

Health and Safety Policy

General Statement

Crèche Cois Laoi believes that the health and safety of those in our care is of the utmost importance.

Aim

Crèche Cois Laoi's aim is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff, parents/guardians, work experience students and visitors. This includes ensuring

- That the premises and its equipment are regularly checked to confirm they are safe
- That the systems of work for staff are reviewed and appropriately revised to meet any changes in Health and Safety requirements
- That the children, parents/guardians, staff and other visitors to the crèche are aware of health and safety issues and to minimise the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive and grow in a safe and healthy environment

Responsibilities

Áras na Mac Leinn

The overall responsibility of health and safety lies with Áras na Mac Léinn.

Manager

The Manager's role is to ensure correct implementation and updating of Health and Safety policies and procedures. This includes ensuring that:

- The policies and procedures are effectively communicated to all staff
- Ensuring risk assessments are relevant and up to date
- Ensuring that staff are following procedures and complete the daily health and safety checklists.

This is done by reviewing checklists and accident forms at least every three months. The Manager also ensures continued vigilance regarding health and safety issues and raising awareness amongst staff, children, parents/carers and visitors.

Group Leaders

The Group Leader's responsibility is for completing the daily health and safety checklists, ensuring that all staff are aware of Health and Safety procedures and that the correct procedures are being adhered to. Group Leaders also ensure that all equipment is in good working order and is checked on a regular basis and defects are reported to the Crèche Manager. Group Leaders are also expected to be continually vigilant regarding health and safety issues.

All Staff

It is the responsibility of crèche staff to co-operate with the Crèche Manager to achieve a healthy and safe environment for everyone in the Crèche. Staff must comply with the Crèches policies and procedures at all times and complete health and safety checks as required. Staff must also ensure continued vigilance regarding health and safety issues and raising awareness amongst other staff, children, parents/guardians and visitors.

Parents/ guardians and visitors

This document is made available to all parents during their child's time at the Crèche and during the introductory evening held for all new parents in September. Parents are asked to comply with the policies and procedures to ensure the safety of everyone at the nursery. In particular, parents are requested to enter and depart the building with care, remembering to close all safety gates and doors carefully behind them. They are requested not to pass on details of the exit security code to their children and not to hold the door open for other people to prevent unauthorised access.

Visitors attending the Crèche are requested to document their arrival and departure in our Visitors Book in the lobby.

Risk Assessments and Daily Health and Safety Checks

Risk assessments identify the hazards and risks involved and the safety measures to be used to reduce the likelihood that anyone will be harmed.

Risk Assessments are completed for:

- Fire Safety
- Manual Handling
- Outings
- General Safety
- VDU
- Food Safety

The Fire Safety risk assessments are completed monthly by the Crèche Manager (fire extinguishers and fire drills) and twice during the year by the University Fire Safety Officer.

The Manual Handling risk assessments are completed annually.

Outings risk assessments are completed on a yearly basis for regular outings and on new outings as they arise.

General Safety risk assessments are carried out annually.

VDU risk assessments are carried out by the office staff regularly and all new office staff members must undergo a VDU training course.

Food safety risk assessments are carried out annually.

Any Health and Safety issues are relayed to management for correction.

Insurance Cover

Public Liability insurance and employers liability is in place. The certificate is located in the lobby for parents to view and there is another copy in the HSE folder.

Health and Safety Awareness Training

Induction training for staff includes an explanation of health and safety issues so that all staff are aware of the health and safety policy and understand their shared responsibility for health and safety.

The induction training includes safe lifting practices and the storage of potentially dangerous substances.

Records are kept of these induction training sessions and staff sign the records to confirm that they have been trained and understand all policies and procedures.

Health and safety issues are explained to the parents of new children so that they understand their responsibility for health and safety in the daily running of the Crèche.

As necessary, health and safety training is included in annual staff training. Health and safety is discussed regularly at staff meetings and at specific health and safety committee meetings held bi-monthly in the crèche.

We have a strict No Smoking Policy on the crèche grounds. Smoking is only allowed in designated smoking areas which are located well away from the crèche building.

Children are made aware of health and safety issues through discussions, planned activities and routines.

Security

Access to the building is restricted to registered children, their parents, staff and trainee students. Other adults who have legitimate business and visitors may also be present but will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times and their presence is recorded in the visitor's book located in the lobby of the Crèche.

Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children (See Arrivals and Departure Policy). The times of the children's arrivals and departures are recorded in a Daily Roll Book in each room.

