

# **CHILD SAFE-GUARDING STATEMENT**

## **Burren Sonas Kindergarten, Kilfenora, County Clare**

September 2024

### **Introduction**

This Child-Safeguarding Statement is offered in compliance with the Children First Act, 2015, and Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017.

Burren Sonas Kindergarten welcomes this opportunity to set out its commitment to providing a safe and nurturing place for young children. The Statement follows the template recommended by the Early Years Child Protection Programme (2018). We would like to thank the staff at the Clare County Childcare Committee for their support in developing this Statement.

### **1. Name Of Service And Activities Provided**

Burren Sonas Kindergarten is a registered Community Pre-school providing a Sessional Service for children aged from two and a half to six years. It is open from Monday to Friday during term time.

The Kindergarten operates from premises in the middle of the village of Kilfenora, County Clare.

The Kindergarten is overseen by a Board of Management. Two staff members are presently employed by the Board: a Manager (full-time) and a Child Care Worker (part-time). Volunteers, mostly parents, participate in the daily activities of the Kindergarten and as members of the Board.

### **2. Commitment To Safeguard Children From Harm**

Burren Sonas Kindergarten is committed to safeguarding the children in our care and to providing a safe environment in which they can learn, play and develop.

Our service believes the welfare of the children attending our service is paramount. We

are committed to child-centred practice in all our work with children.

We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.

Our policies and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and are underpinned by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, DCYA, 2017, Child Safeguarding: A guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure, Tusla, 2018, and the Children First Act, 2015.

Our policy declaration applies to all paid staff, volunteers, board members and students of work placement within our organisation. All board members, staff, volunteers and students must sign up to and abide by the policy, procedures and guidance encompassed by this policy declaration and our child safeguarding policy and accompanying

#### **Procedures.**

We will review our child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safety policy and procedures every two years or sooner if necessary due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy.

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection and her deputy are:

#### **DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)**

Blandine Mahfouf

Manager, Burren Sonas Kindergarten,

Main Street, Kilfenora, Co Clare

Phone 087 713 1590

#### **DEPUTY DLP**

Jantsje Schuurmans

Child Care Worker, Burren Sonas Kindergarten,

Main Street, Kilfenora, Co Clare

Phone 087 713 1590

### **3. Risk Assessment**

In accordance with the Children First Act, 2015, the Board of Management and staff members have carried out an assessment of any potential harm to a child while attending the service or participating in service activities. A written assessment setting

out the areas of risk identified and the service procedures for managing those risks is summarised below.

### **RISK IDENTIFIED**

Policy and/ or Procedure in place to manage Risk

Recruitment of Board of Management, Staff and Volunteers

Procedure for Safe Recruitment of Board Members, Staff and Volunteers

Induction for Board of Management, Staff and Volunteers

Procedure for Induction of Board Members, Staff and Volunteers into Child Safeguarding training, procedures and information relevant to Burren Sonas

Outings on Foot or by Car with Children Outings Procedure

Visitors to the service while children are present Visitors Procedure

## **4. Child Safeguarding Policies And Procedures**

As required by the Children First Act, 2015, and the Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017, the following package of measures are in place at Burren Sonas Kindergarten:

(i) Key roles in Child Safeguarding

- Appointment of Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP
- Maintenance of list of Mandated Persons
- Appointment of Relevant Person

(ii) Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures

(iii) Confidentiality Policy regarding Child Abuse and Neglect

(iv) Statement on Management of Child Protection Records

(v) Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Board Members, Staff members and Volunteers

(vi) Safe Recruitment Policy

(vii) Garda Vetting Policy

(viii) Procedure for Induction of Board Members, Staff and Volunteers into Child Safeguarding training, procedures and information

(ix) Safe Outings Procedure

(x) Safe Visitors Procedure

(xi) Code of Conduct for Working with Children

(xii) Staff Support Handbook

- (xiii) Complaints Policy & Procedure
- (xiv) Procedure for Managing Accidents and Incidents
- (xv) Social Media Management Policy

## 5. Implementation And Review

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Burren Sonas Kindergarten is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Statement will be reviewed every two years or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Statement refers.

This Statement has been published on the service website and is displayed in the service. It has been provided to all Board members, staff, volunteers and any other persons involved with the service. It is readily accessible to parents or guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla if requested.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Erin Gardner  \_\_\_\_\_  
ERIN GARDNER, CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT,  
BURREN SONAS KINDERGARTEN, KILFENORA, COUNTY CLARE.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 01.08.2024 \_\_\_\_\_

For further information of this Statement, please contact Relevant Person: Avery McGuire : 085 820 5284 / [a.mcguire10@gmail.com](mailto:a.mcguire10@gmail.com)

## (i) Appointment Of Key Roles In Child Safeguarding

### Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP

The DLP is responsible for dealing with child protection and welfare concerns in accordance with legislation. S/he is the resource person for staff/ Board/ volunteers who have a child protection concern. S/he must be accessible to all staff/ Board / volunteers; knowledgeable about child protection and welfare; and keep up to date with relevant training/ developments.

