop	Low		
Dishwasher operator's manual is available	Injury to adults	Medium	Manual available for consultation at all times	Low		
Care is taken when moving hot objects or liquids around	Possible burning of children or adults	High	All hot items to be moved without children present	Low		

the workplace						
Heat resistant gloves are provided and worn where relevant	Possible burning of adults and children	High	Oven mits provided	Low		
Knives and sharp objects are checked before use, reported defects are dealt with promptly and unsafe equipment is taken out of use	Injury to children or adults	High	Regular inspections of equipment and either repaired or discarded immediately	Low		
Children are instructed in the safe use of knives and graters and closely supervised by teachers when using them	Injury to children or adults	High	Children are instructed, observed, accompanied, and assisted in use of knives and graters	Low		
Use of knives and sharp objects is minimised and they are stored safely	Injury to children or adults	High	Dangerous sharp objects and equipment kept out of reach of children when they are not being instructed and monitored	Low		
Oven/hob is installed, used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions	Injury to adults	High	Adults are instructed in proper use of cooker	Low		
Handles of pots/pans are secure and they do not project beyond the edge of the hob	Injury to adults and possibly children	High	Handles always turned inwards	Low		

Ladles or spoons are not left in saucepans on hotplates or rings	Injury to adults	Medium	Ladles and spoons never left in pans	Low		
Heat resistant gloves are provided and used	Danger of burning adults	High	Gloves always provided and used	Low		
Reported cooker defects are dealt with promptly and unsafe equipment is taken out of use	Danger of fire	High	Cookers are regularly checked and not used if there is detected damage	Low		
Children are never left unattended in the kitchen or allowed to be close to the oven when in use	Danger of children getting burned	High	Children are only allowed in the kitchen accompanied by an adult, and not near the cooker	Low		
Entrance Area/Windows	Children departing premises Unauthorised visitors	High	All windows and doors are locked shut when children are inside	Low		
Walk from kindergarten to outside play area	Children running away or in the road	High	Children hold hands in groups of 3 to adults and counted	Low		
Outdoor play	Children falling when climbing Children running away	Medium	Adult positioned nearby to assist if necessary Constant counting of children and adult monitor of gate and wall	Low Low		

	Children injuring themselves or others with digging tools		Adult positioned nearby to assist if necessary	Low		
Inside play	Falling from climbing or jumping	Medium	Teachers are monitoring and assisting as needed, sheepskins put on floor when jumping	Low		
	Tripping over toys		Clearing pathways continuously	Low		
	Falling while walking or running		Only walking allowed inside kindergarten	Low		
Clothes changing area	Tripping over clothing or footwear	Medium	Keeping clothing and shoes in proper places	Low		
	Falling when jumping from benches	High	Putting cushions and sheepskins on floor to prevent injury and supervision	Low		
Staff absences /leave	Not having enough supervision of children due to incorrect ratios	medium	Having fully trained relief staff available	Low		
Human transmission of Covid 19 virus	Illness and possible death	High	Supervised hand washing of children for 20 seconds every time, frequently throughout the day	Low		

		High	Frequent hand washing of staff throughout the day	Low		
		High	Sneezing or coughing in a tissue or in a sleeve	Low		
		High	Children or adults with a fever or other symptoms remain home until well	Low		
		High	Parents or guardians to drop off and collect children at staggered times and socialise outside	Low		
		High	Hand sanitisers mounted on wall entering kg, and session room for parents and visitors to sanitise hands on entering	Low		
		High	Staff or children to self isolate for at least 2 weeks at home if infected with Covid 19 virus	Low		
		High	Children or staff to go home immediately if symptoms of Covid 19 are exhibited	Low		
Transmission of	Illness and	Mediu	Wiping of	Low		

Covid 19 viruses from surfaces	possible death	m	surfaces including door handles, and bathrooms with alcohol based cleanser 2 times per day			
		Medium	Steam cleaning toys, shelves, and surfaces every week	Low		
		Medium	Purchase of more sheets and pillow covers so there is no sharing between children. Frequent washing after use.	Low		
		Medium	Removal of toys that are difficult to clean	Low		
		High	Extra close observation to notice if children, cough or sneeze on surfaces and clean up immediately	Low		

This policy was adopted by Burren Sonas Kindergarten on Date: _____

Signed by: _____ Martin Harold On behalf of Management

This policy will be reviewed on August 2021 in collaboration with staff and parents.

Relevant Resources

This document has been informed by the following resources:

Health and Safety Authority www.BeSmart.ie

Health and Safety Authority [Guidelines on Risk Assessments and Safety Statements](#)

HSE [Risk Assessment Tool](#)

Outdoor Play Policy

Policy Statement :

Burren Sonas Kindergarten as a Steiner based kindergarten recognises the vital importance of outdoor play and experience for all children. The outdoor environment provides a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for all children. Burren Sonas is committed to following good practice in relation to ensuring appropriate adult to child ratios are maintained when outside the service. Teachers are aware that the proper ratios must be maintained.

Principle:

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. Rationale A new requirement under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 stipulates that all services shall ensure that—

- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or
- (b) where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

In accordance with Steiner philosophy Burren Sonas Kindergarten believes that outdoors is one of the best learning environments for young children. The natural world is a spiritual teacher for children and teachers with which to connect and be inspired by every day, throughout all the seasons. A daily connection with nature fosters respect for the natural world and provides the experience of teaching children to care for our environment. Our outdoor environment is accessed daily and offers diverse, creative, challenging, and enriching experiences for our children offering lots of opportunity for play, movement, observation and reflection, and sensory stimulation.

Burren Sonas Kindergarten recognises the importance of outdoor play and experiences for all children. Outdoor walks and play are normal parts of daily activity in every weather so long as there are no orange or red wind warnings in place. Children and teachers are required to dress appropriately for all weather conditions and to have a full set of spare clothes in which to change after outside play if necessary. Most children enjoy the chance to experience every type of weather as long as they are dressed appropriately.

Children learn through play, movement, communication, and sensory experience which the outdoors provides for on a much greater scale than indoors. The outdoors is one of the best learning environments for young children, providing them with an opportunity to explore, experience and make meaning of the natural world. Nature is continuously changing through the seasons and gives children the chance to observe and question their relationship with their environment in a way that is not possible when they are inside. The outside environment offers children the chance to play with each other differently, and in more varied combinations. Children have more freedom to move, run, climb, jump, and make noise, constantly creating new games with new found materials.

As there is no adjacent garden to Burren Sonas Kindergarten the outdoor spaces offered by Burren Sonas are fun, suitable, safe and secure and also provide the important opportunity for adventurous play which is guided by teachers. The three outdoor spaces are in close proximity to the kindergarten and require a short walk of 5 minutes to access them. Each day the children are given the choice of which place they prefer which offers them a chance to practice negotiating between each other. The choices are:

- a. Gloria's garden which provides a large space for running and playing, trees in which to climb, the large sandpit and toys, and a garden bed for planting.
- b. St. Fachnan's Holy Well which provides running and tumbling space, a wall for climbing,

- a well, a stream when there has been rain, and picnic tables and benches.
- c. The grounds of the Cathedral during non tourist visits which provides a sheltered semi- covered space for hide and seek, and a connection to Kilfenora history, and culture. In particular children have the opportunity to explore the graveyard and see their relative's graves and understand death in a natural context.

Philosophy:

Outdoor experiences for children provide more than play opportunities, which are in themselves important, they provide spiritual, emotional, and creative nourishment. These experiences enable children to experience a connection that will sustain and inspire them for their entire lives. As Sally Jenkinson says in the introduction to Sally Schweizer's, Under the Sky, "At a time when global changes call for adults to act ethically towards the planet, knowing and loving it intimately as a child and getting immersed in it, must surely be the best preparation for acknowledging and accepting this responsibility in later years." As children spend more time on screens at earlier ages, and in cars being hurried around, it is increasingly more important to balance this with providing ample time for children to be outside in nature using all their senses and bodies to explore and create.

There is a chance for children to run, jump, climb and move but also to be still, to reflect, to observe. Outside time and space allow for freedom of the mind, body, and spirit. How many of us adults remember laying on the ground and looking at the clouds, or laying in a field of grass still and dreamy? These precious experiences are becoming rarer for our children which is why it is so important for the kindergarten to regularly provide these opportunities for them. Without these experiences to be and to move in nature, children are unable to maintain their connectedness to everything, their sense of wonder, their empathy for each other and all other living things.

As part of our philosophy we encourage children to interact fully with their environment. This often means they get wet and dirty while playing outside. We feel the benefits of this type of play far outweighs the disadvantages. Jumping in puddles, stomping in mud, rolling in the grass, splashing in water is even more fun together with friends. We apologise in advance for the extra washing this will entail and suggest you keep your child's clothing at kindergarten simple and practical. We encourage you to keep an open mind about this type of outside play and to speak with us if you have any suggestions.

Organisation of the outdoor environment:

The outdoor environment is organised or accessed to offer children diversity in outside play, most importantly by giving children the choice of 3 play areas. The space in Gloria's garden gives more scope for more permanent organisation of play and learning materials, such as the sand pit, toys and gardening tools, water barrels, and garden planting bed. Children are encouraged to use toys and tools creatively, and to make suggestions of additions.

As the 3 spaces are varied so are the learning experiences. When children use sand, stones, and water they have the chance to practice maths with their whole bodies, especially measuring. Using different sized containers, making sand cakes, pouring water from the barrels, and building sand castles all are opportunities to experiment with materials, shapes, and amounts. There are myriads of questions from the children relating to the natural world which can be explored together. Children learn to balance and coordination from climbing and jumping. It is a big milestone as each child learns to climb a tree without assistance. Children learn to stretch emotionally by negotiating together in games, and the sandpit, and by practicing respect for the natural world and each other. Children can communicate differently with each other enjoying more dynamic, free, and creative speech and expression. There is more spontaneous laughter, singing, and dancing.

Gardening gives the children a wide scope of learning as children learn about the process of planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting. They learn about vegetables and fruits, insects, weather, and seasons. The garden bed at Gloria's offers many happy hours caring for plants and watching them grow.

