



KIDDIE'S COVE PRESCHOOL ROOM

Parent/Guardian Handbook

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Our Mission Statement - About Kiddie's Cove

Kiddie's Cove is a community-based childcare service managed by the Co. Waterford Community Childcare CLG and its voluntary Board of Directors. It accommodates preschool age children which is 2yrs and 8 months to 5yrs.

The safety, health and well-being of children in our care are of paramount importance.

Through comprehensive policies we are committed to delivering quality childcare.

We provide a safe, caring, stimulating and fun environment for children whose needs and best interests we aim to meet.

We provide encouragement, promote enthusiasm and independence and allow children to express themselves and become active learners.

A spirit of inclusion and equality is created through positive experience, opportunities and activities where all children are valued as individuals. We embrace diversity.

Kiddie's Cove supports the Principles of Aistear and Siolta, the National Curriculum Framework from birth to six years and the National Quality Framework for Early Education.

Our service is an open, welcoming, happy and friendly centre committed to the development of each child.

We are sensitive to the needs of all, aware of the age, ability, stage of development and cultural background of all children.

We nurture all; encourage tolerance, acceptance, and value and respect each other.

This service is delivered professionally by a dedicated team of childcare practitioners with relevant childcare qualifications, experience and professionalism.

As a registered Childcare provider Kiddie's Cove is subject to "on the spot" rigorous TUSLA Early Years Inspections which are not pre-notified in addition to DES (Department of Education and Skills) and Pobal inspections. The service must be compliant.

All Staff are Garda vetted.

Curriculum Statement

We at Kiddie's Cove celebrate the uniqueness and individuality of each child in our care. We see learning as a life long journey.

We offer an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum which is underpinned by both Síolta and Aistear. Our curriculum is play based and focuses on the interests of the children.

Children's early learning and development takes place through play and relevant, meaningful learning opportunities. Children's interactions with other children, adults, materials, events and ideas are key to the child's wellbeing, development and learning.

We offer a safe and stimulating environment that supports the holistic development of each child as an active, confident, competent learner. We provide an accessible, developmentally appropriate and well-resourced environment which supports children to become active agents in their own learning and development. The educators in Kiddie's Cove play a key role in this by establishing responsive, sensitive and reciprocal relationships through consistent quality interactions.

We acknowledge that parents/guardians are children's primary care givers. From the outset we endeavour to build positive and trusting relationships with parents/guardians. We are committed to meet the ever-changing needs of children and families. We operate an open-door policy where parents/guardians are always welcome to visit. We recognise that early childhood is a time of being and not becoming, and therefore we recognise and celebrate the uniqueness of every child and family.

Our Relationship with Parents/Guardians

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Management and Staff I would like to extend a warm welcome to you and especially to your child. We hope that your child will be happy and have an enriching experience at Kiddie's Cove.

We respect that you, as parents or guardians know your child best. You know their strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes and can anticipate their needs.

In getting to know your child, we rely on open communication with parents/guardians in all aspects of care and education for the benefit of your child.

Our relationship with you is as important as our relationship with your child.

Each staff member of Kiddie's Cove is qualified and holds a minimum of QQI Level 5 in Childcare and up to Degree Level. Our childcare team is therefore professionally trained to look after your child.

Matters regarding your child's care can be discussed with any staff member working in your child's room.

However, if you have any sensitive worries or concerns the Co-Ordinator will give you time to discuss them. If you wish you can also speak to the General Manager about any matter relating to your child's care.

Please do not hesitate to make any enquiry if it is not covered in this handbook during your child's stay at Kiddie's Cove.

Eleanor McGrath
General Manager

Anne Casey
Room Leader

Julie Mulcahy
Co-Ordinator

Our Staff Team

While your child is attending Kiddie's Cove, we understand that you, as parents and guardians need to be reassured that all your child's needs are being met and that they are being cared for.

In line with our Equality and Diversity policy, we do not discriminate. We include both female and male staff.

Our robust recruitment procedure is designed so that we select the people who we believe are the best people for the job.