The DLP is responsible for:

- making sure concerns are referred promptly to Tusla following procedures
- reporting concerns to Tusla or an Garda Síochána either with the

Mandated Person (see below) or directly for all other referrals

III ensuring that information is submitted properly on the correct form

- liaising with relevant agencies
- keeping records of actions and log of concerns

III advising on training needs

In general, it is the manager of the service who is the DLP. The Board has responsibility for appointing the OLP and Deputy.

Blandine Mahfouf (Service Manager) is the OLP for Burren Sonas Kindergarten. Jantsje Schuurmans (Childcare Worker) is the Deputy OLP.

### Mandated Persons

Legislation places an obligation on mandated persons to report child protection concerns to Tusla, and assist Tusla in assessment of concerns. All child care staff members are mandated persons by law.

The OLP maintains the list of mandated persons and is responsible for keeping it up to date.

Therefore both Blandine Mahfouf and Jantsje Schuurmans are mandated persons at Burren Sonas Kindergarten. Mandated persons make child protection referrals to Tusla jointly with the OLP.

### Relevant Person

The role is to be the first point of contact in respect to Burren Sonas's Child Safeguarding Statement. The Relevant Person for Burren Sonas is Avery McQuire.

## **(ii) Child Protection And Welfare Reporting**

### **Recognising Child Protection and Welfare Concerns**

All Board members, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and to report child protection and welfare concerns in line with the procedures outlined below.

Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child.

All Board members, staff and volunteers should be familiar with the definitions of abuse as outlined in Children First: National Guidance 2017, and how they can be recognised (see Appendix A below).

Under the Children First Act, 2015, Mandated Persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach a particular threshold (as defined in section 2 of the Children First Act, 2015) to Tusla. Mandated Persons should be familiar with the threshold of harm for each form of abuse as outlined in Children First: National Guidance 2017 (see Appendix B).

All child protection concerns should be brought to the attention of the Designated liaison Person without delay.

### **Reasonable Grounds for Concern**

Children First: National Guidance 2017 states that: 'Tusla should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.' (p.6)

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

All Board members, staff and volunteers are expected to bring any child protection concern which meets reasonable grounds for concern to the attention of the OLP and to seek their advice and guidance if unsure.

### **Reporting Procedure- All board members, Staff and Volunteers**

All Board members, staff and volunteers should follow the procedures in this section when they have a concern that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused, harmed or neglected. Mandated Persons should also consult the section below, "Reporting Procedures

- Mandated Persons Only".

When a Board member, staff member or volunteer has a child protection or welfare concern they should speak to the Designated Liaison Person without delay. This includes concerns which reach the threshold for a mandated report under the Children First Act, 2015 {see Appendix B} .

The DLP will report the following child protection and welfare concerns using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form to Tusla (available on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)):

- Child protection and welfare concerns that meet reasonable grounds for concern but do not meet the threshold for mandated reporting.
- Child protection and welfare concerns that meet reasonable grounds for concern and have been passed to them by persons who are not Mandated Persons.

If the DLP is unsure if a child protection concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern they should contact the Tusla Duty Social Work Team for advice and guidance using the informal consultation process.

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending intervention from Tusla. In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Tusla Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Siochana.

In addition to a report to Tusla, if there is a criminal or suspected criminal aspect to the child protection concern, An Garda Sfochana will be notified by the Mandated Person or DLP as appropriate.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Duty Social Work team, Tusla Child and Family Agency</b>   | <b>An Garda Siochana</b>  |
| Child and Family Agency ,<br>Unit 3, St. Camillus Hospital,<br>Shelbourne Road,<br>Limerick<br><br>(061) 588688 | Ennistymon Garda Station,<br>Ennis Road,<br>Ennistymon,<br>Co. Clare<br>V95 WF51<br><br>(065) 657072180 |

The chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed when a report is made to Tusla and An Garda Siochana under this policy. In accordance with the confidentiality policy, identifying information about the child and family is only shared with them on a need to know basis.



## Reporting Procedures for Mandated Persons

At Burren Sonas Kindergarten, the two staff members are designated legally as Mandated persons.

Under the Children First Act, 2015, Mandated Persons are legally required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed to Tusla (see Appendix B). Mandated Persons should bring any child protection concerns to the attention of the DLP without delay as stated above. If the child protection concern reaches the threshold of harm as defined in the Children First Act, 2015 it is a mandated report. The Mandated Person may seek advice and guidance from the DLP in relation to the child protection concern and the threshold of harm.

Mandated reports will be made jointly by the Mandated Person who raised the concern and the DLP, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (available on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)).

The form must clearly indicate that the report is a mandated report.

