

POLICY NO.5 PARENTS AS PARTNERS POLICY

REV: 09 REV. DATE: 15.05.2022

This policy is a requirement of the Childcare Act 1991.

Killorglin Community childcare Centre acknowledges the crucial role of parents as primary educators of their children. The Board of Directors, management and staff of the service are committed to being open, inclusive, welcoming, accepting, and respectful of all parents using the service.

A copy of our Policies and Procedures are available in the Entrance Hall. Copies of our parent handbook is also available at our reception area. Digital copies of the policies & Procedures as well as the parent information booklet are supplied to all parents in August of each year.

A warm welcome is provided for all parents each morning ensuring a brief daily exchange of information with each parent when relevant.

Notice boards are provided for current information, leaflets, Tusla information, contact numbers and relevant statutory documents as required by the Child Care (Pre-school services) Regulations 2006 and subsequent legislation.

We also communicate verbally, via SMS and digitally (including Facebook & website) And email to enhance the smooth sharing of events and information.

We display some art work and photos of children internally in the rooms and around the centre. We provide a daily report for all children up to Toddlers.

All information relating to each service including curriculum, menus etc is on the main notice board and the notice boards of the rooms and is updated weekly.

We occasionally supply newsletters and written correspondence when appropriate to do so.

We periodically utilise a Parental Survey for parents to voice their opinions on our Service.

The Centre values all parents individually and ensures opportunities for them to contribute to the group's activities.

We have a suggestions box in our reception area and welcome any constructive ideas to enhance our service and parents / guardians are equally welcome to email suggestions to the centre.

The management & staff work in partnership with Parents & families to ensure:

The development of each child - physically, language & cognitively, social & emotionally through the curriculum & programmes and activities & experience provided by qualified, professional and caring staff.

Health of each child – through the policies on nutrition, sleep/rest, fresh air, outdoors play, medicine administration, illness and exclusion due to illness.

Safety and well being of each child – through the policies on first aid, accident procedure, management & staff reporting obligations on child protection issues, inspections, fire safety, environment & premises, arrivals & departures, outings / transport.

The Centre welcomes hands on input from parents to the service, i.e. Board of Directors, fund raising etc.

Families with Separated parents/guardians

The separation of parents following marital breakdown is extremely traumatic for all the parties involved.

This centre will approach the issue of marital or civil separation with the utmost sensitivity and with a clear focus on the well-being of the children while in their care.

Occasionally where the separated parents are in dispute with each other conflicting demands can be made on childcare staff and the following present a best practise guide for all involved to ensure the best outcome for the children involved.

Custody and Access Disputes

As a matter of practice, this service advises parents concerned that the we have no role in or will not become involved in any such dispute, remaining impartial at all times.

However this service will, in general observe the wishes of the parent who has 'de facto', ie 'day to day' control of the child ie., in the event of a dispute over issues such as the collection of children, this service will work with the primary caregiver.

In general, we will also consult with the primary caregiver before releasing information to the other parent.

While a child attends this service our staff are in 'loco parentis'. In the case of a dispute, where one parent seeks to use the service for informal access to his /her children the Service Manager may decline this in the best interest of the child.

If there is a dispute over collection for example (where both parents have equal guardianship), we will require a copy of the official court order stating who has rights of collection.

It should be noted that it is not the role, at any time of any staff members within our service to enforce a court order on behalf of any parent/guardian.

We will work, as much and as closely as possible with both parties and whatever agreements are in place however It is expected that such agreements between both parties will be adhered to or altered by agreement where necessary.

All alterations to any agreements must be advised in writing at the earliest opportunity to the manager of this service. Due to GDPR we will not share such information between parents on either side. This is the role solely of both parents.

This centre will ensure that, as much as is possible (some information sharing will be required) to treat all information confidentially.

Other requirements

– if guardianship or access issues change we need to be advised.

OR

– Where parents are not married, this service will need to be informed whether both parents have guardianship and access. This declaration should be signed by both parties.

Any change in guardianship, access or custody arrangements must be advised and supported in writing at the earliest opportunity.

Terminology that we use of Guardianship, Custody and Access Information.

Guardianship

Guardianship in Ireland describes the legal responsibility of parents to make decisions and perform duties in relation to their child's upbringing.

Custody

Custody in Ireland refers to the day-to-day care, residency and upbringing of children who are regarded as dependant children.

Dependant children in custody matters are children who are under the age of eighteen. In cases of judicial separation or divorce, one parent is usually granted custody.

The children reside permanently with the parent who has custody and the other parent is granted access to the children at agreed times, which can include overnight access.

It is possible for parents to continue to have joint custody of their children after separation/divorce and for the children to spend an equal amount of time with each parent if the parents can agree and arrange this.

Access

Access refers to the right of the parent in Ireland with whom the child does not reside to spend time with the child. It can include the right to have the child stay overnight either occasionally, on alternate weekends or during school holidays and the right for parent and child to go on holidays together.

Occasionally where separated parents are in dispute with each other, conflicting demands can be made on the creche where the children attend. As such it is important to be aware of parental rights to protect you the provider act within a legal framework

A father in Ireland who is married to the mother of his child, has automatic guardianship rights of his child. As such both parents have the same rights. This is irrelevant of whether the marriage took place before the birth of the child.

Unmarried fathers in Ireland do not have automatic rights.

If a child in Ireland is born outside of marriage, the mother is automatically considered the sole guardian.

There are two ways an unmarried father can become a guardian

If the mother agrees, the father can become a joint-guardian if both parents sign a "statutory declaration." This parental agreement is a joint statutory declaration made by the mother and father of a non-marital child who wish the father to become a guardian of the child jointly with the mother.

However, if the mother does not agree to sign the statutory declaration or agree that the father be appointed as joint guardian, the father must apply to the court to be appointed as a joint-guardian. This is possible, irrespective of whether the fathers' name is on the child's birth certificate or not. While the mother's views are taken into account, the fact that she does not consent to the guardianship application does not automatically mean that the court will refuse the order sought by the father. Instead, the court will decide what is in the best interest of the child.

The father's name on the birth certificate does not confer guardianship rights or mean he is a legal guardian.

If a dispute or issue arises in relation to a child the manager of this facility may have to request evidence of the parental agreement or court order dealing with guardianship, access and custody if they are not aware of it in advance.

Unless precluded by court order, each parent has a right to consult with this service, attend parent teacher meetings, receive information in relation to their child reports and be notified of meetings of parents.

It effectively gives all guardians a say in all matters affecting the welfare of children whether physical, moral, religious, social and educational.

APPROVAL DATE: _____

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: _____

SIGNED: _____
(On behalf of the Board of Directors)