

ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT POLICY

At **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd**, we are committed to safeguarding children, staff, parents and all visitors to our centre. We have policies, procedures and practices in place to ensure that we are providing a safe place for children, staff, parents and visitors to be.

All possible precautions are taken to prevent and avoid any accidents/incidents that could cause harm to children or adults (staff and visitors) in the service. This includes carrying out risk assessments and providing a safety statement as guided and informed by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), ensuring the environment is safe (while allowing for appropriate levels of risk and challenge) and providing adequate and appropriate supervision of the children at all times.

Principle

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Acts 2005 and 2010 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 and the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 and the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework. Critical Incident plan updated with guidance from Critical Incidents in Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Services: Planning and Responding, Barnardos, 2023.

Communication Plan

All parents/guardians are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Accidents, Incidents or Injuries on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

The Policy Statement will be included in the Parent Handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with staff at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/guardians in the Policy Folder located within the setting. This policy can also be downloaded from our website at www.overtherainbowelc.com

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request. Parents/guardians and staff will receive written notification of any updates.

Measures to be taken to prevent accidents and incidents:

In **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** we have taken the following measures to prevent accidents and incidents.

- We have appointed a Health & Safety Officer.
- We have a Health & Safety Policy & procedure, a Risk Management policy and we carry out regular risk assessments both indoors and outdoors.
- All staff receive regular Support and Supervision and reflect on their practice.

- A Training schedule is provided for all staff to maintain their levels of qualifications and renew training when it falls due as per regulations and legislation.
- Our building, equipment and materials are well maintained, and there are procedures in place to ensure any defects are dealt with immediately.
- All staff are familiar with the policies and procedures in our service and there are detailed induction sessions for new staff as well as reorientation sessions for existing staff when required.
- A fully stocked easily identifiable first aid box is provided.
- All staff members hold an up to date First Aid Certificate.
- Adult child ratios are maintained at all times.
- All staff have appropriate qualifications to ensure that they provide the required level of care and attention to safeguard all children in our setting.
- Records are accessible to all relevant staff in case of an emergency
- A suitable car seat / booster seat is available, in the event that a child has to be transported to hospital or a doctor.
- Vehicles are roadworthy, insured, taxed and NCTd, and drivers hold full driving licences.
- If staff have to leave the premises to accompany a child to hospital or a doctor, we revert to our Staff Absence Policy.
- We have a list of all emergency numbers displayed at the manage station.
- We promote realistic play limits and behaviour limits that guide children's safety and security rather than curb their play experiences, curiosity or creativity.
- Safety is ensured and injuries prevented by:
 - Supervising children appropriately.
 - Regularly checking both indoor and outdoor play areas for, and getting rid of, hazards.
 - Providing appropriate soft fall surfaces under climbing equipment.
 - Checking for and removing choking hazards in areas where children are present.
 - Ensuring that no cords are accessible to children, in particular cords on blinds.
 - Ensuring that all hazardous cleaning materials are stored in an inaccessible cupboard out of reach of children.
 - Keeping all electric cords out of reach of the children.
 - Teaching children how to use playground equipment safely e.g. ensuring that another child is not standing at the bottom of the slide while someone else is coming down.
 - Understanding what children can do at different stages of development. Children learn by testing their abilities. They should be allowed to participate in activities appropriate for their stage of development even though these activities may possibly result in some minor injuries, such as scrapes and bruises. Children should be prevented from taking part in activities or using equipment that is beyond their abilities and that may result in serious injury such as broken bones.
 - Ensuring equipment, furniture and materials used by the children are appropriate for use and used in a safe manner.

- Safety drills involving staff and children are regularly practised randomly, without warning and at different times of the day such as fire safety drills.

Risk Assessment and Safety Statement

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, risk assessments are carried out regularly to identify any hazards present, assess the risks arising from such hazards and identify the steps to be taken to deal with any risks.

A safety statement is prepared which is based on the risk assessment. The statement contains the details of staff members who are responsible for safety issues.

Our Health & Safety Officer is: **Jennifer Byrne**

Our Safety Statement is displayed in the hall and reviewed yearly and our Risk Assessments can be viewed in our Risk Assessment file located within the setting. See our Risk Management Policy.