If the child protection concern requires a more urgent intervention to make the child safe, the Children First Act, 2015 allows Mandated Persons to alert Tusla of the concern, by telephone or in person, in advance of submitting a written report. The mandated report must then be submitted to Tusla using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form within 3 days.

The statutory obligation of Mandated Persons to report under the Children First Act, 2015 must be discharged by the Mandated Person and cannot be discharged by the Designated liaison Person on their behalf. Mandated Persons can, however, report jointly with another person. Where the Mandated Person or OLP is unsure if the report meets the threshold of harm as outlined in the Children First Act, 2015 advice and guidance should be sought through informal consultation with the Tusla Duty Social Work Team.

If a child protection concern does not meet the criteria for a mandated report, it may meet reasonable grounds for concern for a report to Tusla and this possibility must be considered. If Reasonable Grounds for Concern exist, a report to Tusla will be made by the OLP.

The Mandated Person may submit the report to Tusla solely; however, the OLP must be informed that the report has been made and be given a copy of the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form.

If a child protection concern has come to the attention of a number of Mandated Persons the report may be submitted jointly by a number of Mandated Persons.

Mandated Persons are not required to make a report to Tusla where the sole basis of their knowledge, belief or suspicion of harm is as a result of becoming aware that another mandated person has made a report to Tusla.

## Informing Parents about Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

Communication with parents is very important in ensuring best outcomes for children and any concerns about the health and well-being of a child will always be discussed with parents from the outset.

Parents will always be informed by the OLP if a report is to be made to Tusla, unless doing so would further endanger the child, impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment, or put the reporter at risk of harm. The OLP may seek guidance from the Tusla Duty Social Work Team in relation to this.

## Responding to a Retrospective Disclosure

A retrospective disclosure is a disclosure from an adult about abuse that happened while they were a child. It is imperative that all child protection and welfare concerns are examined and addressed when a retrospective disclosure is made.

If a Board member, staff member or volunteer becomes aware of a retrospective child protection concern they should follow the reporting procedures as outlined above.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the service should report the concern to Tusla without delay using the Retrospective Abuse Report Form (available on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)).

## Child Protection Concerns that are Not Reported to Tusla

If the Designated Liaison Person decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps will be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded
- Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded
- The Board member, staff member or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla
- The Board member, staff member or volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána. The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998, will apply to any staff member who wishes to make a report to Tusla.

## Recording Child Protection Concerns

Written records will be kept of all child protection concerns (including those not reported to Tusla) and these will be managed by the OLP. Information will include: details of the concern, who raised it, who was contacted, details regarding informal consultation, any action taken, details regarding informing parents.

If a child has made a disclosure of abuse, a written record will be made. If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made.

Records will be stored securely in line with the service's Record Policy and the Pre-school Regulations 2016.

A Template Child Protection Concern Record is available in, 'Developing a Child Safeguarding statement: A Guide for Early Years Services in Ireland', Early Years Child Protection programme, 2018.

### **(iii) Confidentiality Policy Regarding Child Abuse Or Neglect**

- a. All information regarding a concern about child abuse or neglect should be shared on a need to know basis in the best interests of the child*
- b. No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given and this should be made clear to children and families using the service*
- c. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection*
- d. Parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child at further risk*
- e. Parents will always be informed if a report is being made to Tusla unless doing so would further endanger the child, impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment or put the reporter at risk of harm*
- f. Under the Children First Act, 2015, information shared by Tusla with a Mandated Person in the course of carrying out an assessment, arising from a Mandated Report, shall not be disclosed to a third party unless Tusla has provided written authorisation to this effect.*

### **(iv) Statement Of Management Of Child Protection Records**

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

Parents may have access to the files and records of their own children on request to the

Service Manager, but may not have access to information about any other child.

The Manager of Burren Sonas Kindergarten is the only person with direct access to confidential files and records. S/he will use her/ his discretion to share with the Childcare Worker what information is necessary.

Where there are child protection or welfare concerns, observations/records will be kept on an ongoing basis and information shared with Tusla as appropriate. A separate file for each child will be kept, individually labelled with the child's name. Any such files will be stored in a locked drawer/ cabinet.

Child protection and welfare records will be archived as needed, and kept in the locked drawer/ cabinet along with other archived records from the Kindergarten.

All records are managed in line with the service's Data Protection Policy.

**(v) Policy For Dealing With Allegations Of Abuse Or Neglect Against Employees  
Ie. Board Members, Staff Members And Volunteers**

*NB. It may be necessary to seek legal advice and/or Human Resource Management advice when dealing with allegations of abuse or neglect against Board members, staff members and/ or volunteers*

*NB. 'Employee' in this situation includes all staff and volunteers including Board members. The Board is also the 'employer' of the 'employees', so care needs to be taken to ensure that any potential conflict of interests is appropriately addressed when responding to allegations*

The protection and welfare of the children in Burren Sonas Kindergarten are paramount and their safety and well-being is the priority. However, Burren Sonas Kindergarten also has a duty and responsibility, as an employer, in respect of its staff members and volunteers (including Board members). It is important to note that there are two procedures to be followed when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a staff member, volunteer or Board member:

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

It is recommended that two different people are nominated to manage each procedure. As Burren Sonas Kindergarten is a small organisation, it may be necessary to call on external people who are independent to the parties.