Planning:

As outside play is 1 1/2 hours of the session and is an integral component of the Waldorf Kindergarten programme, there is a commitment by the teachers to plan and evaluate outdoor play with the same philosophy that underpins inside play. In this way teachers and parents try to provide as many rich and diverse natural materials for the children. Children are encouraged to creatively use toys, tools, and materials in different ways. For most of outside play there is freedom and time given to the children to create their own games and activities. Teachers are actively involved in play, questions, and activities when invited by the children. Teachers observe closely what children are playing in order to record how they are developing and how they can be assisted in challenges they may have.

As much of Waldorf kindergarten philosophy is based on nature and the seasons, there are several festivals and celebrations that take place outside. Teachers plan the practical and aesthetic aspects of the festivals to ensure the happiest and safest outcome for the children and parents. They include celebrating Apple Day in September, the Lantern Festival on 11th November, Brigid's Day on February 1st, the Easter Egg hunt on the last day of spring term, Bealtaine on a Friday close to May 1st, and the Leaving Day Festival. These festivals incorporate special stories, songs, activities, and the sharing of food. It is also an opportunity to celebrate with the wider community of children's families.

Outside play is an integral part of the Steiner programme and as such is included in the biweekly planning meetings of the teachers, as well as in the monthly Board meetings. The teachers discuss the children's well being and development during outside play in order to ensure that their safety, changing needs and interests are being facilitated. Teachers also review the routines and curriculum to reflect the desires and needs of the children. Board meetings are mostly for the purpose of physical improvements of the outside space.

Rules for outside:

- ◆ Children are to be dressed appropriately for the weather with warm and waterproof clothing and wellingtons. There is spare gear available in kindergarten if a child arrives without something.
- ◆ Children are to be dressed in outside gear when they arrive into kindergarten at 9:30am so as to be prepared to go outside first thing.
- ◆ Particular attention is to be focussed on hats and gloves for cold weather days, and sunhats and sunscreen for warm weather days. Please label things with your child's name.
- ◆ If a child does not have her/his own labelled bottle of sunscreen permission must be obtained from the parents to use kindergarten's.
- ◆ Children must have a full set of spare clothes in a bag hung on their hooks in the cloakroom. This must be regularly restocked and should contain: socks, underpants, tights/leggings/trousers, shirt, and long sleeved shirt or hoodie. All things labelled please.
- ◆ When walking to and from the outside spaces children must at all times hold hands with each other, and be connected in a group with an adult in no more than three children in each group.

- ◆ Children must listen to, and respond to all safety warnings spoken by the teachers, especially when crossing roads.
- ◆ Children should practice respect for each other and the nature around them by using care and compassion. When necessary adults must sensitively remind children to care for insects, trees, plants, and their natural environment with love and respect.
- ◆ Children should be allowed to explore their environment, experiment using materials they find, and to move with as much freedom from interference from adults as possible. This means teachers must be observant and be ready to intervene only in cases of danger to a child or to another living being. Teachers should allow children to try things for themselves and only offer assistance when asked.
- ◆ Children are to be allowed to use their “outside” voices to sing, shout or however they choose to express themselves as long as they are not annoying someone else.
- ◆ Children must stay with the other children in the outside space and not leave the premises alone. They must listen to teachers' requests to remain in the space.
- ◆ On return to the kindergarten children will remove outdoor clothing in the hallway, place their wellingtons in the box provided in the bathroom after carefully removing them, thoroughly wash hands with soap, and change any wet or dirty clothes.

Roles and Responsibilities of Adults:

- Adults will be aware of the safety and well being of children at all times.
- Adults will always bring a rucksack equipped with a first aid kit, arnica, tissues, wet wipes, and hand sanitiser.
- Adults will always bring a fully charged mobile phone with parent's numbers programmed in.
- All adults will count children when they leave the kindergarten premises, when they arrive at the outside play space, at regular intervals when outside, on leaving the outside space, and when arriving back to kindergarten. Numbers must be said out loud and be agreed upon at all times by every adult. A copy of the day's attendance record will be put in the rucksack.
- Adults must regularly, at least one time per week, check all play equipment and materials and discard anything that is broken or unsafe.
- Adults must on a daily basis check the environment on entering to ascertain it is safe and move anything dangerous or obstructive, ie tree branches after wind; or checking for gardeners working.
- Adults must station themselves within view of the risky play areas at all times, and in the area of greatest density of children playing together. Risky play areas are places where children climb or jump, and where there is a water source. High density areas are the sand pit, and any other place of choice. The adults must be hyper aware and flexible to move where there may be risks occurring or assistance needed.

Outdoor Ratios:

In accordance with best practice and our insurance outside play ratios are 1 adult per 3 children.

Equality and Inclusion:

Our outdoor spaces can be accessed, utilised and enjoyed by children of all ages and abilities. We provide a safe and secure outdoor areas with opportunities for appropriate challenge to facilitate the children's ability to learn about risk and increase their self-management skills. We closely monitor children's abilities and interests and provide access to spaces, materials, and equipment that safely stimulates development and learning.

Weather:

It is the policy of the kindergarten to go out in every weather unless there is an orange or red weather warning in place. Most children enjoy being out in every weather as long as they have proper outside clothing. Please ensure your children have proper rain gear, wellies without holes, hats, gloves, and enough spare clothes for changing. If the weather is too extreme for the children teachers will decide to have a shorter walk and return to kindergarten early.

Health and Safety:

All efforts are made to ensure the health and safety of children and adults in the outside play areas. This includes being aware of what the children are doing at all times and where they are. Teachers believe children must have the opportunity to challenge themselves by moving, jumping, and climbing so station themselves where there is most chance of risk, especially near trees, walls, and water. Teachers are nearby to assist children when they need help and to encourage safe choices when engaging in risky play.

Regular risk assessments are made to ensure that the outdoor space, the equipment, and materials are safe for everyone using them. Adults are trained in first aid and procedures for accidents. Grounds are checked every day for any changes that may have occurred overnight. Alternative choices for a play area are chosen in a case of an dangerous occurrences, such as tree falls or garden maintenance. Gates are attended by adults at all times to prevent children from leaving and unauthorised people from entering.

Children wear high visibility vests when walking to the outside play spaces to ensure safety while crossing the road and walking on footpaths.

Risk Assessment:

A general safety check is carried out daily to identify any hazards or broken equipment that need attention or removal. A regular risk assessment will be carried out as required. These will include any fencing and walls that need repair, and any unsafe areas to be fenced off.

Hygiene:

To develop an understanding of the importance of health and hygiene routines among the children a thorough routine of hand washing is implemented before the children leave on the walk, and when children come inside returning from outside play. Adults have tissues in their pockets to assist children with runny noses outside. Antibacterial wipes and hand sanitiser are brought to the outside spaces and are used to clean children's hands before and after eating, and before leaving the garden space and holding hands for the return walk to kindergarten.

This policy links with our:

- Outings Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Training Policy
- Supervision Policy

Person responsible _____ Deirdre Riffel, Manager

This policy was adopted by Burren Sonas Kindergarten on _____

Signed by: _____ Martin Harold, Chairperson on behalf of
Management

Quote from:

Schweizer, S., *Under the Sky: Playing, Working, and Enjoying Adventures in the Open Air*. Sophia Books, East Sussex, UK: 2009, p. 1 forward from Sally Jenkinson.

Managing Behaviour Policy

Burren Sonas Kindergarten recognises all children as individuals with unique needs and abilities. We encourage children to develop the skills of regulating their emotions, problem-solving and decision-making. All staff will support children with their individual needs and adjust the supports as required. Staff will implement clear and consistent expectations depending on the age, abilities and stage of development of the child. Staff will follow clearly the strategies to support children as named in this policy. The kindergarten will work collaboratively with parents/guardians to implement the managing behaviour policy. Through this partnership, it places each child's needs and rights at the centre of our practice.

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

Procedures for Supporting Positive Behaviour :

Staff :

- Teachers model positive behaviour in every interaction with children: through play, speech, activities, and transitions. Role modeling may include: explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, getting down to the child's eye level, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, waiting and checking for the child's understanding.
- Teachers always comfort an upset child.
- Teachers show empathy to the feelings which the child may be experiencing.
- Teachers are responsible for building up a special relationship with the child and her/his family. This helps with learning to know what the child enjoys and understanding some of the situations she/he may find challenging.
- Expectations are consistent for all children, and are dependent on the age, stage of development and needs of the whole child.
- A child's behaviour is discussed only amongst the staff directly concerned with the child who may need to create an action or care plan. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
- Burren Sonas Kindergarten has a procedure in place that staff uses to observe, and record issues and incidents that is used to support children to manage their behaviour.
- Burren Sonas Kindergarten has a Code of Conduct for staff relating to behaviour management.
- Any rules will be kept clear, simple, and age appropriate.

Children:

- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings are acknowledged by sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Play activities are used as an opportunity for children to practice problem solving when challenging situations arise, and for children to learn self-regulation strategies.
- Books and storytelling are used in a therapeutic way to identify and discuss feelings, and how children and adults can all work together to manage anger, upset, or frustration.
- A range of activities are available to the group of children which offer freedom of choice, creativity, and self expression.
- The children are encouraged to develop rules, depending on their age and verbal ability, for interactions in kindergarten that help them to develop respect for themselves, each other, the teachers, and their environment.

Parents :

- A summary of the managing behaviour policy is within the parent's handbook which is available at all times on the Burren Sonas Kindergarten website: .
- Requests of specific strategies from parents are only be implemented where it follows the services managing behaviour policy and is line with best practice.
- Teachers will communicate with parents in a respectful, calm, and non-judgemental manner.
- Staff are aware of respectful communication in supporting a child in managing his/her behaviour. Where staff need to speak with a parent/guardian, the child will not be present.
- The parent/guardian is informed of incidents of behaviour in a mindful manner, e.g. away from the door, with privacy away from the presence of other parents, staff, or children.
- Parents can request a meeting to discuss specific elements of the managing behaviour policy. The service will facilitate this at the earliest convenience.
- Burren Sonas Kindergarten maintains clear and confidential procedures on monitoring and recording any incidents or issues in relation to supporting children with managing their own behaviour.
- Information is only shared with parent/ guardians regarding strategies or plans in place to support their child. Information about other children is not shared.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concern regarding behaviours occurring. All issues, concerns or grievances are managed within Burren Sonas Kindergarten.
- Where an accident and/or incident has been recorded under the managing behaviour policy, details are recorded on two separate record forms for each parent to sign. Records only disclose the name of the individual child of the parent who is signing the form. The second child's name is not disclosed.