Apart from ensuring that each person has the right attributes to work with young children, they are fully trained in Early Years practice. Each of our staff is a childcare professional with a minimum of QQI Level 5 in childcare or its equivalent and some have a Degree in Early Years Care and Education. We actively encourage and support staff to further their professional development through training.

Board of Directors

A voluntary Board of Directors is in place and is committed to the delivery of a quality childcare service that meets the holistic needs of every child in a caring and supportive learning environment.

Students on Work Experience

We positively encourage students undertaking accredited childcare courses to participate in work experience placements at Kiddie's Cove.

Students are also Garda vetted and interviewed for their placement.

Students are supervised by Kiddie's Cove staff and are not counted as part of the required ratio of adults: children.

They are required to adhere to Kiddie's Cove policies and procedures.

Health and Safety

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of each individual in the service. To achieve this, we have established safe working practice amongst staff and children, and ensure everyone is aware of these procedures. We have a health and safety statement available on request.

Safety Procedures

In line with legislation, Kiddie's Cove has a Safeguarding policy in place and it is displayed in the foyer.

- ◆ Staff ensures that every child's safety is of paramount importance.
- ◆ Children are supervised by adults at all times.
- ◆ We adhere to strict collection procedures.
- ◆ All toys, materials are age appropriate and used with supervision.
- ◆ Parents/Guardians should ensure that unsuitable objects such as lollipops, popcorn, or nuts are not available to the children in the childcare service.
- ◆ TUSLA guidelines of ratio regarding qualified adults to children are strictly adhered to. It varies for each age group.
- ◆ The outdoor sand pit is covered when not in use.
- ◆ A Child Protection Policy is in place and training has been provided to staff.
- ◆ The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in relation to Child Protection is the General Manager, Eleanor McGrath. The Co-Ordinator and deputy DLP is Julie Mulcahy.
- ◆ Fire Drills are carried out regularly.
- ◆ The electric sockets are protected by the appropriate covers.
- ◆ Window Blind cords are secured and out of reach by children.
- ◆ Our comprehensive policies and procedures are committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of your child.

Security

- ◆ Kiddie's Cove is a secure area which can only be accessed by authorised personnel.
- ◆ CCTV is in operation at all exits/entrances with a strict protocol in place.
- ◆ Parents/guardians are asked not to hold doors open for other persons as they may not be authorised to enter the building.
- ◆ Security Door must remain closed at all times.
- ◆ Staff will sign in each child as they arrive at the service and sign them out when leaving.
- ◆ All visitors sign in a visitor's book at reception.
- ◆ Non-Childcare staff and authorised personnel also sign on entry.
- ◆ Access to Kiddie's Cove by unauthorised persons is strictly prohibited.

Arrivals

The side gate of the building is the entrance to Kiddie's Cove. It will be unlocked at 09:00 and 13:00 for children to enter.

Collections

All children must be collected by an adult who is named on the registration form and must be over 18 years of age.

If due to unforeseen circumstances you are unable to collect a child as planned, you must notify Kiddie's Cove staff giving the name of your replacement.

This person must carry personal identification and must be **over 18 years of age**.

Kiddie's Cove will not hand a child over to any person claiming to be collecting on the parents/guardians' behalf unless previously notified by that parent/guardian.

Insurance

We have full day care insurance.

ECCE (free pre-school)

Kiddie's Cove operates the ECCE programme that entitles all eligible children to 3 hours free childcare per day, 5 days per week per school term.

ECCE Closures - There are no ECCE free hours during mid-terms, Christmas and Easter. The ECCE year normally finishes at the end of June – we will give you a list of ECCE closures at enrolment.

Admission Policy

Places are offered on a first come first served basis.

Waiting List Procedure:

Parents/guardians will be asked to fill out a waiting list form.

This does not guarantee that a place will be offered.

If a place becomes available, we will contact you and a registration form must be completed by the parents/guardians. This includes details of emergency numbers, medical information, allergies and vaccination records.

A copy of the child's vaccination will be requested.

Settling In Policy:

The service is committed to the smooth transition of your child into the childcare centre. Settling in should be a positive experience and will lay the foundation for future learning.