### *1. Reporting procedure in respect of any child protection and welfare concern*

In general, it is the Designated Liaison Person who is responsible for any issues under Burren Sonas Kindergarten's Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures (such as reporting the matter to Tusla) while the employer (the Board) is responsible for addressing the employment issues.

In almost all cases this is the Designated Liaison Person (OLP) (*at present this is the Service Manager Blandine Mahfouf*). If the OLP is absent, it is the Deputy OLP (*at present this is Jantsje Schuurmans*). If an allegation is made against the OLP, the appropriate person to contact is the Chairperson of the Board.

Any child protection concerns arising through an allegation against a staff member, volunteer or Board member should be considered under the Burren Sonas Kindergarten's Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures and reported to Tusla without delay if necessary.

All staff and volunteers including Board members should be aware of who to contact should they become aware of an allegation of abuse or neglect against any employee in the service. Written records are very important. If a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure should be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it. Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made by an adult, a written record of the allegation should be made and a written statement should be sought from this person.

### *2. The procedure in respect of the allegation against an employee*

Where the employer (the Board of Management of Burren Sonas Kindergarten) becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by an employee (staff, volunteer or Board Member) while executing their duties, the Chairperson of the Board or Designated Person is responsible for responding to the allegation on behalf of the employer.

The Chairperson of the Board or Designated Person should privately inform the employee of the following:

- (i) The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
- (ii) The nature of the allegation.

The Chairperson of the Board or Designated Person must use his/her discretion in deciding whether to share the allegation with the whole Board at this stage.

The Chairperson of the Board/ Designated Person will decide on the best course of action as per procedure/ legislation, and will consult with the HSE Liaison person if needed.

If an allegation is made against the DLP (Service Manager}, the Chairperson may seek the assistance of the HSE Liaison person in deciding on the best course of action, and if

considered appropriate may consult with/ inform the Deputy OLP (Childcare Worker).

If an allegation is made against the Deputy DLP (Childcare Worker), the Chairperson must inform the OLP (service manager) of the allegation.

The employee should be afforded the opportunity to respond, the response should be noted and passed onto Tusla with the formal report.

All stages of the process should be recorded.

If an investigation is required, the Board as employer will decide on who will carry this out, the time involved and any appeal process. This will be done on a case by case basis, considering the small size of the organisation, and an independent, external party may be called on.

Whether or not the matter is being reported to Tusla, the Board as employer will always be informed of an allegation of abuse or neglect against an employee.

*Confidentiality: It is essential that at all times the matter is treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required under the procedures within the policy.*

*Protective measures may be required while the allegation is being investigated. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures should be adhered to. It is very important to note that protective measures are intended to be precautionary and not disciplinary.*

The Board as employer should maintain regular and close liaison with Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána and ensure that no action by anyone in Burren Sonas Kindergarten frustrates or undermines any investigation.

Further action will be guided by employment legislation, the contract of employment, the other policies and procedures of the service (including the disciplinary policy) and the advice of the investigating agencies.

### **Parents and Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employees - Board members, staff members or volunteers**

Parents have the right to contact Tusla to report an allegation of abuse or neglect about an employee or Burren Sonas Kindergarten as a service.

Parents of children who are named in an allegation of abuse or neglect will be kept informed of actions planned and taken, having regard to the rights of others concerned.

If there is any concern that a child may have been harmed, their parents will be informed immediately.

*Confidentiality: It is essential that at all times the matter is treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required under the procedures within the policy.*

*Protective measures may be required while the allegation is being investigated. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures should be adhered to. It is very important to note that protective measures are intended to be precautionary and not disciplinary.*

The Board as employer should maintain regular and close liaison with Tusla and/or An Garda Siochana and ensure that no action by anyone in Burren Sonas Kindergarten frustrates or undermines any investigation.

Further action will be guided by employment legislation, the contract of employment, the other policies and procedures of the service (including the disciplinary policy) and the advice of the investigating agencies.

## **(vi) Safe Recruitment Policy**

*Under the Children First Act, 2015, the Burren Sonas Kindergarten's Child Safeguarding Statement must include accompanying procedures for the selection or recruitment of staff with regard to that person's suitability to work with children.*

*The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 also require preschools to have a recruitment policy for hiring employees and volunteers, including the steps to be taken to check and verify references, qualifications and vetting documentation.*

Burren Sonas Kindergarten seeks to ensure that all people recruited to work as paid staff or volunteers with the service, including Board Members, are appropriately skilled and able to contribute effectively to the creation of a positive, safe environment for nurturing the children in the service.