Curriculum & Environments:

- The Steiner programme implemented by the kindergarten is designed with the whole child in mind, each unique child receiving supports in different areas as needed.
- Provides a balance of adult led and child led activities.
- Children never have to sit for long periods of time, allowing them to have a choice to move from an activity which does not interest them.
- Play environments are laid out into specific play areas which supports children's natural curiosity encouraging them to become engrossed in their play and develop their own interests.
- There is a rhythm of structure within the curriculum so children feel confident in their day but routines can be flexible to meet the needs of the children.
- The kindergarten keeps a minimum number of transitions throughout the day, signaling them in advance by specific songs or rhymes.
- The environment provides sufficient space, equipment and materials to meet the needs, abilities and interests of the children.
- Children will go on a daily walk whenever possible to enable exploration, physical exercise, and appreciation of the natural world, all of which contributes to a feeling of well-being and freedom of movement and play.
- A communal meal is prepared and eaten together, with the teachers, with helping roles for the children. There is a starting and finishing ritual, with ample opportunity for children to share their experiences and stories. This process supports children to respect each other, improve listening skills, and appreciate new tastes in food.

Strategies for Supporting Children:

It is important for teachers to gather information and knowledge about the whole child. Through their role, teachers can anticipate a child's reaction and behaviour knowing what is likely to upset a child's mood or behaviour, knowing when to step-in or just observe from a safe distance. Each child may be assigned a "key person" if necessary but generally both teachers will work together with all the children.

Burren Sonas Kindergarten follows different strategies based on the type, frequency and impact of the behaviour(s).

1. Resolving an Incident /Conflict Management

This type of behaviour may be a once off incident or it may be specific times where a child needs support based on their age, stage of development or needs.

Burren Sonas Kindergarten supports the development of self-regulation through the Conflict Resolution Approach . This strategy supports the child to develop the skills of regulating emotions and problem-solving. There may be different levels of support which are needed for each individual child, the adult should adjust support where necessary in this process for each individual child.

Strategy:

Below are the steps to follow in using the Conflict Resolution Approach.

- Approach calmly –put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
- Acknowledge feelings–describe how the child/ children are feeling, children often don't have the language to explain how they feel, leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them "you both look very sad and upset," etc.
- Gather information–remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
- Restate the problem–after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/ all can understand both sides of the story.
- Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together (or for younger children give a solution)- give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time but it's giving the children lots of practice compromising with one another which are vital skills they will need.
- Be prepared to give follow up support–it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

Communication with parents

These behaviours may or may not immediately be shared with parents as it may be linked to the age of the child, or stage of development. It is the role of the adult to support the child in developing these problem-solving skills.

2. Managing Moderate Behaviour Issues

This type of behaviour can be recognised when a behaviour is becoming a more regular occurrence. Incidents of reoccurring behaviour are documented by Burren Sonas Kindergarten. The type of information which is recorded may include location, time, date, triggers, witness. This is stored within the child's file in a locked cabinet.

Strategy:

The strategies used are consistent and follow the Conflict Resolution Approach.

Communication:

Staff communication

- The staff team will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place. The plan will have a start and end date for review.
- Staff may observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour. This may be the key worker, and/or another staff member. The plan will identify the duration of observations e.g. for one week, two weeks.
- When the behaviour happens the steps above will be implemented.
- Where observations are carried out, the child should not feel isolated. It is important at this stage, staff involved are clear on the purpose of the observations and behaviours being observed.
- In respecting the dignity and rights of the child, where observations are carried out, information is only shared with relevant persons.
- The well-being of the staff is paramount, and the early years' service may put varied supports in place where needed.
- Following the observations, staff are supported to reflect on trends and/or triggers for the behaviour. Additional strategies may be suggested at this stage e.g. staggered transitions, one-to-one support at mealtimes, visual routine, increasing adult: child ratio, physical layout is arranged so that there is a high level of visibility.

Communication with Parents

Reassurance should be provided to parents on supporting their child and open communication should be encouraged throughout this process.

- In setting up a meeting to with parent/guardian, Burren Sonas Kindergarten will consider the following:
 - o Where possible, a suitable time/day is prearranged with the parent and service e.g. after the session, collection time or during the day.
 - o Possible supports the parent/guardian might need for the meeting e.g. Presence of another family member.
 - o Meetings are in a comfortable uninterrupted space.
 - o All conversations away from the child.
 - o Consistent staff attend the meeting e.g. room leader and manager
 - o All meetings, plans and observations are recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.

Communication with Parents

-Before observations are carried out, the Burren Sonas Kindergarten should consider the following:

- o A meeting may be set up with the parent/guardian. A teacher may speak with the parent / guardian about the reoccurring behaviour.
- o A plan may be developed between the staff and parent/guardian to support the child. This plan is short-term of 1-2 weeks approximately. The strategies and time frame of the plan are clear. The plan is reviewed regularly.
- o Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents.
- o Where possible, the next time/day to discuss the observation is decided at the meeting.

-After carrying out the observation:

- o The teacher(s) may request to speak with the child's parent/guardian.
- o During the meeting, the plan, trends and/or noticeable triggers may be discussed with the parent/ guardian.
- o Parent/ guardians are encouraged to contribute to the plan.
- o Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents.
- o Where the service has decided to continue observing the child, a further plan may be put into place in collaboration with the parent/ guardians.
- o Where possible, the time/day for the next meeting is decided.

-This process may be cyclical and reoccur many times to identify a trigger or the appropriate strategy.

3. Managing Serious Behaviour Issues:

Serious behaviour issues may include the following -

- Repeated pattern of behaviour which impacts with the child's learning or engagement.
- Behaviours that are not responsive to the process described above.
- Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive behaviour (e.g. screaming, self harm or harm to others, property destruction).

Strategies

Specific strategies may be followed to support the child including the Conflict Resolution Approach. If appropriate, Burren Sonas Kindergarten may develop an individual care plan to support the child. Where other strategies are in place to support the child, there is a clear outline provided in the care plan. These strategies follow best practice guidelines.

Services may also use the following to support serious behaviour issues:

- Time to one side with support of an adult
In rare situations, it may be appropriate to use time to one side with the support of an adult, for short periods of time, to enable a child to calm down. Adult support is needed throughout this time, and a child must never be isolated in any space or room without adult support. Clear guidelines are followed by the early years' service. This should not be used as a form of time out and/or isolating a child.
- Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm. The purpose of this intervention can only be to prevent injury to the child, another child or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property. Physical holding as prevention must only be used:
 - To prevent injury to the child or other children
 - To prevent an accident

Regardless of age, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time.

In some cases, an individual care plan is developed from external agencies who are supporting the child. The early years' service, in so far as practical, will implement this care plan in collaboration with parents/ guardians.

Communication

- The staff team may carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and develop an action plan to support the child.
- Observations may be carried out at different times of the day to establish triggers of the behaviour. All observations are discussed with the parent/ guardian.
- A plan may be developed in collaboration with the staff team and family of the child.
- If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
- If the behaviour is a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
- All information gathered and discussed are stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
- All meetings, plans and observations are recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.

- The staff always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.
- When all reasonable attempts to support the child, whose challenging behaviour is causing the difficulties have failed, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek professional advice. The parent/guardian may then seek the advice or request referral to other professionals.

Prohibited Practices

- Corporal punishment -Any physical force which is used with intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, such as hitting, spanking (refers to striking a child with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities with the intention of modifying behaviour without causing physical injury), shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, pinching, squeezing, or biting is prohibited.
- Practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful will not be carried out on any child while attending the service.

Supporting Staff

- Staff are given a copy of the behaviour management and emotional support policy as part of their induction in Burren Sonas Kindergarten and must sign to say that they have read and understood the policy.
- Staff receive training at induction on the behaviour management techniques that are used in Burren Sonas Kindergarten.
- Staff are supported with behaviour management and emotional support of children in their care through ongoing training, support and supervision with management and availability of information on best practice in relation to behaviour management and emotional support in an early years setting.
- A copy of this policy is available in each room for staff to easily access. A copy of specific techniques we use for managing behaviour are available to staff. Staff receive training on these techniques as needed.
- This policy is reviewed on a yearly basis with the input of staff.
- Staff share information as needed, in a confidential manner, to ensure consistency across the service when supporting children's behaviour.
- Staff are aware of the language that they use when speaking to children. Staff focus on positive quiet commands when encouraging children to modify their behaviour. Using 'do' instead of 'don't', for example.

Complaints Policy

The services complaints policy and procedures should be followed where there any issues or concerns regarding the implementation of the managing behaviour policy.

Links with other Policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Transitions Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Staff Development & Training Policy
- Storage of Records Policy and Data Protection Policy.
- Complaints Policy

Person Responsible: _____

Date implemented: _____

Signed by: _____ On behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Review Date:

Review Date:

Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

Burren Sonas Kindergarten recognises and respects the rights of all adults and children in our service in accordance with the UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child. We welcome the involvement of diverse cultures, spiritual beliefs, backgrounds, and abilities as an opportunity to learn and share together as a community. We value the ability, individuality and cultural background of all children by providing each child with a variety of resources she/he needs to develop holistically within an inclusive ethos/culture. We aim to actively promote equality of access and participation and eliminate discrimination on grounds of, gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Travelling Community. This policy represents the agreed principles and commitment for inclusion, in line with Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter.

Principle

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2011, the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2012, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 29 & 30), the Disability Act 2005 and the Special Needs Legislation – EPSEN Act 2004.

Rationale

Burren Sonas Kindergarten is committed to working in partnership with parents to support children's ability, identity, cultural background and sense of belonging. We will support families in their parenting role and respecting their values and beliefs about childrearing. We will support children to become respectful of difference and foster each child's critical thinking in order to confront bias and discrimination. We will implement a curriculum that meets the individual needs and emerging interests of the child under Síolta, The National Quality Framework (2006) and Aistear: The National Curriculum Framework (2009) and respond to children's diverse and individual learning needs and styles through an emerging curriculum.

We will respond appropriately and sensitively to any additional needs a child may experience. Additional needs may include any change introduced into the child's life, such as a new sibling, moving house, absent parent/s, or a situation that may call for a long-term care plan, such as asthma, allergies, disability, development delay and medical conditions. We will support continual development for all early childhood practitioners so as to ensure they are trained in an equality and diversity approach to providing care and education to all. We will ensure fair and equal opportunities for all potential and existing employees in line with our Recruitment Policy.