It can be an emotional experience for the child; we recommend that parents/guardians leave their child for a maximum of 1 hour on day 1. The staff will keep in constant contact in the first few days during this transition period.

Supporting children with additional needs:

Kiddie's Cove is committed to supporting children with additional needs. The development of young children with disabilities or additional educational needs is more likely to be enhanced through attending services for all children with mixed abilities.

All children have differing needs and some children's needs require more staff attention and awareness. We welcome discussions with parents/guardians whereby we can learn how their child can be best supported within our service.

Kiddie's Cove facilitates the "**Access and Inclusion Model**" (AIM). The Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with additional needs can access the ECCE programme. Whilst every effort is made to support the child's learning and their well-being, lack of resources may prevent us from assigning one to one care.

Procedures

Before enrolling a child, we will assess that as a service, we can meet his/her needs appropriately.

We will only enrol a child if we can assure a parent/guardian that:

- ◆ The physical environment is appropriate.
- ◆ Every effort can be made to meet the needs of children and families using the service.

We have adequate resources to meet the child's individual needs

Dropping/Collecting

- ◆ **All children must be dropped off by 9.30am at the latest.** Please contact us if you will be late dropping your child to Kiddie's Cove. Staff have to plan daily routines. If your child arrives after this time staff may have planned an activity with the children away from the room. For these reasons we may have to refuse late admittance.
- ◆ Allow time for a handover in relation to how your child's day has gone; if you have something you would like to discuss with staff please arrive ten minutes early, so that staff can talk with you.
- ◆ If you wish for a person other than yourself or those nominated on the registration form to collect your child, you must inform us and update the registration form.
- ◆ **Please note any person collecting a child must be over 18 years of age.**
- ◆ Staff cannot allow your child to leave until contact has been made with you and proper authorisation is made
- ◆ Children must be collected on time. Failure to collect a child on time is very stressful for a child and staff is expected to work beyond their official working times. If you are unavoidably delayed, please notify us.

AISTEAR

The National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to 6 years

Our curriculum follows the principles of the National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to six years, with planned activities to stimulate the child's development; we provide opportunities for children to develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially.

Aistear means "Journey". We at Kiddie's Cove are committed to support your child to become confident and independent, who learns to value and respect, to think and understand, and develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. We do this by providing play and learning "experiences" and help your child to learn for him/herself.

SÍOLTA

Síolta is the National Quality Framework for Early Education. It ensures that we deliver a curriculum through a range of principles and standards that staff must meet as Early Years Educators.

Early Language and Literacy

Communication begins at birth through every day interactions, singing songs, telling stories, scribbling, painting and drawing and role play.

When a language is not shared:

Staff will try to learn some key phrases in the child's language e.g. hello, goodbye, hungry, thirsty, do you need help? It would be appreciated if parents/guardians can help staff with a few simple phrases to support communication with the child.

Staff will talk to the child, speaking slowly and simply demonstrating what is meant by the words and they will use concrete examples.

They will encourage other children to talk to any child who does not share the same language in a similar straightforward way and at normal volume.

We also use pictures to convey simple routines.

Early Childcare and Education

Children need early learning experiences to foster their intellectual, social and emotional development and lay foundations for later success. Children learn how the world works by playing, exploring and problem solving.

We incorporate many different activities throughout the day. The staff in Kiddie's Cove plan an age-appropriate curriculum that will help to support your child's holistic development. A weekly plan is displayed for parents/guardians to become familiar with their child's routine.

We endeavour to provide:

- ◆ Responsive and stimulating experiences.
- ◆ Interesting environments and challenges.
- ◆ Outdoor play.
- ◆ Child led activities.
- ◆ Imaginative play.
- ◆ Music, movement and drama.
- ◆ Creative time- we look at and discuss different topics and themes- highlight milestones such as birthdays and much more!!!!
- ◆ Awareness of Equality and Diversity.
- ◆ A Sense of Belonging: A family wall is displayed in the room, this helps stimulate parental involvement and build respect for diversity. The wall is reassuring to the children as they can see their parents/guardians in the photos and gain a sense of belonging. We are delighted when parents/guardians contribute family photos.