Paid staff and volunteer positions, including the Board, should have a clear job description and person specification including qualifications, skills and duties.

For paid positions:

- III Vacancies should be advertised widely, both internally and externally.
- The use of application forms can support the collection of consistent information from candidates.
  - A scoring sheet should be developed, based on the criteria set out in the job description and the person specification, and candidates should be shortlisted



against this criteria.

- III An interview panel should be appointed consisting of at least 2 people.
- Interview questions should be agreed in advance, based on the job description and person specification, and a scoring sheet used.
    - Prior to an offer of employment being made, two references from previous employers (including the most recent) should be obtained. References from family members are not suitable. (Consult the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 for further guidance on references.)
  - Prior to commencement in post, satisfactory Garda vetting must be obtained, in line with the Burren Sonas Kindergarten's Garda Vetting Policy.
  - Identification should be verified and official forms of ID requested from new employees
  - All paid staff should have written Terms and Conditions of Employment (Contract of Employment).
  - Procedures relating to probationary periods should be included in the contract of employment.

For volunteer positions, including Board members, Garda vetting must also be obtained prior to commencement of post.

### **(vii) Garda Vetting Policy**

*Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, it is a crime to employ someone in certain work or activities without undertaking Garda Vetting.*

*The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 also require services to ensure satisfactory Garda vetting for every worker both paid and unpaid.*

Everyone at Burren Sonas Kindergarten including staff, Board members and volunteers must have satisfactory Garda vetting.

At Burren Sonas Kindergarten, the Manager of the service is responsible for carrying out the procedures necessary to ensure that all staff, Board members and volunteers are Garda vetted. The Manager is also responsible for following necessary procedures if a negative disclosure is returned from the National Vetting Bureau.

The Manager must maintain adequate records to ensure that all staff, Board members and volunteers are re-vetted every 3 years.

In the case where a new Manager is being employed, the Board is responsible for following the procedures in relation to Garda vetting of the potential new employee.

Staff, volunteers and Board members should not commence work until satisfactory Garda vetting has been processed.



## **(viii) Procedure For Induction Of Board Members, Staff And Volunteers Into Child Safeguarding Training, Procedures And Information**

All new staff, volunteers and Board members at Burren Sonas Kindergarten will be briefed on the Child Safeguarding policies of the service within the first week of participation in the service. For those working directly with children this will include an emphasis on the Code of Behaviour for Working with Children.

All new staff, volunteers and Board members will be requested to complete the Tusla e-learning course, "Introduction to Children First". This is available at [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie). It provides introductory information on Children First and can be a useful part of the induction process.

All new staff, volunteers and Board member should be provided with a copy of the safeguarding policies (electronically or on paper) and asked to confirm with their signature that they have read and understood them.

## **Training on Child Safeguarding**

The designated liaison Person (DLP) will keep up to date on attendance at Always Children First training and any other relevant training identified. This includes refresher training every three years.

The deputy DLP will keep up to date with the online child safeguarding training and, as resources allow, attend Always Children First training and/or other relevant training as identified.

Volunteers and Board members will be encouraged to attend child safeguarding and other relevant training as identified.

## **(ix) Safe Outings Procedure**

### **Daily Outings on Foot**

Burren Sonas Kindergarten aims for the children to spend time outside every day. This often requires that the children and accompanying adults walk to other locations in the village for activities, such as to a garden or the local Well.

A strict procedure is followed to manage these outings to ensure the safety and well-being of children during these activities.

- At enrolment, parents are informed of the daily outings and the procedure for

organising and supervising them. Parents are requested to assist as volunteers with the outings

- The person in charge always has access to a mobile phone in case of emergency
- The venue for the outing is assessed before the outing takes place to check its suitability and safety for the group
- Adequate insurance is in place for the daily outings
- Staff and volunteers are familiar with emergency procedures.

A familiar routine has been established for outings on foot to support safety:

- All children are first prepared for the outing with adequate clothing, toilet requirements completed etc.
- The children must sit at the Kindergarten table when ready and wait
- When everyone is ready, one of the teachers leads the way and unlocks the door
- A head count is done by both teachers before the children leave the Kindergarten
- Once the children are outside the building, both teachers again do a head count and confirm numbers with each other
- Children hold hands with each other and with one adult to each group of 3-4 children. They continue to hold hands in this formation until the venue is reached
- When leaving the venue, a head count is done again by both teachers and confirmed
  
- Children again hold hands with each other and one adult to a group of 3-4 children on the way back to the Kindergarten
  
- A head count is done on return by both teachers and confirmed

A routine has been established for managing the children's regular visit to a garden near the Kindergarten:

- One person always stands by the gate of the garden, preferably a parent volunteer
- The teachers circulate to supervise the children and do a regular head count
- Other parent volunteers are encouraged to circulate and check on the children
- When leaving a gathering song brings the children together and a head count
- is done before leaving the venue.