Procedure

All children attending Burren Sonas Kindergarten are supported to:

- * Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- * Know they belong and are valued as unique individuals
- * Feel strong and confident about their identity
- * Know their cultural backgrounds are respected and valued
- * Learn in smaller groups that allow them to more easily express themselves and be creative
- * Engage with materials and experiences that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, gender and ability (visitors, books, music, musical instrument, cooking activities, craft, clothing, multicultural dolls, multicultural jigsaws, games, play equipment, posters and other props).
- * Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- * Participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of disabilities

- * Respect the purpose for which other children's aids or assistive technology are intended.

Families attending the centre are supported to:

- * Consult with the service about the care of each child to provide common ground and understanding between the service's philosophy and family values.
- * Be involved in policy and procedure development to ensure cultural sensitivities are included.
- * Access information about the service and the policies and procedures by having information translated into their home language if necessary.
- * Participate in the service's programme and to introduce their culture's food, art, music, language, celebrations and dress to the other children in the service.

Early years educators will promote equality, diversity and inclusion. They will:

- Remove assumptions, judgements and expectations about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all families and fellow staff members.
- Regard all individuals equally, showing sensitivity and providing equal opportunities for all children of all backgrounds.
- Actively model open acceptance and appreciation for differences between people.
- They will intervene in situations when bias is shown by children and encourage children to accept differences.
- Demonstrate positive attitudes when making changes to accommodate all children.
Work as a team with parents and other professionals to develop, carry out and review plans for children with additional support needs.
- Adhere to the National Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter.

Dealing with Discriminatory Incidents:

- The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- All children will be informed that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- When an incident occurs between children both children learn from the incident. The response to the incident will reference the rules of the service as appropriate.
- Staff will endeavour to determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so staff will be careful not to make assumptions.
- Some issues may be brought into the early childhood service by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the service. Staff will recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.
- An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussions, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling children out in the group.
- By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings.
- It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. All staff will be mindful that early childhood practitioners are role models for the children and the early childhood service. Children will do as we do. (The éist manual- Ar an mBealach, 2010, Pavee Point)

The Inclusion Co-ordinator within our service is Deirdre Riffel. More information on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion is included in the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2016).

If you, as a staff member or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow Burren Sonas Kindergarten Complaints Policy.

This policy links with our

- * Child Protection policy
- * Staff training policy
- * Supervision policy
- * Complaints policy
- * Recruitment policy

Person Responsible: Deirdre Riffel

This policy was adopted by Burren Sonas Kindergarten on Date:

Signed by: _____ Martin Harold, Chairperson

Review date:

Review date:

Policy on Administration of Medicine

Policy Statement:

Burren Sonas Kindergarten is committed to supporting each child's health and well-being. Burren Sonas Kindergarten will work in consultation with parents/guardians to ensure the safe storage and administration of medication if:

- a child is taking prescribed medication, with the prior written permission of their parent(s) or guardian(s)
- a child is taking non-prescribed medication, with the prior written permission of their parent(s) or guardian (s)
- a child becomes unwell while attending the setting and, only with the prior written permission of their parent(s) or guardian(s), is given pain relief or temperature reducing medication.
- a child has a minor bump while attending the setting and is given homeopathic remedies such as arnica or hypericum, only with the prior written permission of their parent(s) or guardian(s).

Principle:

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Quality Regulatory Framework.

We are committed to:

- Storing medication safely and appropriately.
- Implementing a procedure to ensure that the right child receives the right medication, dosage, route, and timing by authorised staff.
- Documenting the administration of medication accurately.
- Providing a copy of the administration of medication policy to all parents/guardians and recording that parents/guardians have reviewed the policy.
- Incorporating staff feedback in to future policy development.

Parental consent:

- Written parental permission for temperature reducing/anti-febrile medication and administration in the event of a child's high temperature will be obtained on enrollment. This permission will be reviewed annually.
- Written parental permission for the administration of homeopathic internal or external remedies in the event of bumps or scrapes will be obtained on enrollment. This permission will be reviewed annually.
- The medical history of each child will be sought when a child begins in Burren Sonas Kindergarten. This will be updated as needed.

Procedure for children's prescription medication:

- Prescription medication is administered only if required. Only staff that have the required competency (knowledge, skills and training) will administer prescription medication to children.
- Medication (prescription or non-prescription) will never be administered without written permission from parent(s) or guardian(s). Parents/guardians must complete the required consent form if prescription medication is to be administered.
- The child must have received the prescription medication for at least 24 hours prior to it being given in Burren Sonas Kindergarten.
- Where a child has a chronic/on going condition, which requires regular prescription medication, the written parental consent and a written care and administration plan will be obtained on enrollment and be reviewed regularly (as necessary). Burren Sonas Kindergarten will seek training from medical professionals as needed for the

administration of prescription medication. Parental consent must be updated when there is any change to prescription medication required by a child.

- All prescription medications received by the service will be stored safely and appropriately in line with instructions provided (e.g. in the fridge). Prescription medication provided to the service must always be in date. Prescription medication received, administered and returned to the parent/guardian is always recorded by the service. All prescription medication must be appropriately labelled with the child's name.

Medication Administration Procedure:

- Medication is only administered by staff who have been authorised by the manager to do so and who are appropriately trained.
- Non-prescription medications will be given per the manufacturers' instructions unless a health care professional provides written instructions otherwise.
- Staff will always read and understand the leaflet enclosed with the medication before administering the medication.
- Medications are accepted for use only when they are within their expiration period. The medication must be labelled with the child's name and in their original container.
- Medication is not added to a child's drink or food unless a medical professional has directed that this is how it should be administered. Staff are aware of how the medication reacts with food/fluids/other medications.
- There is a named person responsible for administration of medication in Burren Sonas Kindergarten. There is a second named person who checks medication and the dosage when it is administered.
- Ointments for nappy rash are not applied unless for treatment purposes and where a health care professional has directed their use for the child on whom they are being used.

Before Administration of Medication:

In services where there are at least 2 staff members, there must always be two staff members present for administration of medication.

Before medication is administered the following is checked:

- Consent has been received from parent/guardian to administer medication
- The child's identity
- Recipient's name
- Prescribed dose
- Expiry date of medication
- Written instructions of prescriber
- Any possible side effects
- Date and time the medication was last given

Staff can only administer medication that has been prescribed for a particular child. Staff are aware of the contra indications relating to medication being administered.

When Administering Medication:

- The appropriate equipment is used to administer the medication e.g. dosing spoon/oral dropper. Measuring devices are thoroughly cleaned after each use.
- The child's dignity and privacy are ensured as appropriate e.g. if the method of administering the medication is not orally.
- If there is any doubt about any of the procedures, the member of staff will check with parents/guardians or a health professional before taking further action.

After Administration of Medication:

- Staff involved will keep records each time they administer medication. This record is signed by both staff members administering the medication.
- A record of the outcome of the administration of medication is maintained. For example, were there any adverse effects/did the temperature come down?
- The medication is returned to its appropriate storage.

Incidents involving medication:

- If a child refuses to take medication –parents/guardians are informed straight away.
- If there is a mistake when administering medication, a doctor will be called immediately.
- Emergency numbers including the national poison line are readily available.

Emergency medication:

- An individual care plan is in place for each child in the service who has an allergy/asthma/a condition that requires emergency medication. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that emergency medication is supplied to Burren Sonas Kindergarten and replenished when necessary.
- Emergency medication must be monitored at the 1st day of every month to ensure that the expiration date is still valid and remind the parents/guardian to replace it if not.
- If a child requires emergency medication in an anaphylaxis/asthma emergency, the emergency services and the child's parents/guardians are notified as soon as possible.
- The emergency medication plan of your service should be included here in this policy.

Individual care plans:

- All children with medical conditions enrolled in Burren Sonas Kindergarten have an individual care plan that outlines any medication needs they have. Individual care plans are prepared by the child's doctor.
- If a child has an individual care plan, the plan is available to all staff caring for the child. The plan is stored confidentially and is only shared with staff on a need to know basis.

Medication administration records:

- The authorised person giving the medication will ensure that they document the medication administration times and dosage precisely and have the process witnessed and signed by another authorised member of staff). Any administration of medication will be documented in a record book and signed by parents/carers.
- The following will be documented by the staff member administering medication:
 - o Child's name
 - o Check that consent was received
 - o Check of child's ID before medication administration
 - o Check that medication within expiry date
 - o Check of administration instructions
 - o The date and time the medication was administered
 - o Method and dose of medication
 - o Signature of person who administered medication and signature of witness
 - o Any side-effects or adverse reactions are recorded
- A record will also be kept of the date and time the parent was contacted before the

administration of medication in the case of anti-febrile or pain-relieving medicines.

Procedure for the Storage of Medications:

- All medications brought into the childcare setting should have child-proof caps and will be stored:
 - a. At the proper temperature (according to the label)
 - b. Away from food
 - c. Out of the reach of children
 - d. In accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
 - e. With the child's full name and expiry date on the medication container
- Medications requiring refrigeration will be clearly marked and separated from food in an airtight container marked 'Medications'. Access to the fridge will be restricted to authorized staff only.
- Inhalers will be stored in a safe location in a manner that allows them to be accessed quickly in case of emergency, they will be labelled with the child's name.
- Epi-pens will be stored in an accessible, safe location known to staff and labelled with the child's name. A copy of parent/guardian consent and the emergency care plan are stored with the epi-pen.
- Emergency medication is stored in a safe and accessible location that is known to all staff.
- All medication brought in to Burren Sonas Kindergarten will be labelled with the child's name.
- Medicines, creams and ointments are not stored in the first aid box. Medications that are applied to skin are kept separate from medications that are injected into the body or taken by mouth.
- The manufacturer's instructions are followed at all times for the safe storage of medication.