The Crèche operates a coded entry system for staff and a buzzer entry system for parents and visitors to prevent unauthorised access to our premises. Only adults who are known to staff can be admitted. Cameras are in place to ensure that the people being admitted into the Crèche are authorised.

Systems are also in place to prevent children from leaving the crèche unnoticed. Under no circumstances are children to be informed or shown details of the exit security code.

Windows

All windows are secured so that children cannot climb through them and open them either by use of high up winders or heavy latches that need to be pushed up. Safety and access features including disability access on doors and windows are in accordance with the requirements stated in the Building Regulations 1997-2006 made under the Building Control Act 1990. (From Childcare Guidelines document-Appendix G Regulation 27)

Doors

Safety finger guards are in place to prevent children from trapping their fingers in the doors and self closing devices fitted on some of the doors are of a low manual effort so as to avoid trapping risks.

Floors

All surfaces are checked daily to ensure they are clean, dry and not uneven or damaged.

Kitchen

For safety reasons, children are not allowed access to the kitchen area in the dining room. The kitchen door is always kept closed and children are not allowed to enter the kitchen. The children cannot gain unsupervised access to the kitchen from the dining room as entry is kept secure by means of a locked gate and hatch.

All surfaces are kept clean and are non porous. There are separate sinks for hand washing and for washing up.

Cleaning materials are kept on a high level shelf in the kitchen or in the utility room downstairs. Access to the utility room requires a code to enter the room. All of the cabinets in the utility room have child locks on them. Children are not permitted to enter the utility room at any time and the door is to be kept closed at all times. All cleaning materials used have the relevant safety information documented in a file in the office.

When children take part in cooking activities they are supervised at all times. Any use of electrical equipment is supervised at all times.

Heating

The Crèche is heated by means of under floor heating which is thermostatically controlled to ensure temperatures in the main rooms are kept between 18-22°C and between 16-20°C in the sleep rooms. The Nursery sleep room is fitted with air conditioning which turns on automatically if the temperature goes above 18°C. Glass on the windows in the main rooms and

the nursery are fitted with anti glare covering to help ensure that temperatures are kept at recommended levels during the summer months.

Lighting and Emergency Lighting

The Crèche is provided with suitable and adequate means of natural lighting which is supplemented by safe and suitable artificial lighting. Shatter proof diffusers are used on all lights.

The Crèche is also fitted with emergency lighting to ensure that if the electricity fails and it is dark then staff/parents/ children will be able to make their way out of the crèche. Each room has also been equipped with a torch if needed.

Sanitary Facilities

The two changing rooms have Sengenic nappy bins to place soiled nappies into. These bins wrap each nappy individually thereby preventing the spread of infection.

Separate toilet facilities are provided for adults and each of the 3 adult toilets have sanitary bins in them which are changed every Monday by outside contractors.

The Crèche is equipped with a suitable number of wash hand basins which are equipped with cold running water and thermostatically controlled hot water, soap and either paper hand towels or hand dryers. These are located in the bathrooms, changing rooms, kitchen, and staff room and in the classrooms. A shower is also located in one of the downstairs bathrooms. This has thermostatically controlled hot water.

Water

The hot water in the taps in the children's rooms and toilets is thermostatically controlled and is checked twice weekly by staff to ensure that the temperature does not go above 43°C preventing children from scalding themselves. The temperature reading taken on each tap is documented and if a high reading is obtained then it is reported to the manager who contacts the Facilities Manager in Brookfield to have it repaired.

Waste Disposal

Nappy bins are emptied at the end of each day and at least once during the day. All rubbish from the refuse and recycling bins is emptied every night and is placed into large wheelie bins located outside the crèche. These wheelie bins are emptied by Greenstar, our Waste Management and Recycling Company, at least once per week. The wheelie bins are located in an area that is not accessible to children.

Electrical / Gas Equipment

All electrical / gas equipment conforms to safety requirements and does not pose a threat to children, it is checked regularly.

Electrical sockets, wires and leads are properly guarded and the children are taught not to touch them. All sockets are fitted with socket covers to prevent the children from sticking their fingers or other items into the socket.

Wires/Flexes from radios or monitors are kept out of reach of the children and away from sources of water.

There are sufficient sockets in the building to prevent overloading.

Lighting and ventilation is adequate in all rooms.

Storage

All resources and materials which children select are stored safely.

When not in use all equipment and resources are stored or stacked safely to prevent them from accidentally falling or collapsing.