### Occasional Day Trips/Outings

Burren Sonas organises occasional special day trips, for example at the end of the summer term. Such trips are planned in advance and risk assessment is carried out with regard to safety in method of transport, facilities, activities, accessibility for children with additional needs and emergencies.

The initial Kindergarten enrolment form includes a request for parental consent for outings in general, and information of allergies/ medical conditions. In addition, the Service Manager verbally asks the parents about allergies/ medical conditions during the initial meeting with the parents and child.

For the occasional day trips, parents are usually asked to accompany their children and drive their children to the venue. The small size of Burren Sonas Kindergarten means that this is the most practical option.

The Kindergarten assesses the appropriate adult: child ratio needed for each individual trip depending on circumstances. This ratio always complies with Insurance policy demands - at least one adult per three children.

Where a parent is not available to accompany their child/ren, procedures are followed to ensure that written consent is given for the child/ren to participate in the trip, and that a specified adult has particular responsibility for supervision of the child/ren.

For any trip, Burren Sonas Kindergarten will ensure that:

- the method of transport complies with relevant safety requirements and insurance. This includes appropriate car seats for each adequate insurance is in place
- appropriate staff/ child ratios are maintained in line with the pre-school regulations and the risk assessment
- An outline of the details of the trip and related activities will be supplied in writing to parents and written consent by a parent specifically for each trip will be obtained
- parents are asked to provide information about any allergies that their child has
- emergency contacts for all children will be brought on the trip.

Children will be appropriately supervised at all times and the relevant adult/ child ratios maintained. Safety measures such as frequent head counts will be carried out.

### **Managing Emergencies and Critical Incidents**

A first aid box will be brought and a person with a first aid certificate will be present. The person in charge will have access to a mobile phone in case of emergency.

Burren Sonas Kindergarten does its utmost to minimise risk and ensure the safety of all children at all times. However, on outings it is important that staff/ volunteers are prepared for any emergencies that may arise. In this regard, a plan to deal with emergencies (such as critical incidents or an incident involving a missing child) will be in place for outings. Staff/ volunteers will refresh themselves on relevant policies and procedures prior to the trip.

### **(x) Safe Visitors Procedure**

From time to time there are visitors to the Burren Sonas Kindergarten during the time when the children are present in the service. Sometimes these are pre-arranged appointments while at other times they are unannounced. Measures are in place to

ensure that the safety and needs of the children are not disregarded when a visitor arrives on the premises. This is important with regard to child safeguarding and maintaining adult: child ratios in line with legislation.

- As far as possible, staff do not arrange appointments at the premises during the time when the Kindergarten is in session. If someone calls unexpectedly, the staff member will ask the person to call back at a different time when the children are not present.
- At no time is a visitor left alone with the children.
- From time to time it is necessary to accept unscheduled visitors who are inspecting Burren Sonas Kindergarten. These would include inspectors from Tusla, Pobal, Siolta and Aistear. These visitors must show a picture identification to the Manager and sign in the Roll book.

Prospective Kindergarten parents are welcomed in as visitors to become familiar with the service and talk to the staff. Staff must always organise these visits so they are compatible with the activities of the service at that time. The arrangements will depend on the particular situation.

Staff and volunteers must be mindful of safeguarding procedures when parents call in to pick up or drop off their children.

## **(xi) Staff Support And Supervision Policy**

*The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 require preschool services to have a supervision policy which outlines how staff and volunteers are supervised and supported in the service in relation to their work practices.*

The management and supervision of staff and volunteers is an important part of child safeguarding.

### Staff Support and Supervision

The Kindergarten employs two people (Service Manager and Childcare Worker) who work together closely for most of the day directly with the children. A non-hierarchical atmosphere is fostered enabling the two staff members to work together to support each other wherever possible. The Service Manager is responsible for supervising the Childcare Worker, though ultimately it is the Board that is the employer of both staff members. The Board takes an active part in overseeing and making management decisions about the work of both the employees.

The Burren Sonas Kindergarten is a member of the Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association. As part of this membership, the Service Manager is entitled to mentorship from the Association.

### Volunteer Support and Supervision

Volunteers visit the Kindergarten as part of induction before they start volunteering. The induction process includes:

- Informing the volunteers about relevant policy and procedures, including Child Safeguarding requirements such as garda vetting and training;
- Information about practical everyday details of how things are done;
- Spending time with the children to become familiar with each other.

The Service Manager assigns tasks to the volunteers. It is emphasised that the volunteer can ask the Service Manager or Childcare Worker questions at any time if they are unsure what to do.