Anti-febrile (temperature reducing) medication:

- Burren Sonas Kindergarten has a supply of anti-febrile medication (such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen for Children) in liquid suspension form, in child-proof containers and with the appropriate measuring devices. These medications are stored in accordance with manufacturer's instructions in a safe location that is not accessible to children.
- The date the medication is opened will be clearly labelled on the container.
- Medications with illegible labels or medications which have been opened over 6 months ago will be discarded.
- Medication in tablet form will never be administered to children under 5 years of age.
- Parents/guardians provide written consent on enrollment for anti-febrile medication to be given to their child in the event of a high temperature.
- Parents will be contacted by telephone before these medications are administered, to ensure that the correct time frame is adhered to between doses.
- If a child has a suspected temperature, their temperature will be taken using a clean thermometer. The child's temperature will be recorded and if the body temperature of the child rises beyond a safe limit (38 degrees Celsius or higher), an anti-febrile medication will be administered by staff.
- The child's record form will be checked before administration of anti-febrile medication to ensure that there is parental consent and there are no recorded allergies to anti-febrile medication for the child.
- There is a system in place to identify children who regularly require anti-febrile medication.

A health care professional such as a GP can write a standing order for a commonly used non-prescription medication that defines when the medication should be used for any child in the service. For example, "With parent's/guardian's consent, children who are older than four months of age may receive Calpol when their body temperature exceeds 38°C, (101°F), per the dose schedule and instructions provided by the manufacture."

Emergency contact details:

- Parents/guardians must provide contact details to Burren Sonas Kindergarten when their child is enrolled.
- Parents/guardians will be requested to notify Burren Sonas Kindergarten if their emergency contact details change. Emergency contact details for parents/guardians of all children in the service will be kept on file and updated as needed.
- The phone number of the Poison Line, local GPs, Pharmacist and Public Health Nurse are readily available to all staff. Emergency contact numbers 999 or 112 are available to staff and there is always a working phone on the premises.
- In the event of an emergency an ambulance will be called. The parents/guardians of a child will be informed immediately.

Sunscreen:

- Parental consent is required when a sunscreen supplied by the service is used. When providing consent parents are informed of the exact brand and type of sunscreen used by Burren Sonas Kindergarten.
- Sunscreen supplied by parents does not require consent. Sunscreen supplied by parents is labelled with the child's name and is only used for that child.
- A record of when sunscreen is applied is kept for all children.
- Sunscreen is stored out of children's reach and labelled with the date it was first opened
- Sunscreen is brought on outings as needed.

This policy links with our -

- Risk management policy
- Policy on staff absences
- Staff training policy
- Supervision policy
- Policy on safe sleep
- Policy on infection control
- Outings policy

Supporting documents and links:

- Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework
- Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016
- Managing Chronic Health Conditions at School

Contact person: Name: Deirdre Riffel

Phone number/email: 0877131590

Date implemented: _____

Document approved by: _____

Signed by: _____ Chairperson

Review Date:

Review Date:

Outings Policy

Policy Statement

Burren Sonas Kindergarten understands the value outings can bring to children's learning and development, and how they enrich the Kindergarten experience. We are committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of children in our setting, and giving children and parents the opportunity to share in active learning experiences in suitable and safe settings outside our premises. Risk assessments are carried out prior to all outings and adequate insurance is in place. This policy outlines how we conduct outings in Burren Sonas Kindergarten. This policy is available to all Parents/Guardians on our website: <http://burrensonas.com>.

Principle:

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Quality Regulatory Framework.

Guidelines

- An outing is one that takes place during normal Kindergarten hours and departs from and returns to the Kindergarten setting.
- As this is a Steiner based Kindergarten the value of children being outside, interacting with nature, and playing with each other is central to our philosophy.
- There are daily outings to an outside play space as there is no outside play area attached to the kindergarten building. There is a special procedure in place to ensure safety for the children when walking to the space, and while playing in the space.
- There may be an annual outing to a local outdoor playground, beach, or petting zoo which necessitates driving the children.
- The procedure to ensure safety on outings is continuously reassessed and changed as needed.
- Children and adults will respect each other, people with whom we come in contact, and other people's property.
- Teachers will make every effort on outings to prevent adults outside of the service from photographing the children.

Risk Assessment:

- A detailed Risk Assessment is carried out by Burren Sonas Kindergarten on the proposed outing location and transportation, if needed, for the outing. This is carried out prior to the outing itself.
- The risk assessment completed prior to the outing is used to determine how many members of staff are needed to accompany children. The ratio for the outing is established through this risk assessment.
- The risk assessment identifies and assesses the risks a particular outing may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child being taken on the outing and specifies how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.
- An exploratory visit is to be carried out by at least one staff member to the proposed location of the outing as part of the risk assessment process.
- Consideration of the following is included in the risk assessment:
 - o The route and transportation for the outing
 - o The destination and proposed duration
 - o The type of activities that will be taking place on the outing
 - o The weather forecast –will sunscreen and/or rain gear be required?
 - o The number of adults and children involved in the outing
 - o Additional needs of children
 - o Water hazards and water-based activities

- o Children's allergies
- o The number of adults and children involved in the outing
- o Insurance requirements
- o Potential of public accessibility on the outing
- Depending on the outcome of the Risk Assessment, it may be necessary to consider alternative locations for the outing.
- All staff are made aware of the Risk Assessment prior to the outing. Parents/Guardians are advised that the risk assessment is available to them in Burren Sonas Kindergarten prior to the outing.

Consent:

- Parents/Guardians are given access to the website where the outings policy is located when their child commences attendance in Burren Sonas Kindergarten. If a parent/guardian requests a hard copy of the policy, the Kindergarten will give one.
- Children can only attend an outing with parental/guardian's consent.
- Before their child's commencement in the service written consent from Parents/Guardians is sought for the daily outing for their child to attend in line with this outings policy.
- Separate written consent forms will be issued to the parents/guardians for the annual outing and must be returned to the Burren Sonas Kindergarten prior to the outing. Staff are aware of any children who do not have consent to attend an outing.
- The consent forms include:
 - o The date of the proposed outing (or details if it will be a regular occurrence).
 - o Information on the destination of the outing and transport to the location
 - o The duration of the outing and how long the child will be away from the premise
 - o The adult: child ratio for the outing
 - o Details of adults who are not staff of Burren Sonas Kindergarten attending the outing
 - o Details of the drop off and pick up arrangements and times
 - o Cost of the outing

Prior to an outing:

- Prior to each outing taking place a checklist is prepared. The checklist is in place to ensure that all procedures in relation to the conduct of outings is adhered to.
- All staff who work in Burren Sonas Kindergarten and all Parents/Guardians with children attending the service are informed that an outing is taking place.
- It is checked that adequate insurance is in place for the outing.
- A plan is put in place prior to any outing that outlines what staff will do if a child goes missing while on the outing. This plan outlines:
 - o Who will help to search for the child,
 - o How the search will be carried out
 - o Who will take charge of the rest of the group of children.
- A named member of staff is designated the person in charge for the outing

Supervision on daily walks:

- All staff attending the outing are aware of the number of children they are supervising and also the specific children that they have responsibility for.
- A roll call is taken of all the children going on the outing, with a name to face check, before leaving Burren Sonas Kindergarten and on return to the Burren Sonas Kindergarten.
- On arrival to the garden/play space, and at regular intervals while on the outing, two staff members will count the number of children, and agree on the number, to be certain

all children are present.

- Children are given a high visibility vest to wear so that they are easily seen and identifiable as being with Burren Sonas Kindergarten.
- At all times when on an outing, children are appropriately supervised by a member of staff.
- Burren Sonas Kindergarten ensures that adult:child ratios are adhered to in line with our insurance policy, the needs of the group. and the risk assessment we have conducted.
- Parents/Guardians attending the outing are provided with information about the outing and their role on the outing at least 24 hours before the outing takes place.
- Parents/Guardians are aware of who the person in charge is on the day of the outing.
- All adults are made aware of their responsibilities prior to the outing.

Supervision during annual outings requiring motorised transport in addition to above conditions:

- There is a named person in charge on the outing.
- A group photograph is taken (with prior consent from Parents/Guardians) before each outing so there is an up to date photograph of all children in the clothes they are wearing on the day.
- Particular care is given to supervising children at pick up and drop off especially if this is taking place in a different location to normal.
- There will be an extra adult on each outing who is not included in the adult: child ratio who has a supervisory role.

Communication during an outing:

- A fully charged mobile phone is taken on all outings by the person in charge. The mobile has emergency numbers saved on it. Parents/Guardians of the children attending have the contact number of this phone while the children are on the outing.
- Staff are aware if there is a landline available at the outing location in case of emergency.
- Parent and guardian contact details are brought on the outing for all children in attendance. One staff member has a responsibility for these contact details and all staff know where they can be accessed.

Clothing requirements:

- Parents/Guardians are informed prior to the outing the clothing that is required to be by children worn and if any additional clothing items are needed.
- For outings during the summer months, sun cream is required for outings and also protective clothing such as sun hats.
- For outings during the winter, children are required to wear warm clothes such as coats, hats, gloves, and full rain gear.

Food and Drink:

- Parents/Guardians are advised of food and drink requirements prior to the outing taking place.
 - If packed lunches are needed they are stored appropriately in accordance with food safety guidelines
 - If food is to be provided on the outing this is communicated to Parents/Guardians beforehand.
- Children wash their hands prior to eating on an outing.
- Children have access to water and are kept well hydrated on an outing.
- Any child with an allergy attending an outing is known to staff and their emergency plan and medication is brought on the outing.

Accidents and Incidents:

- There is a fully stocked first aid kit and at least one qualified first aid officer on every outing who is always available to adults and children on the outing.
- Medications required by any children attending the outing are brought on the outing and stored in accordance with the guidelines for the medication.
- The individual care plans of any children attending the outing are brought on the outing.
- There is a clear plan in place in the event of an accident or incident. The following steps are followed:
 - o First aid is administered by the trained first aider if required
 - o Pre-assigned staff members take the other children back to the service
 - o Communication is co-ordinated between the emergency services and the child's Parents/Guardians/guardians where necessary
 - o The Board of Management is contacted as soon as possible after a serious incident has occurred
 - o On return to the service the accident/incident is recorded in the accident/incident book

Transport:

- Burren Sonas Kindergarten ensures that all transport vehicles to and from the outing venue are roadworthy, fully insured and fit for purpose.
- Records will be kept of vehicles used to transport children and adults with named drivers and insurance cover.
- All vehicles will have appropriate seat belts and child restraint systems correctly fitted where necessary.

Management of a Critical Incident on an Outing:

There is a procedure to follow if a child goes missing on an outing. This procedure outlines:

- o The search methods that would be used
- o Who is contacted and when
- o Who stays at the outing venue
- o Who returns with the group to the pre-school

Staff are prepared for all possible incidents that may occur while on the outing (e.g. choking, drowning etc.) and receive training as needed.