Rubbish and nappy waste storage is provided in dedicated wheelie bins located outside the crèche building.

Staff are aware of the dangers of overloading shelves.

Outdoor Play Area

The outdoor play area is secured and safely fenced off to ensure that children cannot leave the area and to ensure that unauthorised access is prevented.

The outside areas are risk-assessed daily for broken equipment, animal faeces, and security, to ensure that drains are covered and that the play equipment such as the swings and the rope climbing frame are safe. The area is also assessed to ensure that the other play equipment is safe. The outdoor sand pit is kept covered when not in use.

All outdoor activities are supervised at all times and the number of children outside does not exceed 40 at any one time.

The shed is checked to ensure that it is secure and locked to prevent unsupervised access by children.

Hygiene

We regularly seek information from the Health Services Executive to ensure that we keep up to date with the latest recommendations

Our daily routines encourage the children to learn about personal hygiene.

We have a daily cleaning routine for the Crèche which includes the Nursery, Toddler rooms, Naíonra, Montessori, After School, sleep rooms, bathrooms, changing rooms and general areas. We have a schedule for cleaning resources and equipment.

We implement good hygiene practices by:

- Cleaning tables between activities and meals
- Checking toilets regularly and using a checklist for this
- Wearing protective clothing such as gloves, aprons and hairnets as appropriate
- Ensuring staff wear indoor shoes in the nursery and parents or other staff members have to wear blue protective covers on their shoes when entering the nursery
- Requesting that children have at least one spare change of clean clothes
- Providing a supply of tissues, clean face cloths, towels and spare bedding
- Providing staff with gloves to use while changing nappies
- Ensuring that soap and hand towel dispensers are located beside every sink in the crèche

Activities

Before purchase, equipment and resources are checked to ensure that they are safe for the ages and stages of the children currently attending the crèche. When purchasing toys, staff ensure that all toys and equipment have a CE symbol ensuring the toy complies with EU Standards of Safety. The layout of play equipment allows adults and children to move safely and freely between activities.

All equipment is regularly checked for cleanliness, cracks, splinters and safety and any dangerous items are repaired or discarded.

All materials including paint and glue are non toxic

Sand is clean and clear of foreign bodies; sand after play that has been dropped on the floor is disposed of. Sand is changed at least 4 times per year and more often if necessary

Physical play is constantly supervised

Children who are sleeping are checked every 10 minutes and this is documented

Children learn about health, safety and personal hygiene through the activities we provide and the routine we follow.

Food and Drink

Staff who prepare and handle food receive appropriate training based on the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and understand, and comply, with current food safety and hygiene regulations.

Crèche Cois Laoi is committed to carry out all its food related activities in a safe and hygienic manner. The guidelines of IS 340:2007 are applied to all the Crèche food activities.

All food and drink are stored appropriately and are clearly labelled. The Nursery and Toddler Rooms have fridges to store food in and all other foods can be stored in the large fridges located in the kitchen, each shelf is labelled so parents will know which shelf to place the lunches on.

Adults do not carry hot drinks through the play areas and do not place hot drinks within reach of the children.

Snack and meal times are appropriately supervised and children do not walk around with food or drinks.

Fresh drinking water is available to the children at all times either in cups in their classrooms or from the drinking fountains located on the ground and upper floor of the crèche.

We operate systems to ensure that children do not have access to food/drinks to which they are allergic.

Outings and visits

We have agreed procedures for the safe conduct of outings; these are documented in our Outings Policy. Ratios remain on a 1:3 basis at all times when children and staff are out of the crèche for trips and visits.

A risk assessment is carried out before a new walking route is undertaken and before every walk, staff have to fill in a form stating where they are going, which children are going on the walk, a staff member's phone number. A first aid kit, tissues and a mobile phone are taken on all trips.

When children are enrolled, the parents sign the contract indicating whether their child is allowed to go on walks. If a new walk is taking place, parents are asked to sign a consent form to allow their child to go on the outing.

The children are appropriately supervised to ensure that no child goes missing and that there is no unauthorised access to the children.

For those children remaining on the crèche premises, the adult to child ratio conforms to the requirements of the national standards for childcare.

Animals

Pets such as dogs are not allowed on the crèche premises (with the exception of guide dogs). Animals that are brought into the crèche are free from disease, safe to be with the children and do not pose a health risk.

Fire Safety

Our Fire Risk Assessment is the controlling document for fire safety issues. Please refer to our Fire Safety Policy document and Fire Evacuation Procedures document.