## **(xii) Code Of Behaviour For Working With Children**

### **Introduction**

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

The Code of Behaviour at Burren Sonas Kindergarten is used to:

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

The Code of Behaviour relates both to interactions with children and to what is acceptable between adults while children are present. It applies to all adults in the service including parents.

The Code of Behaviour is given to all staff and volunteers at induction and it is expected that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the Code and that they will raise any questions arising with their manager.

## Our Code Of Behaviour at Burren Sonas Kindergarten

In all matters adults who work at the kindergarten will endeavour to work in the spirit of cooperation reminding themselves always that our main purpose is to create a healthy community where all people are respected and appreciated. All staff and volunteers have a duty to adhere to the Code of Behaviour and to bring breaches of the code to the attention of the Manager and/or the Chairperson of the Board. Breaches of the Code of Behaviour are dealt with by the Manager, or by the Board if it is the Manager who has allegedly breached the Code of Behaviour.

### **Our Code of Behaviour outlines our commitment to:**

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

### **1. Managing/Supervising Activities**

All children regardless of abilities are to be included in activities. Specific stories, crafts, and activities may be targeted at specific times towards a particular child(ren) in the service but will be balanced over the year so each child will receive equal support and opportunity to develop in various areas. If children request certain activities teachers will endeavour to include their requests in the curriculum as soon as possible.

Teachers will supervise crafts with smaller groups of children so that children will have the opportunity and time to learn new skills with focused attention. The process of learning is the important part of the projects so teachers will use patience and understanding, aiding children with their work and praising their efforts. Teachers will constantly support the development of childrens' confidence. Each child, though different, will be given the same encouragement and praise. Activities will be approached with the attitude of respect and fun.

### **2. Managing Behaviour**

All children and adults are to be treated with respect and kindness. The teachers model this respect by treating each other, the children, and the parents/guardians with respect and kindness with the hope that the children in their care will learn this behaviour naturally.

When it becomes necessary to correct a child's behaviour it is appropriate to try and

distract young children and guide them to better behaviour. If another child(ren) is/are involved teachers will intervene by speaking quietly and firmly about what is appropriate behaviour, reminding children that it is necessary to be kind and respectful to each other at all times.

All efforts will be made to catch inappropriate behaviour, such as unkind words or actions, between children and to emphasize that the kindergarten is to be a safe environment for everyone.

Children who repeatedly are aggressive towards other children will be given books or a soft toy/dolly to hold and asked to be seated in the story chair located in the story area until they are calm enough to join the rest of the group. It may be necessary to distract such a child by bringing him/her to the eating area or kitchen to do a job with a teacher. If a pattern emerges of difficulties in children controlling their behaviour it will be necessary to ask parents/ guardians to meet with the teachers to create a strategy together to manage this behaviour at kindergarten with reinforcement at home.

All staff members and volunteers will use calm and firm voices with the children. Should one of these adults feel she/ he is having difficulty being patient or remaining calm it is appropriate to ask for help from other members of staff in order to allow her/ himself to recover her/ his calm.

### **3. Use of Mobile Phones and Technology:**

There is a zero tolerance policy for staff or volunteers to use either mobile phones or electronic devices when working with children either in the kindergarten or in the garden. This policy is to ensure that the attention of the teachers is continuously focused on the children in their care. Only in a case of emergency can a teacher speak or text by mobile phone in the presence of the children. We ask therefore that parents/guardians respect this by limiting texts and messages during sessional time to only those that are emergencies.

Teachers will be happy to respond before and after the session when children are not present.

### **4. One-to-one work**

Most activities with the children will be in smaller or larger groups. Occasionally when a child is upset, hurt, or angry it will be necessary for a teacher to work with a child individually. Teachers will balance this individual work with a child so that there is equal time and energy given to all children at various times, with no favouritism for any one child. This one-to-one work will take place within the sessional room in the context of the other children.

## 5. Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Positive Physical Contact

Touch and physical interaction are essential to the healthy development and well-being of young children.

- \* Young children and babies require touch and physical contact to develop.
- \* Touch and Physical Contact are important in offering comfort and reassurance to a child. When children require comfort at kindergarten teachers will give vocal comfort first and when the child needs more reassurance will respond by sitting close to the child or picking the child up. Teachers will respond to the child's cues as to what is appropriate. When a child falls and is shocked or hurt it is necessary to look at or touch the place where the injury is felt.
- \* Touch and physical contact should be governed by the age and developmental stage of the child, for example physical interaction with a 6-month old baby is very different to that with a 4 year old child.
- \* All children are different and may need assistance in different ways. Children should be assisted with toileting and dressing based on individual need. Children's need for privacy should be respected. Children are always asked if they need help with these tasks rather than any assumptions being made.
- \* Touch should be in response to the needs of a child not the adult. However, young children should be given the opportunity for physical contact if they require it.
- \* Touch and physical contact is most positive when initiated by the child. It should be with the child's permission - resistance from the child should be respected.
- \* Touch and physical contact should be open and not secretive.