Review and Evaluation:

After each outing:

The Management and staff of Burren Sonas Kindergarten will review and evaluate each outing after it has taken place to ensure that all safety measures and procedures were conducted and contributed to the safety, health and welfare of the children, staff and Parents/Guardians attending. Outcomes of these reviews will be recorded.

Helpful documents:

Critical Incident Plan Toolkit

RSA Child Safety in Cars

Food and Nutritional Guidelines for pre-school services

Date implemented: _____

Document author: Early Childhood Ireland and Deirdre Riffel

Signed by: _____ Martin Harold, Chairperson

Review Date: _____ Review Date: _____

Staff signatures:

Authorisation to Collect Children

Policy Statement:

This policy outlines the protocols in relation to the collection of preschool children from Burren Sonas Kindergarten. It also includes the information and records required for each pre-school child.

Principle

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

Procedure:

On attending a service, a written hard copy of each child is obtained and kept with the following details:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date the child first attended the service.
- The name, address and telephone number of the person/s authorised by a parent or authorised nominee named in the child's record to collect the child from the premises.
- The relationship to the child of the persons authorised to collect the child from the premises. The date of birth of the person authorised to collect the child from the premises (must be over 16 years of age).
- Details of any court ordered custody arrangements, or relevant legal evidence of individuals that are prohibited from collecting a child.
- The signature of the person providing authorisation.
- Details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention.
- Record of immunisations if any.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- Written parent or authorised nominee consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Burren Sonas Kindergarten shall ensure that a record in writing is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Procedure for authorisation of collections:

- If a child is to be collected by a person other than their parent prior signed parental permission must be in place.
- The parent should provide the name, address, contact number of the persons authorised to collect their children and state the relationship of this person to the child.
- Authorised persons must be over 18 years of age.
- When an authorised person is to collect a child the parent must inform the setting beforehand on each occasion. (in person or by phone).
- Only persons named and authorised by the parent may collect a child.
- The setting should be informed if one parent does not have guardianship and access to the child. The setting should be informed immediately of any changes to those authorised to collect their child.
- If the person authorised to collect the child is unknown to the service staff may ask the individual to produce photographic identification as prove of identity.
- The following is included on the enrollment forms for each child:
 - o The name of the parent or guardian providing authorisation.

- o The signature of the person providing authorisation.
- o The date the authorisation is signed.
- Educators are able to seek emergency medical assistance for a child as required without seeking further authorisation from a parent or guardian (i.e. medical practitioner, ambulance or hospital) including for those emergencies relating to asthma and anaphylaxis.

The service reserves the right to refuse entry to the service of any individual authorised or otherwise if it is determined that they pose a risk of harm to the safety, health and welfare of the service team and children. The service reserves the right to contact an alternative authorised contact on the child's record to collect, if they determine the authorised contact that has arrived could pose a risk to the child.

Procedure for Refusing Authorisation:

The procedure for authorising collections is that parents name two people on the child's registration form when enrolling and then parents tell educators in advance each time an authorised person will be collecting the child.

In the instance that authorisation from a parent/guardian does not meet the requirements outlined the team member will:

- Immediately explain to the parent/guardian that their authorisation cannot be accepted, explaining why. Educators will guide the parent/guardian on how to meet the requirements.
- Ensure that the parent/guardian is provided with a copy of the relevant service policy and that they understand the reasons for the refusal of the authorisation if so required. Request that an appropriate alternative authorisation is provided by the parent/guardian that complies with the requirements of the relevant service policy.
- Ensure that procedures outlined in the relevant service policy are followed where a parent/guardian cannot be immediately contacted to provide an alternative written authorisation
- Follow up with the parent/guardian, where required, to ensure that an appropriate written authorisation is obtained.
- It is the responsibility of the Kindergarten to ensure that all authorisations adhere to the requirements.

This policy links with our -

- Settling in policy
- Risk management policy
- Policy on staff absences
- Staff training policy
- Supervision policy

Person Responsible: Deirdre Riffel

This policy was adopted by Burren Sonas Kindergarten on Date: _____

Signed by: _____ Martin Harold, Chairperson

Review Date: _____

Review Date: _____

Infection Control Policy–Early Years Service

Policy Statement:

It is the priority of Burren Sonas Kindergarten to protect all pre-school children attending our service and all persons working in our service from the transmission of infections. The health and well-being of all children, staff and visitors to our service is paramount and our aim is to prevent and manage any infection which may be present in the service. This policy is communicated to all staff and a version of this policy is available to parents at our website:.

Principle:

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Tusla (2018) Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Rationale:

Infection can lead to serious ill-health for young children. Infection control procedures seek to reduce the risk of children and staff contracting an illness in Burren Sonas Kindergarten by ensuring good hygiene is followed at all times and the risk of infection is minimised. We aim to promote good hygiene practices that children and parents can implement at home.

Preventing the spread of infection:

Risk Assessments:

- Risk assessments are undertaken by staff to assess if activities, actions or environments pose risks from an infection control standpoint to the children and staff of Burren Sonas Kindergarten. Actions are implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk identified through risk assessment.

Hand washing:

- Recognising the critical importance of hand washing in preventing the spread of germs, Burren Sonas Kindergarten has a hand washing policy in place which all staff promote and model for children. Staff wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating/preparing food, after wiping noses, after waste disposal and mopping up spills, after assisting children going to the toilet, after caring for sick children, after handling soiled clothing, and after removing disposable gloves.
- A wash hand basin is provided in each room with a constant supply of hot (no greater than 43c) and cold running water, liquid anti-bacterial soap and paper towels. A wash hand basin is available in all bathrooms and kitchens.
- In Burren Sonas Kindergarten children are encouraged/assisted to wash their hands with warm water and liquid soap under supervision after visiting the toilet, before eating, after sneezing, coughing or blowing noses, after handling animals, after touching a cut or sore and after outside play and activities. Clear guidance on handwashing is outlined for children and staff in our service.
- Staff will supervise and assist children to encourage effective handwashing.

Food preparation:

- All staff and children wash hands thoroughly before preparing and serving food
- Our Staff always wash their hands after removing waste food and materials.
- Appropriate food hygiene practices are followed at all times.
- Perishable food is kept in a refrigerator, between temperatures of 0 and 5 Celsius. Any perishable food left at room temperature for more than 2 hours will be discarded safely.

Nappy Changing and Toileting:

- The nappy changing area does not communicate with any occupied room or room where food is stored.
- The nappy area is adequately ventilated, by window/mechanical ventilation.
- A wash basin is included in the nappy changing area and has hot and cold running water and access to liquid soap and paper towel dispensers.
- Children's hands will be washed and dried after nappy changing, staff will also ensure that they have thoroughly washed their own hands before and after nappy changing.
- Staff that are changing nappies use powder free, synthetic vinyl or latex gloves.
- All nappy changing mats used in Named Service are waterproof, in good condition i.e. no exposed stuffing or foam and have an easily cleanable cover. Nappy changing mats are wiped down by staff with lavender essential oil and vinegar after each nappy change.
- All nappies are disposed of in a way which will not risk infection. Soiled nappies are placed in an airtight plastic bag and placed in the child's bag to be brought home for disposal. Nappy changing units are cleaned thoroughly on a regular basis.
- All staff are to be fully trained and briefed in nappy changing and infection control.

Cleaning and the premises:

- All staff are aware of their role and personal responsibility in maintaining high standards of hygiene. This is emphasised in all training of new staff.
- Burren Sonas Kindergarten encourages best practice regarding keeping the environment and premises clean and safe.
- Spillages of blood, faeces, urine, vomit or other bodily fluids or excretions are cleaned immediately and with priority. Mops are not be used for these and extreme caution is exercised at all times.
- Daily, weekly and monthly cleaning schedules are in place and records kept. Cleaning records are located in each room.
- Burren Sonas Kindergarten removes all waste weekly to O'Gorman's Shop, Kilfenora who arranges for disposal with BinMan.
- Our premises are free from pests and rodents and we keep records of our own internal monthly checks which maintains the premises as pest free. When any pest or rodent activity is discovered it is immediately addressed. All affected areas are steam cleaned.
- We maintain a good stock of cleaning products and tools to ensure that hygiene practices can be carried out at all times. Adequate supplies for cleaning are provided to be used, like clean cloths, gloves, aprons, mops, buckets and detergents. All the environmentally friendly cleaning products and supplies are stored in a locked press that is not accessible to children.
- Toys and play materials are cleaned daily, with attention placed on especially soiled items. Toys are not brought into toilet or changing areas.
- Toilets, floors, shelves storing bags, tables and chairs and other areas are cleaned daily to help decrease the spread of infection, cleaning agents used are detailed on our cleaning schedules.
- All linen is washed at 60 degrees once per week and more frequently if necessary. Children do not share bedclothes and all sheets and blankets are stored separately. These items are washed at the hottest wash the fabric will tolerate.
- At least three times per year -- before Christmas, Easter and Summer breaks-- the kindergarten is completely steam cleaned, including all toys, units, and rugs. All textiles including curtains, dollies, and soft materials are washed.
- Like linen, all children have individual clothing and towels. These items are not shared. Any soiled clothes are placed in a plastic bag, sealed and sent home with parents/guardians. Parents and guardians are informed at collection if clothes being sent home are soiled.
- At least once a day, even in winter, all rooms in the service are aired out.
- All staff receive regular training, support and supervision in relation to infection control.

Immunisation:

- We recognise that it is an individual decision for each child's family whether they immunise their children or not. All children will be treated equally regardless of the decision to immunise or not.
- On enrollment, parents are asked for their child's immunisation record, this information is recorded on the child's enrollment form.
- Parents/guardians of children who are not immunised are made aware of the dangers of infectious diseases. Parents are encouraged to keep up to date with current vaccination requirements and to ensure that the service is kept informed and the child's record updated when required.
- Parents/guardians are not required to have their children immunised to gain admission to the service but where a child's immunisation record is not up-to-date parents/guardians are encouraged to have their child vaccinated.
- If a child is not immunised, parents/guardians are advised that their children will be excluded from the service during outbreaks of some vaccine preventable diseases such as Measles, Whooping Cough etc., even if their child is well. This is to protect their non-immunised child.
- We provide information leaflets on immunisation schedules, oral hygiene and prevention of infection to parents.