Procedure to be followed in the event of an accident or incident:

A 112/999 call or a call to a local emergency number should be made in the case of any of the following:

- You believe the injury is life threatening or there is a risk of permanent injury to the child/adult, for example -
 - Severe neck or head injury
 - Choking
 - Shock
 - Chemicals in the eyes, on the skin, or ingested in the mouth
 - Near-drowning.
- They are acting strangely, much less alert, or much more withdrawn than usual.
- They have difficulty breathing or are unable to speak.
- Their skin or lips look blue, purple or grey.
- They have rhythmic jerking of arms and legs and a loss of consciousness (seizure).
- They are unconscious.
- They become progressively less responsive.
- They have any of the following after a head injury:
 - decrease in alertness,
 - confusion,
 - headache,
 - vomiting,
 - irritability or difficulty walking.
- They have increasing or severe pain anywhere.
- They have a cut or burn that is large, deep, to the head, chest or abdomen and/or won't stop bleeding.

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- They have a suspected fracture.
- Severe or persistent vomiting.
- They are vomiting blood.
- Their stool contains blood.
- They have a severe stiff neck, headache and fever.
- They are significantly dehydrated: sunken eyes, lethargic, not making tears, not urinating.

If a child or adult is bitten by a child:

- First Aid must be administered.
- Where the bite causes bleeding, it is advisable to attend the GP as soon as possible.
- In the case of a child being bitten, the parents/guardians of both children are notified.

Responsibilities

The managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- Risk assessments are carried out and a safety statement is provided
- All staff members are aware of their responsibility to help prevent accidents and incidents
- All staff members know exactly what to do in the event of an accident, incident or injury.

The agreed written procedures are made accessible and each staff member must be made aware of their responsibility to follow the outlined procedure in the event of an accident/incident. It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that each staff member reads and understands the agreed written procedures.

It is the manager's responsibility to:

- Ensure that contact details for emergency services are displayed clearly in a readily accessible location close to an easily accessible telephone.
- Ensure that contact details for the local GP are always immediately accessible.
- Ensure that least one member of staff on duty has completed a recognised First Aid course for children (First Aid Response- FAR).
- Provide a properly stocked First Aid box in each section of the service. The First Aid box must be accompanied by a list of essential contents.
- The Health and Safety Officer will restock the First Aid box after every use and to do a monthly check to ensure that the contents match the essential contents list and supplies are in date. See Appendix A for First Aid box contents list.
- Contact the emergency services in the event of a serious injury.
- Contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible.
- In the absence of the parent/guardian being available arrange for a staff member to accompany a child in an ambulance or to a GP if necessary.
- Arrange for relief staff, if required.

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- Assess whether an incident is to be deemed a **Critical Incident**.
- Assess whether an accident/incident is one which is to be notified to Tusla and/or other appropriate outside authorities and to ensure that this is done effectively and efficiently.

In the case of a minor accident or incident:

- The child or children will be attended to immediately.
- The staff member will reassure the child and administer First Aid (if required) as per First Aid Training.
- An accident/incident report will be recorded on ChildPaths, including photos of the injury which will be made available to parents through the App. Parents are required to sign the report and it is kept on the ChildPaths system.

In the case of an accident which requires medical intervention:

- The manager will be informed immediately.
- Treatment will be assessed, while the child/children are comforted and attended to.
- The Manager will telephone the local doctor on call or an ambulance and provide the emergency services with the child's name, contact numbers and any known allergies/ medical records.
- The Manager will contact the child's parents/ guardians by telephone.
- The exact time and date the call was made will be recorded.
- A member of staff will accompany the child to the GP/emergency room if the parents are not available.
- Remaining staff will reassure the other children and if necessary explain the accident to other parents.
- Staff who witnessed the accident should fill in the accident report form on ChildPaths.
- If the child has to go to hospital before the parent/carer arrives, an adult known to the child must accompany him/her to hospital and stay until the parent/carer arrives.
- The child's record file must be brought for reference.

If the accident does not warrant outside intervention:

- The staff member responsible will treat the injury and she and the person who witnessed the accident will complete an accident form on ChildPaths.
- This will be read and signed by the manager and signed by the child's parent/guardian.
- The accident report form, including photos of the injury is kept on ChildPaths and stored until the child is 21 Years.
- Minor accidents will be treated in the childcare premises and parents/carers will be advised of the injury and the action taken, when the child is collected.