## 6. Communication with children:

All communication with children is to be respectful, kind, clear, and fair. Children use the teacher's first names to encourage the feeling that teachers' are accessible to them. All efforts are made to create positive communication between teachers, children, and parents so that all people feel heard and respected.

Children are encouraged to express their feelings and experiences with the teachers so that the children learn to develop their expression in a supportive environment. In group activities, such as craft work or eating, each child is supported in expressing her/himself with emphasis on development of respectful listening skills by the other children. This means that children are reminded to speak individually waiting their turns to speak in time. Teachers respect confidentiality in regards to any information that children share about their families.



## (Xiii) Complaints Procedure

### **Policy Statement:**

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

### **Procedures for Responding to a Complaint:**

- We undertake to ensure all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly, impartially and confidentially
- We will endeavour to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with parents and members of staff as appropriate
- Parents will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure in operation as part of enrolment/ intake
- If we find that we have made a mistake/ something could have been done better we will change the way we do things to avoid making the same mistake in future
- Complaints can be made by parents, guardians and other advocates on behalf of children

If a parent is not satisfied with any aspect of the service they are requested to resolve the issue informally through discussion with the Service Manager of Burren Sonas Kindergarten.

If the problem persists, re-occurs or the parent is not satisfied with the response, the complaint should be put in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management: Erin Gardner, Burren Sonas Kindergarten, Main Street, Kilfenora.

The Board of Management may then nominate a committee member to meet with the Manager or other staff member (as appropriate) and the person(s) making the complaint to try and resolve the issue. A note will be made of this meeting and copies made available to the person(s) making the complaint.

Most complaints are resolved by this stage. However, if there are other or more serious issues arising from the complaint or it cannot be resolved then both sides may agree for a third party to mediate. Written records will be kept of all written complaints, the response, meetings and other actions and records kept for a minimum of 2 years. Written complaints will be acknowledged in writing.

All complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner and the person making the complaint will be informed of the next steps of the process at every stage. Depending on the nature of the complaint the Disciplinary Procedures may also be followed.

If a complaint is made to the Early Years Inspectorate about any aspect of Burren Sonas

Kindergarten, we will cooperate fully with the Inspectorate to resolve the issue.

### **(Xiv) Procedure For Managing Accidents And Incidents**

#### **Policy Statement**

It is our policy to promote the health, well-being and safety of all the children in Burren Sonas Kindergarten through the implementation of robust policies and procedures and by developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety.

Although we adhere to the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and all safety precautions and guidelines, accidents may occur.

#### **Procedures for Responding to an Accident/Incident**

- We will ensure that all personnel are aware of emergency numbers and that they are prominently displayed.
- We will ensure that all relevant personnel have up to date First Aid Training and that a complete First Aid Box is accessible.
- The safety and welfare of the child is always the first consideration if a child is injured or an accident occurs.
  - After an accident, as soon as practicable, the Accident Report Form is completed and recorded in the Accident Book/Log.
  - The Chairperson of the Board of Management is informed of serious accidents or incidents.
  - The Early Years Inspectorate are informed of serious incidents in line with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, as soon as practicable.- Parents are always informed of incidents or accidents involving their child and requested to sign the relevant form.
- The Manager will review the accident and incident reports annually.

### **(Xv) Social Media Management Policy**

At Burren Sonas Kindergarten we use social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) as an additional tool for communication with parents and families. Social media is only used to

provide generic updates on camp enrolments; ecce places; awards. Individual information (age, name, address, DOB) about staff or children is not published.

Social Media is used to:

- Communicate with the wider community
- Market the service
- Provide information to parents and the wider community
- Provide information on awards received by Burren Sonas, children or staff.

The Social Media Administrators (usually members of the Board/ and or parents) manage social media engagement and have permission from the Board to publish/ share information on Social Media for the Kindergarten. All posts are verified before publishing. The Service Manager directs any social media enquiries to the Social Media Administrators.

Children in the service will not be engaged with on social media by staff or volunteers.

### **Consent and images:**


- Consent is required from parents before an image of a child can be used on social media and this is obtained as part of the registration process
- All images of children are recovered by Data Protection Legislation
- We never post an image of a child with identifying information
- Children are appropriately dressed before posting any image/ close ups are

avoided.

### **Service Events**

Parents are not allowed to photograph or video children at Burren Sonas

Kindergarten events unless they have express permission in advance, nor are they allowed to share

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Erin Gardner  \_\_\_\_\_  
ERIN GARDNER, CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT,  
BURREN SONAS KINDERGARTEN, KILFENORA, COUNTY CLARE.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 01.08.2024 \_\_\_\_\_

*For further information of this Statement, please contact Relevant Person: Avery  
McGuire : 085 820 5284 / a.mcguire10@gmail.com*