General Routine

We follow general routines whereby the children feel secure and have an appropriate balance of active and rest time. Children are all individuals and will develop differently; we will build on their strengths and provide support and encouragement when needed.

Kiddie's Cove has a very general routine that includes:

- ◆ Morning greeting.
- ◆ Lunch/Snack time. Children must bring their own pack lunch as this allows for preparation for when they move onto "big school".
- ◆ Child-led activities
- ◆ Circle, story time or news time.
- ◆ The children are taken outside frequently for play each day, weather permitting.
- ◆ At going home time, children are generally excited to see their parents or guardians and share their news, show their pictures and so forth. They may get anxious if left waiting for collection.

Child Observations

The benefit of observations by childcare staff is to:

- ◆ Ensure that your child is meeting his/her significant milestones of development.
- ◆ Find out how best to support your child's learning and holistic development ensuring that they become active and confident learners.
- ◆ Find measures to deal with certain behaviours.
- ◆ Ensure that all the child's needs are being met.

Childcare staff undertakes a variety of methods of observation that are able to track your child's progress across all domains of development i.e. physical, social, emotional and language.

Observations are carried out discreetly while the child is engaged in play or an activity. They are carried out in line with the recommendations set out in the TUSLA guidelines for Pre- School services and are intended to support the child's holistic development.

All information is confidential and can only be shared with the permission of the parent/guardian (for instance for a referral from TUSLA).

Observations can be shared with parents/guardians at any time.

A "Learning Journal" for each child is compiled. This shows examples of your child's work clearly showing his/her learning across all the domains of development. This journal is passed on to you when your child leaves the service

Illness/Exclusion/Vaccination/Medication

Please notify the service when your child cannot attend at your earliest convenience. If your child is diagnosed with a notifiable illness such as chicken pox or a condition that is contagious the service must be informed so that other parents/guardians can be made aware. Please note that your child's identity will NOT be disclosed.

Medication must never be left in a child's bag, including inhalers.

MINIMUM PERIODS OF EXCLUSION FROM THE SERVICE FOR ILLNESS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.

- **Antibiotics Prescribed:** At least 24 hours.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Until eyes are no longer weeping and clear or until they have been on antibiotics for 48 hours.
- **Croup:** When the cough has subsided.
- **Diarrhoea:** 48 hours from last episode
- **Chickenpox:** 7 days from appearance of the rash, blisters are scabbed over.
- **COVID 19 (Confirmed case):** Follow HSE guidance on Isolation. Do not enter the service until isolation period as per HSE recommendations has ended.
- **COVID 19 (Close Contact):** Follow HSE guidance on testing, restricting of movement and isolation. Do not enter the service until restriction/isolation period as per HSE recommendations has ended.
- **COVID 19 (Awaiting test result/household member awaiting result):** Follow HSE guidance on testing, restricting of movement and isolation. Do not enter the service until all tests results have been received and the restriction period or isolation period as per HSE recommendations has ended.
- **Gastroenteritis, Food poisoning, Salmonellas, Dysentery:** Until 48 hours after first formed stool.
- **Hand, Foot and Mouth:** Until child is well/seek Coordinator's advice.
- **Infective hepatitis:** 7 days from onset of jaundice.
- **Infective Jaundice:** Until clinical recovery.
- **Influenza (flu):** 7 days from onset of symptoms.

- **Measles:** 4 days from appearance of the rash.
- **Meningococcal Infection:** Until recovered from illness, bacteriological exam clear.
- **Mumps:** Exclude child for 5 days after onset of symptoms.
- **Pertussis (Whooping cough):** 5 days from the commencement of antibiotics
- **Poliomyelitis:** Until declared free from infection by GP
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV):** Until symptoms are gone and temperature is under 38° Celsius.
- **Rubella (German measles):** 7 days from appearance of the rash
- **Scabies:** Not necessary, once treatment has commenced
- **Scarlet fever:** Child can return 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment.
- **Streptococcal infection of the throat:** 24 hours from the start of treatment
- **Impetigo:** Until the skin is healed or 24 hours after starting antibiotic.
- **Pediculosis(lice):** Until appropriate treatment has been given.
- **Temperature:** Of 38 degrees or over
- **Vomiting:** 48 hours from last episode of vomiting
- **Ear Infection:** 24 hrs after starting antibiotic
- **Thrush:** 24 hrs after starting antibiotic
- **Streptococcal infection of the throat:** 24 hours from the start of treatment

The above list is not exhaustive and there are other symptoms that children may have where the service may require the child to remain at home until the condition has been treated. Some of the following may fall into that category:

- Deep persistent coughing
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing

- Complaints of stiff neck and headache
- Unexplained rashes

If your child contracts any communicable disease, you must inform Kiddie's Cove in the interests of Public Health.

We will notify all parents/guardians of any notifications of a communicable disease.

If your child or family member has a confirmed infectious disease e.g. measles, written confirmation must be received from your child's doctor. Our service is obligated to inform Infectious Disease Control.

Accident/Incident

- A first aid box is available in each room and staff have up to date First Aid training.
- Emergency contact numbers and doctors' details for each child are available at all times.
- Every accident/incident is recorded in the room diary, log and the accident/incident book and also in the child's personal file and the parent notified, this has to be signed by staff and parent/guardian.
- **Staff must be notified of all ALLERGIES.** Any specific actions to be taken in the event of an allergic reaction **MUST** be notified to the service **ON REGISTRATION**. If an Epi-Pen is to be used, training in the use of same by a medical practitioner must be provided to staff before the child commences.
- A list of allergies is displayed in the classroom so that restricted foods will not be given to the affected child.
- Whether indoors, outside in the playground, or on a walk outside Kiddie's Cove, the children are supervised. Accidents, though, occasionally occur. Any accident is reported to the parent/guardian. If it is minor, it will be dealt with by staff and the parent/guardian will be informed on collection. If an injury causes concern, we will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact person straight away. If **emergency medical care** is necessary the staff may take the following steps:
- Contact the parent or guardian, in the case where they cannot be contacted the other persons listed on the registration form you complete upon admission will then be contacted.
- Contact the child's doctor
- If we cannot contact you or your child's doctor, we will do any or all of the following:
 - Call Kiddie's Cove nominated doctor. (Shandon Clinic)
 - Call an ambulance.
 - Have the child taken to the Hospital in the company of a staff member.

Clothing

Please send appropriate labelled clothing i.e. rain coats, wellies, sun cream, hats etc., as weather dictates, we ask that these items be left in Kiddie's Cove during term time.

Dress children comfortably and appropriately for play. Please send a spare set of clothes and label all belongings.

Spare clothes to include:

- ◆ Top
- ◆ Vest
- ◆ Jumper
- ◆ Trousers
- ◆ Underwear
- ◆ Socks
- ◆ Shoes

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is so important for every child's development. It is a place where they can explore, use their imaginations, experiment, enhance their social skills and challenge their physical abilities. We treat the outdoor area the same as the indoors where their development and learning is supported by a wide range of activities. We will ensure that children are suitably protected if they engage in "messy play". We do not encourage parents/guardians to send their children in their "best" clothes. Please leave a pair of wellies at Kiddie's Cove for your child's use.

Outings

Before taking a group of children outside of Kiddie's Cove we ensure that we have the correct ratio of adults to children. The outing is always carefully planned and risk assessed. Children love to go out as a group whether it is only a walk to the park or a visit to the local library.

Food and Nutrition

Kiddie's Cove operates a healthy eating policy. We wish to encourage a healthy lifestyle with an emphasis on the enjoyable and social aspects of eating together.

- Parents/guardians are asked to inform staff of any special dietary requirements.
- We ask that the children's lunches contain **"no junk food"** and promote healthy eating to include fruit and yoghurts.

We do not allow nuts or any products containing nuts including Nutella.

You may provide a birthday cake to celebrate your child's birthday. The cake must not contain nuts. Treats may be given by staff on special occasions such as Halloween/ Christmas/ Easter unless a parent requests us not to.

Toys / Personal Belongings

- ◆ If possible, we discourage children from bringing favourite toys in case they get lost or damaged.

Child Protection Policy

Kiddie's Cove has a TUSLA approved Child Protection Policy. This is available to parents/guardians on request.

Kiddie's Cove follows TUSLA "Children's first guidance". All Staff have received child protection training.

Every member of staff has up to date Garda vetting.

Before commencing work at Kiddie's Cove, thorough reference checks are obtained.

Confidentiality

- ◆ All information received relating to any child will be treated in a confidential manner where the safety and welfare of the child is not at risk.
- ◆ All records will be kept safe and secure.
- ◆ Parents/guardians have a right to privacy.
- ◆ Please inform us of any changes in details, phone numbers, emergency contact person etc., as soon as the changes occur.
- ◆ Staff has access to information in order to provide the correct care for your child. It is on a need-to-know basis.
- ◆ In the event of a child protection or child welfare concerns, staff will inform the designated liaison person (DLP). In the best interests of the child. Kiddie's Cove are legally obliged to report concerns to the TUSLA Social Work Department.
- ◆ Where possible we will attempt to advise the parent/guardian/carer unless there is significant risk of harm.
- ◆ Parents/Guardians/Carers must report any matter of concern within the service to the General Manager.
- ◆ If there are Child Welfare or Child Protection concerns, Kiddie's Cove is committed to working with the family for the benefit of the child in collaboration with TUSLA.

Comments/Queries

Please follow up if you are unhappy with any element of our service. We endeavour to investigate and resolve any issues. We aim to be an open, welcoming service and invite any feedback.

Parent Involvement

We have an open-door policy please feel free to ask questions, make suggestions or voice concerns. At times throughout the year there may be an opportunity for parents/guardians or grandparents to share their talents or skills and maybe do a demonstration in Kiddie's Cove.

Training

Kiddie's Cove is committed to staff development and training. Staff training is ongoing throughout the year. This is to develop skills to a high standard and maintain a high standard of quality and care.

Termination of care

Termination by the Parent/Guardian/Carer

In the event that you find it necessary to cancel your childcare you will need to give notice to Kiddie's Cove two weeks prior to termination.

Please give written and dated notice and you will be required to bring your account up to date.

Termination by Kiddie's Cove

This policy is initiated so we can ensure that the children attending Kiddie's Cove enjoy a safe and comfortable environment in which to grow and develop. Termination of a place is always a **last resort measure**, when all other attempts have failed or when our duty of care to other children and our staff is adversely compromised.

Termination of a place will never relate to discrimination of any of the nine grounds outlined in the Equality Act.

Kiddie's Cove reserves the right to terminate a childcare place if:

- ◆ The child has ongoing needs that the service finds, by attempting to deliver appropriate care, does not have sufficient resources to meet.
- ◆ The Parent/Guardian/service relationship has irrevocably broken down and is damaging to Kiddie's Cove.
- ◆ A child after a reasonable period of time is unable to adjust to the routine in Kiddie's Cove and through frustration is consistently behaving in a disruptive or aggressive manner which may cause hurt to themselves, others or damage property. In this case staff will have already introduced strategies to address the behaviours which have failed.
- ◆ Failure to comply with public health advice may result in the termination of your child's place in Kiddie's Cove.

Holidays / Closures

A calendar will be made available to all parents/guardians and reminders will be posted in Kiddie's Cove and on our Facebook page.

Emergency Closures

In the event that Kiddie's Cove should need to close due to emergency or unforeseen circumstances we will endeavour to phone/email parents/guardians and will post a notice giving as much up to date information on our Facebook page.

Hours of Service

ECCE free hours Morning Session: 9am – 12pm Monday to Friday
 Afternoon Session: 1pm – 4pm Monday to Friday

Policies and Procedures

Our policies and procedures are available for parents/guardians upon request.

Conclusion

We at Kiddie's Cove will make every effort to ensure that your child has a positive and happy experience within our service. Please do not hesitate to share your views, concerns and positive comments with us as we are constantly striving to provide excellence in our care.

Thank you.

Signed: *Eleanor McGrath*

General Manager

Signed: *Julie Mulcahy*

Sesame Co-Ordinator

Date: Sept 2023