Animals and pets:

- Hand washing and drying procedures are followed before and after handling any animals and pets that are present in Burren Sonas Kindergarten or that we meet on outings.
- All animals and pets are managed in accordance with required and appropriate instructions for their care.
- Children are supervised with animals at all times.
- All animals visiting Burren Sonas Kindergarten are regularly checked with vets.

Illness :

- If a child is unwell, Burren Sonas Kindergarten requests that the child is kept at home if they are unable to participate in normal activities and/or if they may be at risk of passing the infection to another child or adult in the service.
- If a child becomes ill while in kindergarten we request that the child's parent/guardian or person authorised to collect will collect the child within 30 minutes. Sick children are separated from well children where possible in kindergarten.
- If Burren Sonas Kindergarten cannot contact the parents/guardians/emergency contact for a child it may be necessary to transfer the child to hospital via ambulance depending on the severity of their symptoms.
- Unwell children, with a temperature and/or specific signs and symptoms, will be excluded from the service until a diagnosis can be made. Staff can and will use their discretion when admitting a child back into kindergarten. If they believe the child is still ill and cannot take part in their normal activities they will request that the parent/guardian keeps the child at home.
- Children/Staff must remain at home for at least 48 hours following the last episode of infectious diarrhoea/vomiting.**
- Unwell children and staff should only return to kindergarten when they have fully recovered. The exclusion notes in [Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings](#) are followed.
- Staff will report any illness to the manager in charge.
- A plan will be drawn up to help prevent the spread of the illness and the [HSE guidelines: Managing an infectious disease in childcare setting](#) will be followed in the case of a child in the service contracting an infectious illness.

Notifiable Diseases:

- Staff are aware of diseases classified as notifiable diseases by the Department of Public Health, a current list is available from the HSE at :
<https://www.hpsc.ie/notifiablediseases/listofnotifiablediseases/>.
- When Burren Sonas Kindergarten is informed by the Department of Public Health of a diagnosis of a child attending the service or an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service, as suffering from an infectious disease, the service will notify the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate by filling out the Notification of Incidents Form.
- Burren Sonas Kindergarten will contact the Department of Public Health if there is a concern about a communicable disease or infection or if there is an outbreak of infectious disease in the service. The Department of Public Health will also be contacted before sending letters to parents/guardians about an infectious disease. The advice of the Department of Public Health will be followed at all times in regard to the management of infectious diseases.
- Parents will be informed verbally and in writing if an outbreak has occurred –all reasonable information on the outbreak will be provided to them.

This policy links with our -

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Staff absence Policy
- Policy on safe sleep
- Risk management Policy
- Staff training Policy
- Supervision Policy

Person Responsible: _____ This policy was adopted by Burren
Sonas Kindergarten on Date: _____

Signed by: _____ On behalf of Management
(Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Review Date: _____

Review Date: _____

Relevant links:

- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018 Quality and Regulatory Framework (2018)
- Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings (2012) and Appendices
- Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings (2016) Public Health England produced with the assistance of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.
- Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings) October 2016 Health Protection Scotland NHS National Services Scotland
- A Guide to The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 Health and Safety Authority
- A Guide to Risk Assessments and Safety Statements (updated 2016) Health and Safety Authority

Fire Safety Policy

Policy Statement

Burren Sonas Kindergarten places the highest priority on the health, safety and protection of all children, staff and families using our service. All reasonable measures are undertaken to guard against the outbreak of fire. In the case of fire outbreak, staff are trained to implement the evacuation procedures according to the Fire Safety in Preschools Guidelines 1999. All staff are familiar with location of any firefighting equipment and the manager is trained in the use of such equipment.

Principle

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Fire Services Act 1981 and 2003, the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Building Control Act 1990 and the Fire Safety in Pre-Schools Guidelines 1999.

Rationale

Early childhood settings are required by law to produce and put into practice a Fire Register and an Emergency Evacuation Plan. Every person working with children should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond effectively where there is concern in relation to fire hazards within the building. Adults must supervise children at all times during the day. All equipment, fixtures and fittings must comply with the most recent European safety standard. All settings will have procedures detailing the frequency and timing of fire drills to be carried out in the service and will maintain a written record of any fire drill that takes place in the premises as well as a record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. These records will be available for inspection to a parent/guardian, an employee or an authorised person and retained for a period of five years after its creation. Procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Policy Procedure

The guidelines for a fire safety programme as presented in Fire Safety in Pre-schools (1999) are adhered to:

- preventing outbreaks of fire (see Section 2.3)
- instruction and training of staff on fire prevention and fire safety procedures (Section 2.4)
- emergency procedures and evacuation drills (Section 2.5)
- maintenance of fire protection equipment (Section 2.6)
- maintenance of building services (Section 2.7)
- providing appropriate furnishings and fittings including bedding (Section 2.8)
- availability of escape routes (Section 2.9)
- keeping of fire safety records (Section 2.10).
- Fire drills will be carried out monthly while changing the time and day to ensure all children experience a fire drill.
- All fire drill practices will be recorded in the Fire Register.

Fire Register

- Staff assigned specific responsibilities will be listed in the register along with the training they have received. Copies of training certificates will be retained.
- All fire appliances including fire extinguishers, fire reels and fire blankets and their location will be listed along with their most recent service date.
- Evacuation procedures will be drawn up for each room with due consideration to the age range/mobility of the children. A Record of Means of Escape Route Inspection will be completed daily to ensure all emergency escape routes are free from obstructions and open freely.

- A Record of Fire Door Inspection will be maintained monthly to ensure that all Fire Doors are working correctly.
- A Fire Detection & Alarm System General Register will be used to record any incidents or activation in relation to the fire detection system. A monthly sounder test will be carried out on all alarms.
- A Record of Emergency Lighting Equipment Inspection will be used to record dates of service and ensure that all lighting is maintained in line with the required standards.
- Firefighting equipment including fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and fire blankets are supplied and serviced each year. The Fire Safety Warden will ensure that the annual maintenance is carried out by a competent service provider.
- On completion of the work, a Certificate of Servicing/Testing should be issued by the service provider to the Fire Safety Manager and a copy should be kept with this register for inspection by an authorized person of the local fire authority.

Fire Drill

Fire evacuation drills will be carried out to simulate fire conditions. No advance warning should be given, other than to specific staff or an alarm monitoring centre for the purposes of safety and the avoidance of a false call being made to the Fire Service.

- The alarm will be set off manually or the smoke detectors will raise the alarm.
- The staff and children will make their way to the assembly point location.
- Staff will bring the child attendance record.
- The fire officer will check each room to ensure no person is left in the building.
- At the assembly point all children and staff will be accounted for using the Attendance Records.
- A record of the fire drill will be maintained including the date, person/section taking part, the evacuation time, any details of deficiencies and actions to be taken.

Training

- A staff member will be appointed Fire Warden and will receive training from a registered provider every year.
- All staff will receive training in Fire Safety and evacuation procedures and will sign a declaration that they are aware of and trained in the procedures to be followed in case of fire in the service.
- All staff will be familiar with the location of any firefighting equipment and trained in the use of such equipment.
- Staff will support children understand the procedures to follow when they hear the fire alarm.

Evacuation Procedures

Raising the alarm:

- Anyone discovering an outbreak of fire must, without hesitation, sound the alarm by operating the fire alarm calls points which are located to the left of the front door inside the kindergarten room and to the right of the back door entry point.

Calling the Fire Brigade

- All outbreaks of fire or any suspected fire, however small, must be reported immediately to the Fire Brigade by the quickest means available. This task will be the responsibility of the Deirdre Riffel.

When calling the Fire Brigade give clear information including:

- *Name of the building*
- *Address of the building: Main Street, Kilfenora*
- *Eircode : V95 WOHA*

- *Directions to the building*
- *Type of fire situation (if available), for example, fire location, fire size, materials involved, persons missing.*

On hearing the fire alarm

The evacuation procedure will be initiated once the fire alarm has been sounded.

Assembly Point

- An area outside the premises is designated as an assembly point. It is clearly marked and located outside by the wall in the parking lot adjacent to the building.
- The assembly point is far enough away from the premises to afford protection from the heat and smoke in a fire situation.
- The assembly point is in a position that does not put children and staff at risk from emergency vehicles responding to the incident.
- Specific arrangements must be made for children with additional needs to ensure that they are assisted during evacuation.
- No running is to be permitted to avoid panic.
- On the staircase, everyone must ascend in single file. Overtaking of individuals must not be permitted.
- Anyone who is not in a room when the fire alarm sounds must go immediately to the assembly point.
- No one must be allowed to re-enter the building until told to do so by the Fire Service in attendance, or, in the case of a fire evacuation drill the person in charge.

Roll Call

- Attendance register is located on top of the painting rack and must be brought to the assembly point when the alarm sounds.
- One person should be nominated to have overall responsibility to ensure that a roll call is conducted in the event of evacuation of the premises.
- When everyone has assembled at the assembly point, a roll or count must be made immediately to ascertain that no one has remained in the premises.
- Any visitors or contractors in the premises at that time must be included.
- The count at the assembly point must be checked using the attendance records to verify that everyone is out of the building.
- The teachers should verbally verify that everyone in their charge is accounted for or to inform each other of any persons missing.

Meeting the Fire Brigade

- The nominated person who carried out the roll call must identify herself to the Fire Brigade on their arrival. In doing so, vital information can be relayed to the Fire Officer, which will dictate the necessary actions to be carried out by the Fire Brigade.
- You should provide the following information to the Fire Brigade:
 - the location of the fire;
 - materials involved;
 - details of missing persons;
 - location of all access doors to the building;
 - location of any special risks, -
 - keys for access into any locked areas.
- ***The Fire Brigade should be notified about any missing persons when they arrive at the scene.***

Notifying Parents and Guardians

- The agreed notification procedure should be initiated so that parents and guardians are notified.

A Fire Warden has been appointed. Our fire officer is: Deirdre Riffel

An assembly point location has been identified. The location is: By the wall in the parking lot adjacent to the building.

Person Responsible: Deirdre Riffel

Date implemented: _____

Signed by: _____ Chairperson

Review Date: _____

Review Date: _____

Policy on the Use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices

Policy Statement:

Burren Sonas Kindergarten is committed to ensuring the appropriate use of internet within the service and to setting out clear guidelines regarding the photographing and recording of children.