Follow up contact with the child's parents/guardians

Out of concern for all of the children and families attending the service, in the case of an accident involving a child we would wish to contact the child's parent on the day following the accident/incident to know how the child is recovering.

Reporting & Record Keeping:

- All Accidents (minor or major) and Incidents will be recorded on the ChildPaths software management system, counter signed by the Manager and shared with parents. A copy is kept until the child reaches the age of 21.
- It is important that all accidents and incidents are fully and accurately recorded. It is recommended to take photos as irrefutable proof of the extent of an injury. This might also be useful for medical assessment purposes.
- All major accidents must be reported to the insurance company at the time of the accident.
- All accidents & incidents will be reviewed in line with our Health & Safety Policy.
- The conditions under which Tusla must be notified of an incident, as well as a notification of incidents form, is available on the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate website.
- Management is aware of which accidents and incidents need to be reported to parties other than Tusla Early Years Inspectorate and will ensure such reports are made, for example:
 - Tusla Social Work services will be informed if there is a child safeguarding concern in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.
 - Garda Síochána will be informed if there is a danger to staff or children, or a criminal offence has been committed
 - The Health and Safety Authority will be informed if the incident is dangerous, or a staff member has been injured as a result.

The Inspectorate must be notified of the following incidents:

- The death of a child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital after they were transferred from the service.
- The diagnosis of an infectious disease in a child attending the service, or the diagnosis of an infectious disease in an employee, an unpaid worker, a contractor or any other person working in the service. (An infectious disease is defined in the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 available in our Infection control policy).
- An accident or incident that resulted in the service being closed for any length of time (an unplanned closure).
- A serious injury to a child while attending the service that needed immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner, in hospital or elsewhere.
- An incident of a child going missing while attending the service.

Critical Incident planning and responding

What is a critical incident?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes a critical incident as 'an event out of the range of normal experience – one which is sudden and unexpected', that involves a threat to life or loss of life, and can include elements of physical or emotional trauma or loss.

A critical incident may also involve severe damage to buildings or facilities such that the damage causes risk to children and adults or the service cannot operate. Such events have the capacity to bring about significant distress in an individual, or a

group of people, and/or overwhelm or threaten to overwhelm the normal coping capacity of a service and those in charge of its operation.

Our roles and responsibilities:

- Prepare a Critical Incident Plan that includes information as to the staff team's roles and responsibilities in the event of an incident
- Have an up-to-date Policy on Accidents and Incidents
- Ensure all other required policies, procedures and statements are up-to-date
- Inform Tusla and your local County Childcare Committee when a critical incident happens
- Respond in line with DCEDIY guidance when a critical incident happens

Critical Incident Team Leader is: **Jennifer Byrne**

Deputy Critical Incident Team Leader is: **Ann-Marie Healy**

Staff members' roles and responsibilities at the time of an incident is outlines in our Critical Incident plan folder, which is kept at the managers station within the service.

Critical Incident Folder

The Critical Incident Team Leader has developed and keeps up to date the steps to be taken in the case of a critical incident occurring.

This folder will include:

- The location of essential services such as First Aid kit, water, electricity shut-off valves.
- The location of emergency exits and our assigned Assembly point.
- Agreed actions to be taken by all staff members
- A list of relevant contact details including address and Eircode of setting, Emergency Services, GP, An Garda Síochána, Local Authority, County Childcare Committee (CCC), Tusla, and Pobal
- Contact information for staff members and next of kin as well as any medical information and consent.
- Contact information for all parents/guardians, the child's medical information, GP contact and allergy information (if any) and any other necessary information to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing. As this is confidential information, access should be limited to necessary persons only.
- The daily sign-in sheet should be kept to hand and added at the time of the critical incident.
- The Critical Incident Folder can be stored electronically, to be accessed on a device such as a mobile phone or tablet in the event of an emergency. Paper copies of all plans and contact information for all children, parents and guardians, staff members and their next of kin are available in the event that it is not possible to access digital information.
- The folder is stored securely but easily accessible by the person in charge, and all staff members are made aware of its location. All documents created in response to the critical incident, including checklists used, log records, and communications to families, media or others as necessary, should be kept on file in keeping with GDPR requirements, and available for inspection by an

authorised officer. The list of relevant contact details should be displayed at various easily accessible points around the setting.

This policy was adopted by **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** on:

Date: _____

Manager

co-Manager

Review Date: _____