First Aid and Medication

All full-time staff working in Crèche Cois Laoi must have a current and valid paediatric first aid training certificate (relevant to babies and young children). At the time of admission to the nursery, parents' written permission for emergency medical advice or treatment is sought. Parents sign and date their written authorisation.

First Aid Kit

All First Aid kits within the crèche comply with the Childcare (Pre School Services) Regulations 2006. **(Appendix 9)**

First aid kits in each room are checked every month to ensure they are stocked properly, they are re-stocked as necessary. First aid kits are easily accessible to adults but are kept out of reach of children.

The Nursery, Toddler and Montessori Rooms also have locked medicine cabinets which store the children's medicines in them. These are checked monthly to ensure that all medicines are within their use by date. When new medicines are put into the cabinet they are added to the list.

Accident / Incident Books

Each room has a secure Incident Book that is easily accessible. All staff know where they are kept and how to fill out and complete individual accident forms. The incident book is reviewed periodically to identify any potential or actual hazards.

A separate accident folder for staff, parents or visitors is kept in the Manager's office. All staff is made aware of its existence and are encouraged to inform management if they have an accident so it will be documented in the accident folder.

Any injury requiring a GP or hospital treatment to a child or staff member, parent, volunteer or visitor is reported to UCC's Health and Safety Department.

Prescribed Medication

Prescribed medication is controlled by the Medical Administration Policy. Children's prescribed medications are stored in a locked cabinet in their original containers, are clearly labelled and are inaccessible to the children. Parents give prior written permission for the administration of medication both in the Enrolment Contract and on a daily basis in the office. The administration of medication is accurately recorded and parents sign the Administration of Medicines Chart in the office to authorise staff to give their child medicine.

If a child runs a temperature and needs paracetamol to bring the temperature down, then the child's parents are phoned and permission must be sought over the phone to administer this medicine. Medicine is only administered to a child if permission has been sought by the parents/guardians or emergency contact person associated with the child.

If the administration of prescribed medicine requires medical knowledge, individual training is provided for the relevant member of staff by a health professional. This training is arranged by the crèche in conjunction with the parents and the HSE.

Sickness

Our policy for the exclusion of ill or infectious children is discussed with parents. This includes procedures for contacting parents or other authorised adults if a child becomes ill in the crèche.

The HSE is notified of any infectious diseases, which a qualified medical person considers necessary.

Safety of Adults

Staff are provided with manual handling training, this includes lifting and carrying children as well as the safe storage, movement, lifting and erection of large pieces of equipment.

When adults need to reach up to store equipment or to change a light bulb they are provided with safe equipment to do so.

The sickness of staff and their involvement in accidents is recorded. The records are to be reviewed regularly to identify any issues, which need to be addressed.

The safety of pregnant staff is ensured through completion of a Pregnant Worker Risk Assessment and appropriate actions.

The office (work station) area is also risk assessed and measures are taken to ensure that staff help to prevent health problems by

- Sitting comfortably at the correct height with forearms parallel to the surface of the desktop and eyes level with the top of the screen
- Maintaining a good posture
- Avoiding repetitive and awkward movements, keeping frequently used items within easy reach
- Changing position regularly
- Using a good key board and mouse technique with wrists straight and not using excessive force
- Making sure there are no reflections or glare on screens by carefully positioning them in relation to sources of light
- Adjusting the screen controls to prevent eye strain
- Keeping the screen clean
- Reporting to their manager any problems associated with use of the equipment
- Planning work for breaks away from the workstation
- The Manager and the Assistant Manager have to undergo VDU training to ensure that they are using their workstation safely

Records

We keep records of:

- Adults authorised to collect children from the crèche
- The names, addresses and telephone numbers of emergency contacts in case of children's illness or accident. Emergency contact details are also kept for staff
- The allergies, dietary requirements and illnesses of individual children
- The times of attendance of children, staff and work experience students
- Accidents and medication
- Incidents

In addition, the following policies and documentation in relation to health and safety are in place

Safety

- Daily Health and Safety checks
- Risk Assessments
- Record of Visitors
- Fire safety procedures
- Fire safety records
- Outings Policy (and risk Assessment)
- Arrival and departure policy
- Late collection Policy
- Manual Handling training and policy

Health

- Medical Administration Policy
- Prior parental consent to administer medication
- Records kept of the administration of medicines
- Prior parental consent for emergency treatment
- Accident records
- Sick children
- Sun Protection Policy
- Head lice policy
- Infectious Disease Policy