Principle:

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

Procedure:

The purpose of this policy is to set out what is considered to be the appropriate use of internet, photographic and recording devices. This policy ensures a preschool child is not permitted access to the internet, photographed or recorded without prior signed permission.

Email and Internet Usage:

The internet is not to be accessed by children for any reason. The email system and internet must only be used by staff for business purposes which includes the following activities:

- Communication on matters relating to job requirements or for administration purposes.
- Communication of information relating to the service.
- Research of new technologies and educational resources.

What is unacceptable use of email and internet?

- Providing children with opportunities to unsupervised internet access or access to inappropriate internet content, that could affect a child's health, welfare and development.
- To access, download or store inappropriate, defamatory or offensive material.
- For personal financial gain or profit.
- To disclose or publish confidential information about children, families or staff.
- For posting messages to any internet bulletin or discussion board, newsgroup or other publicly accessible discussion forum except for authorised business purposes.
- The service reserves the right to block inappropriate websites.
- Using offensive language and language that would breach any other service policy.

Social Networking Sites and Social Media Tools: The requirements outlined above in relation to your use of service email and internet systems apply to Social networking sites and other social media tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

- * No digital imagery/photos/videos of children or families is to be published on social media sites/networking sites under any circumstances, either by parents/guardians or staff.
- * Employees are not permitted to be 'friends' with, or engage with Burren Sonas Kindergarten parents and families on social networking sites.
- Parents/guardians or staff members must not make any derogatory comments about the service, its team members, contractors, or children/families attending the service on social networking sites.
- When staff is commenting either on blogs or in public forums, they must be mindful of their association to the service and their obligation to be responsible and positive in their portrayal of the service.
- Photographs, videos and/or information about other staff members are not to be posted without the specific permission of the individual.
- Staff are not to divulge or discuss any confidential or personal information obtained while employed or associated with the service.

Communicating Information via Email:

All guidelines and policies relating to signing and authorisation for written communications must be observed when sending electronic mail. Staff must keep in mind that anything created on a service computer network or the internet may be reviewed by others. Copies of any business-related electronic communications and attachments (sent or received) should be kept in accordance with proper record-keeping practices.

Maintaining Confidentiality and Security:

Hardware Personal memory devices may be used at work and may be plugged into service IT resources. An automatic virus check will be run when any documents are opened. However, knowingly introducing a virus or causing a virus to be introduced into service IT resources is a breach of this policy. Personal computers must be shut down at the end of each day. Usernames and passwords must only be used by the person to whom they are allocated. The use of Burren Sonas Kindergarten internet is not a private activity. The Kindergarten internet must not be used to access, carry, send or use private material or information that a person would not want the service to see.

Photographic and Recording Devices:

Consent forms must be signed by parents/guardians and copies of the consent forms should be provided for the parents. Images cannot be used for purposes other than those agreed. All images are to be stored and disposed of in line with the Data Protection Act 2003. Where group photos of children are taken, parents/guardians must provide written permission as they have a right to refuse. The purpose of taking images must always be clearly explained to parents/guardians. Parents/guardians have a right to refuse or to withdraw permission at any time. The use of any photographic or recording devices by staff, parents or visitors must be with the consent of the designated person in charge. Parents/guardians must be informed of their responsibilities around the taking of group photos and that it is not ok to take group photos if not all children present have consented to their photograph being taken. Any consent must be reviewed on a regular basis and at least annually.

Other relevant policies:

- Staff training policy
- Supervision policy
- Complaints policy

Person Responsible: Deirdre Riffel Date implemented:

Signed by: _____ Martin Harold, Chairperson On behalf of Management

Review Date: _____

Review Date: _____

Complaints Policy

Statement:

As Burren Sonas Kindergarten is a Steiner based community preschool we are committed to learning how best we can serve the children, the families, and our wider community. We welcome the contributions of children's and parent's views, and appreciate any suggestions to improve the service in these changing times. Teachers are happy to hear your ideas, either in person, or through the suggestion box located in the cloak area. For any of the parents, family members, or community people who are interested in becoming more involved in long term planning of the kindergarten you are welcome to join the Board of Management.

However we understand that at times families may have a specific concern or negative feedback about the service. We are committed to giving careful attention and a courteous, timely response to your suggestions, comments or complaints so that we can learn from them and continuously improve our service. Complaints will be accepted and investigated irrespective of the nature of the complaint or who the person making the complaint is.

This Complaints Policy and all other policies are available online for parents to consult at: <http://burrensonas.com>

Principle:

This policy is underpinned by the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Procedure:

Burren Sonas Kindergarten is committed to providing a high-quality service for the children, families, and community. If you have any comments or complaints about our service, we would like to hear from you. We are committed to listening to your complaints and to treating them seriously so that we can learn from them and continuously improve our service. In the first instance, Burren Sonas Kindergarten hopes that complaints would be handled informally by speaking directly to the teachers. In the event that a complaint cannot be handled informally within the service, we advise individuals to follow the procedure set out in this policy. All complaints made are treated confidentially.

Burren Sonas Kindergarten endeavours to embody the following values in all aspects of our work:

- Ethical behaviour that includes everyone
- Respectful partnership
- Focusing on the needs and well-being of the children attending our service
- Positive engagement with parents
- Openness and sharing of information
- Integrity, responsibility, and professionalism

How to Make a Complaint :

Informally

In the first instance, Burren Sonas Kindergarten invites all parents/guardians to make a complaint informally. This should ideally be done in person and can be a conversation with the teachers, or the manager. We ask that parents/guardians ask to arrange to meet with teachers in a quiet space outside of session time, without the children and other parents/guardians present, so that teachers can listen to the complaint with their full attention. We aim to ensure that the process of making a complaint is as easy as possible and we deal with the situation promptly and politely. Where possible we endeavour to resolve all complaints informally. In order to maintain a trusting

partnership, we ask that parents/guardians communicate directly with teachers about difficulties they may be experiencing before the situation becomes a problem and before making a formal complaint. We try to learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and annually review our complaints policy and procedures. We will try to informally resolve a complaint as soon as possible but within a maximum of 5 working days. If your complaint cannot be dealt with informally, we will direct you to our formal complaints procedure.

Formally

There may be certain times when a complaint cannot be handled informally. In these circumstances we direct parents/guardians to make a formal complaint in writing. If you wish to make a formal complaint we request that you follow the below steps:

You can make a formal complaint by:

-E-mail: burrensonas@gmail.com

addressed to Deirdre Riffel or Martin Harold, Chairperson

-Post: Burren Sonas Kindergarten, Main Street, Kilfenora, County Clare
addressed to Deirdre Riffel

If you have a difficulty with submitting a complaint in writing please contact us by phone or in person and we can support you with making the complaint. Please include the following information when making a complaint to the Chairperson :

- Name, address, a daytime telephone number and an email address if applicable
- Full details of the complaint including relevant dates and times
- Names of those involved (including staff)
- Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (apology, explanation etc.)
- Copies of any relevant documentation
- State your preferred method of communication

There is a complaints form in the appendix of this policy to assist with making a formal complaint.

Dealing with your formal complaint:

1. We will formally acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
2. The Manager or Chairperson will assess the complaint and the level of risk posed. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be appropriately managed.
3. The Manager or Chairperson will confirm that the issue raised in the complaint is within the control of the service. If there is more than one issue raised in the complaint, the Manager or Chairperson will determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.
4. The Manager or Chairperson will look at addressing the complaint. We will let you know if this includes an investigation. If the complaint is straightforward, generally someone from the service will investigate. We will let you know who will be investigating your complaint.
5. If necessary, an investigation panel is formed to investigate the complaint. The persons investigating the complaint are in no way involved in the complaint, are not related to the complainant or any staff members involved in the complaint. Following investigating of the complaint, a separate HR procedure may need to be invoked.
6. A full response to the complaint will issue within 30 working days.
7. If there is a delay to the timeline of issuing a response we will notify the person making the complaint as soon as possible.
8. The person making the complaint will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint.

Investigation

Depending on the nature of the complaint received, the Manager/Chairperson will determine the type of investigation that will take place. All complaints are thoroughly and objectively investigated. The investigation is handled appropriately and sensitively. The person investigating the complaint will aim first to establish the facts related to the case. In complex cases, an investigation plan will be drawn up outlining how the complaint will be investigated. When investigating a complaint, all relevant evidence will be looked at. In the process of the investigation we may need to meet with the complainant to discuss your complaint further. Complainants can bring a person with them to any such meeting. All staff must participate in the investigation of a complaint, as required. Any staff member involved in the complaint will be supported throughout the process.

Outcome and Response

Following the formal investigation of your complaint, we will let you know what we have found via your preferred form of communication. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions and outline any changes to policies/procedures, practice and risk management arising from the investigation. Where no grounds for the complaint are found, the person making the complaint will be notified and information detailing the next stage will be provided. We will share any recommendations from our investigation with the complainant and also all relevant staff. We will outline the appeals process as part of the complaint response.

Appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, then there is the opportunity to appeal it. The appeal must be submitted within 5 working days. The appeal is handled by someone who was not involved in the original complaint process.

Record of Complaints and Confidentiality

An accurate and detailed record of each complaint is kept for a period of 2 years from the date the complaint has been dealt with. Complaint information is stored confidentially in the service and is only accessed by the Manager and Chairperson. The people who have access to complaint records are named at the bottom of this policy.

Complaint not within the scope of the service

Any complaints not within the scope of the service to investigate, will be referred appropriately.

For example:

- If there are child safeguarding concerns relating to a complaint, the designated liaison person is informed, and the child protection policy of the service is followed.
- If a complaint involves a potential criminal offence, An Garda Síochána is notified.

In the event that a complaint relates to the Registered Provider and the complainant does not want to make the complaint to the Registered Provider, unsolicited information can be submitted to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.

What we expect from complainants

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

Persons who have access to the record of complaints: Deirdre Riffel and Martin Harold

Person Responsible: Deirdre Riffel

This policy was adopted by Burren Sonas Kindergarten on Date:

Signed by: _____Chairperson

Review Date: _____

Review Date:-----

Formal Complaint Form

Name of person making complaint: -----

Address of person making complaint:

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Phone number:

Preferred method of communication:

Date and time complaint was made:

Date and time of incident (if applicable):

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Name of person to whom complaint was first made:

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Name of Registered Provider:

Details of Complaint:

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Signature of Complainant:

Date:

Signature of manager receiving complaint:

Date: