

ST. GABRIEL'S PRE-SCHOOL & AFTER-SCHOOL SERVICE

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Updated September 2016



Manager: Janice Thompson

St. Gabriel's Pre-school & After-school

St Gabriels Primary School, Dominican Campus,

Ballyfermot Road, Dublin 10

Email: stgabrielpreschool@gmail.com

Tel 0858198967

(All policies and procedures are developed in line with recommendations made in "Guide to Developing Policies and Procedures in a Childcare Setting", "Siolta-The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education in Ireland" and "Personnel Practice in Early Years Services – A Guide Revised Edition")

WELCOME TO ST GABRIEL'S PRE-SCHOOL

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we are committed to providing a pre-school service of the highest standard. We are notified to and inspected by the Tusla, the child & family agency.

Trained, motivated and friendly staff are the cornerstone of our pre-school and we encourage a strong teamwork approach to help build and support our shared objectives. St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to equal opportunity in employment.

St Gabriel's Pre-School provides an excellent service for up to 22 preschool children and 60 children in our afterschool service and aims to provide the perfect environment for children to develop their social, personal and educational skills and learn through a planned play based curriculum.

Above all, your child's welfare and your peace of mind are most important to us. We provide a warm, loving, home-from-home environment, where each child is treated with respect and will develop and learn as individuals while feeling safe and secure.

Thank you for choosing St Gabriel's Pre-School

Janice Thompson
Manager

CONTENTS

- 1. THE SERVICE**
 - 1.1 MISSION STATEMENT**
 - 1.2 THE OPERATION & FEES**
 - 1.3 ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT**
 - 1.4 SETTLING IN THE CHILD**
 - 1.5 STAFF RATIO**
 - 1.6 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**
 - 1.7 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**
 - 1.8 CHILD DEVELOPMENT**
 - 1.9 INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**
 - 1.10 CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND MORAL VALUES**
 - 1.11 CHILDCARE CURRICULUM**
 - 1.12 OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT**
 - 1.13 CHILD PROTECTION**
 - 1.14 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF**
 - 1.15 COMPLAINTS**
 - 1.16 POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**
 - 1.17 ANTI-BULLYING**
 - 1.18 COLLECTION OF CHILDREN**
 - 1.19 CAR PARKING**
 - 1.20 CONFIDENTIALITY**
 - 1.21 RECORD KEEPING**

- 1.22 DATA PROTECTION**
- 1.23 FUNDRAISING**
- 1.24 CODE OF ETHICS – WORKING WITH CHILDREN**
- 1.25 IRISH LANGUAGE**
- 1.26 EQUIPMENT AND TOYS**

2. EMPLOYMENT/PERSONNEL

- 2.1 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**
- 2.2 DOUBLE EMPLOYMENT**
- 2.3 DATA PROTECTION**
- 2.4 PERSONAL PROPERTY**
- 2.5 PROTECTED DISCLOSURES**
- 2.6 EMPLOYMENT / PERSONNEL FILES**
- 2.7 PAYMENT OF WAGES / SALARIES**
- 2.8 TIMEKEEPING**
- 2.9 WORKING HOURS AND BREAKS**
- 2.10 ANNUAL LEAVE AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**
- 2.11 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**
- 2.12 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**
- 2.13 DIGNITY AT WORK – ANTI-HARASSMENT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT**
- 2.14 DIGNITY AT WORK – ANTI-BULLYING**
- 2.15 SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION**

- 2.16 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE**
- 2.17 MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**
- 2.18 STAFF TRAINING, QUALIFICATIONS & CPD**
- 2.19 MATERNITY LEAVE**
- 2.20 ADOPTIVE LEAVE**
- 2.21 FORCE MAJEURE LEAVE**
- 2.22 CARERS LEAVE**
- 2.23 JURY SERVICE LEAVE**
- 2.24 PARENTAL LEAVE**
- 2.25 TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**
- 2.26 REFERENCES**
- 2.27 VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS**
- 2.28 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**
- 2.29 MULTI MEDIA POLICY - USE OF MOBILE PHONES/CAMERAS/TV,ETC**
- 2.30 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, INTERNET AND EMAIL**
- 2.31 REDUNDANCY**
- 2.32 DRESS CODE**
- 2.33 ABSENCE POLICY, SICK LEAVE & FITNESS TO WORK**
- 2.34 GARDA VETTING**

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 3.1 THE SAFETY STATEMENT**
- 3.2 FIRE DRILLS & PROCEDURES**
- 3.3 NO SMOKING**

- 3.4 PERSONAL HYGIENE**
- 3.5 SAFETY AND SECURITY**
- 3.6 FIRST AID**
- 3.7 TOILET HYGIENE**
- 3.8 PREMISES INDOORS & OUTDOORS**
- 3.9 MISSING CHILD**
- 3.10 FURNITURE AND FITTINGS**
- 3.11 ELECTRICITY**
- 3.12 EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN / STAFF WHEN SICK**
- 3.13 HEADLICE AND NITS**
- 3.14 RECORDING/REPORTING OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES**
- 3.15 ADMINISTERING OF MEDICATION**
- 3.16 NUTRITION**
- 3.17 FOOD HYGIENE**
- 3.18 SAFE WORK AND PLAY ENVIRONMENT**
- 3.19 ACCIDENTS AT WORK**
- 3.20 OUTDOOR PLAY**
- 3.21 OUTINGS**
- 3.22 ANAPHYLAXIS**
- 3.23 PEST CONTROL**
- 3.24 CLEANLINESS/HYGIENE & HANDWASHING**
- 3.25 SPILLAGES & HAZARDS**
- 3.26 SUN SAFETY**

3.27 SWINE FLU

3.28 EMERGENCY CLOSURE

3.29 ENVIORNMENTAL CARE & RECYCLING

4 MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND FINANCE

4.1 THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4.2 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

4.3 CODE OF WORK PRACTICE

4.4 FINANCIAL POLICY

4.5 BACKGROUND / HISTORY OF THE SERVICE

4.6 COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

4.7 INSURANCE

1. The service

1.1 OUR MISSION

Our Pre-School aspires to providing a high quality, inclusive, accessible, service which will address the social, physical, developmental, creative and learning needs of children in our area.

AIMS

- ❖ To promote a safe, secure and caring environment for the children.
- ❖ To foster the children's independence and self-esteem by showing them how to do things for themselves in a discrete and integrated approach and through providing a well balanced programme of self-motivated and self-directed age appropriate activities.
- ❖ To promote respect, through encouragement, the provision of suitable models of behaviour and planned activities.
- ❖ To provide opportunities and experiences where the children have freedom of choice in selecting age appropriate activities.
- ❖ Through providing childcare places, we will enable and encourage parents to participate in Further education and community based training or employment opportunities.
- ❖ To provide support and encouragement for parents who have felt excluded from the educational system through personal experiences, by giving them and their children an opportunity to be involved in a positive early start.

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ At St Gabriel's Pre-School our ethos and practice values diversity and promotes equality.
- ❖ We aim to select friendly, dependable, mature and professional staff through our rigorous recruitment and selection policy
- ❖ To ensure that the developmental, educational, emotional and social needs of each child are met daily
- ❖ The voice of the child is heard, respected and contributes to our programme
- ❖ We aim to deliver a quality care and play curriculum which addresses children's well-being, identity and belonging, communication and exploring and thinking, along the principles of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework
- ❖ We aim to make St Gabriel's Pre-School accessible to all members of the community, regardless of race, gender, family status, age, disability, or religious belief.

- ❖ We aim to work with 'Síolta' The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, by following its 12 principles of quality and the 16 standards within its framework.
- ❖ We operate within the Childcare (Early year's Services) Regulations 2016 and The National Standards for Pre-Schools (2010)
- ❖ The environment is planned and well-organised in a way that suits the different needs of individual children, while keeping in mind the importance of Safety and Hygiene
- ❖ Parents are actively welcomed at St Gabriel's Pre-School at all times. We endeavour to share information and communicate with parents directly, in order to give feedback at the end of each day and to ensure that they are made aware of on-going developments in policies and procedures.
- ❖ St Gabriel's Pre-School wishes to promote a positive atmosphere where children, staff and parents are treated with respect.

1.2 THE OPERATION & FEES POLICY

The service will operate for 38 weeks per year in accordance with the standardised primary school year.

Opening Hours: 9:05 - 12:05 Pre-School Session
1:25 – 4.00 After School Session

Fees: We have a tiered fee policy based on the childcare subvention scheme, this is reviewed yearly & displayed on the parents notice board. There are no fees for the ECCE places, however a €20 deposit is payable to secure your child's place. This will be returned in September when your child starts

Pre School: The full weekly fee for the Pre School (non ECCE) is €50 euro per week, reductions will be given based on the childcare subvention scheme,(€33 for Band B & €19 for Band A)to be collected every week in advance for the coming week.

After School: The full weekly fee for the after-school full session is €50, reductions are given based on the CSS scheme (€33 for band B & €19 for band A), The full weekly fee for the after-school half session is €25, reductions are given based on the CSS scheme (€15 for band B & €10 for band A), they will be collected every Thursday or Friday in advance for the coming week. If the children are paying their teacher, please put it in a sealed envelope with the child's name clearly stated.

Please note: If a child is absent for all or part of a week, the full fee must still be paid in order to keep the child's place. Arrears will not be allowed to accumulate and a penalty of 10 euro may be charged. Receipts will be given.

There is no reduction in fees for Public/Bank Holidays.

Closure in Exceptional Circumstances

In the event of the closure of St Gabriel's Pre-School in exceptional circumstances, that is beyond the control of the Management i.e. adverse weather conditions no fees will apply however if St Gabriel's Pre-School is open during adverse weather and your child does not attend the full fee will be payable.

There will be no fees charged when St Gabriel's Pre-School is on Holidays (e.g. the month of August, Christmas and Easter holidays). These dates of will be circulated directly to parents and posted on the parent's notice board well in advance of these closure periods.

Withdrawal of Children from the Pre-school

We request that parents/guardians:

- ❖ Give notice, in writing that the child/children are leaving St Gabriel's Pre-School
- ❖ Give St Gabriel's Pre-School one Month's notice or pay St Gabriel's Pre-School one month's fees.
- ❖ St Gabriel's Pre-School also reserves the right to request that the Parent/Guardian withdraw their child/children from St Gabriel's Pre-School if they are not 'settling in' or adapting to St Gabriel's Pre-School. St Gabriel's Pre-School agrees to give two week's notice of this to the Parent/Guardian so that they can make alternative arrangements.

Non Payment of Fees

- ❖ Non payment of fees may result in loss of place for your child
- A repeated failure to pay fees may result in suspension or withdrawal of your child's place until the matter is resolved.
- A €10 penalty may be imposed for late payment of fees.

1.3 ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT

Principles

It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to offer equal access to children and their parents/guardians inclusive of special needs, cultural, financial status and religious orientation.

We focus on ensuring that every child feels safe and welcome at all times, while providing the highest standard of care and commitment.

Pre-School:

Children must be 2years & 9 months. Priority will be given to children:

- ❖ Who qualify for the ECCE scheme
- ❖ Who have siblings in the school
- ❖ From the Ballyfermot area & coming to St. Gabriels school

After School:

Places will be allocated to children from the Junior Infants classes up to 6th class. Application forms will be available from the beginning of the school year. Places are available to children attending St Gabriel's Primary school only.

Waiting list – when all available places are taken up, a waiting list is established.

General Policy and Procedures

- ❖ St Gabriel's Pre-School operates an open door policy especially during the settling in period.
- ❖ St Gabriel's Pre-School offers a one year free pre-school place for children eligible for the scheme. Children outside this age range can avail of a place based on parents paying the appropriate fee.
- ❖ Children with special needs and disabilities are welcome. Parents need to be aware that it may be required for them to provide a special needs assistant when necessary.
- ❖ All details regarding a child's application form must be completed and any relevant important information or specific diet or health requirements must be noted.
- ❖ We reserve the right to refuse admission.
- ❖ We reserve the right to terminate our services.
- ❖ Parents should familiarise themselves with our policies and procedures; they will be reviewed and changed accordingly to incorporate any new developments from the Health Services Executive.
- ❖ No uniform is necessary however the navy tracksuit as worn in the National school is preferable. We do ask that all children wear suitable, comfortable clothes, ideal for art work and outdoor messy play. (No 'good' clothes please). All long hair must be tied up. No hoop or long earrings.

1.4 SETTLING IN THE CHILD

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we aim to ensure children feel safe and secure in the absence of their parents/carers. St Gabriel's Pre-School will therefore endeavour to make the settling-in process a positive experience for children and will work closely in partnership with parents/carers to ensure this is achieved.

We recognise that in some cases there may be particular difficulties experienced by children, parents/carers, and staff during the settling-in period and we are prepared to explore and consider various ways of settling children into the service. All children are individuals and we plan to meet their individual needs and resolve any difficulties quickly and smoothly.

In order to accomplish this we will ensure that: **Pre- Admission**

- ❖ The Manager invites the child and parents/guardians to visit St Gabriel's Pre-School to our open day.
- ❖ The pre-school offers phased/staggered settling-in if required
- ❖ Prior to enrolment exchange of information will take place between parents and staff.

First Day

- ❖ The Manager & staff will greet the child and parent together.
- ❖ The parent will be assured of the value of their presence to the child in this process.
- ❖ Some children may not be ready for a full session and the Manager will advise the parents on this matter.

- ❖ Parents will be made aware of the necessity of interacting with their child and the other people in the service in order to reassure the child of the safety of the new surroundings.
- ❖ Children must be collected on time and promptly from the pre-school session at the agreed time.
- ❖ Staff will provide support and encouragement to parents/guardians during the settling-in period should the transition be difficult. Staff will phone parents/guardians to reassure them, if necessary
- ❖ staff may need to assist parents/guardians through this separation process as an extended goodbye can be distressful for children.
- ❖ The 'settling in' process has no time limits and may need to be repeated if a child becomes unsettled.
- ❖ When children are beginning to settle without their parents/guardians, they should be supported in observing, experimenting and discovering for themselves without any attempt to make them participate in activities.
- ❖ Opportunities will be made available for parents/guardians and tutors to exchange information on the child's progress at this stage.
- ❖ Parents/guardians and their children are encouraged to get to know the key people involved in their child's life.
- ❖ Children who are still clearly distressed having followed the above procedure may need to have their attendance at the pre-school deferred for a trial period.

1.5 STAFF RATIO

The Management will ensure a sufficient number of suitable and competent adults are working directly with the pre-school children in St Gabriel's Pre-School at all times

The adult/child ratios are governed by the Childcare (Early years services) Regulations, 2016. St Gabriel's Pre-School will follow the adult/child ratios as defined in the above Regulations. For afterschool children we will follow good practice.

The ratio will be 1:11 for pre-school ECCE session.

1.6 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

St Gabriel's Pre-School recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers to promote the best interests of children and that parent's play a key role in the education of their children. St Gabriel's Pre-School will work in partnership with and support parents in this role. We have an "open door" policy where families are always welcome but where the needs of all of the children in our care are always the first priority. Parents will be made feel welcome and regular exchange of information with parents and staff will enable a two-way process of support.

We will:

- ❖ Ensure parents views and needs are incorporated, parents rights respected, in regard to all cultural and religious differences.
- ❖ Ensure we adhere to respect confidentiality at all times.
- ❖ Welcome comments and feedback.
- ❖ Ensure parents/carers are given regular information about their child's progress through informal and formal feedback –verbal and written.
- ❖ Facilitate appointments and meetings.
- ❖ Ensure that all parents/carers are informed about meetings and any other activities being organised by the service.
- ❖ Ensure all parents/carers are aware of the policies and procedures.
- ❖ Encourage parents/carers to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests through curriculum activities.
- ❖ If parents are separated we may contact both parents to discuss a child's progress.
- ❖ We ask that parents let us know if you will be picking up your child early so that we can have the child ready for you and to minimise disrupting the rest of the group.

Our open door policy:

It is our policy at St Gabriel's Pre-School to offer a bright, warm, welcoming environment. We understand the importance of consultation and building relationships with our children, parents and staff.

- All parents are welcome to visit St Gabriel's Pre-School at any time, however parents should be aware that we may not be able to give you our attention at this time as the needs of the children in our care come first.
- Potential parents are welcome to visit, however an appointment must be made in advance.
- We ask parents to ensure that their child/children are collected on time; children can become distressed and worried if they are collected late continuously.
- We aim to give feedback on each child both verbally & through our child portfolios.
- We would welcome that parents advise staff each morning of any significant happenings at home that we should know of e.g. child had a poor night's sleep, as he/she may be tired.

Babysitting- In order to maintain a professional relationship with families, St Gabriel's Pre-School staff cannot babysit for children that attend the service outside working hours.

1.7 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Children learn about difference and will be capable of assigning values to them. It is essential that the pre-school staff is aware of this, so that their practice enables children to develop positive attitudes to differences of race, culture, language, gender and disability. Inclusivity is central to the culture of our pre-school and after-school

1.8 CHILD DEVELOPMENT

It is widely accepted that children develop holistically and to enhance their whole development we will provide them with a comprehensive programme that gives them active learning experiences. All children will be supported in their learning and their experiences extended in a variety of ways that are appropriate to their stage of development.

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to providing a curriculum based on the high scope model that incorporates child development, creates a child centred play based environment, which enables young children to actively pursue their own learning, based on the above principles and Siolta and Aistear.

Staff will provide balanced intervention and support to encourage positive attitudes towards learning and play.

Staff will ensure each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the service through the provision of the appropriate opportunities, experiences, activities, interaction and materials and equipment, have regard to the age and stage of the development of child and the child's cultural context.

The diversity of children's experiences, culture, gender, social background and traditions will be nurtured and valued by the staff. We will actively promote equality of opportunity, participation and anti-discriminatory practice with regard to all children in our care. This includes the promotion of mutual respect between children in our care.

Staff will seek ways to support children's own capacities for self-care.

We aim to give children a sense of identity & belonging, changes of carer will be kept to a minimum. We will seek to support, work with and actively involve each child, child's family/carers in the child's development by providing opportunity for on-going communication about the child. These will include on-going updates of the child's activities and regular reviews of the child's well-being.

Child Development Milestone Guidelines

St Gabriel's Pre-School caters for children from 2 years 9 months. Staff will have knowledge of expected developmental milestones to assist them in their observation of children. Staff are aware that children develop at different stages and in different ways and milestones are guidelines only

If staff have concerns in relation to a child they will advise parents to seek help from a professional or local Health Services.

1.9 INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

It is the intention of this service to accept children with special needs. Following consultation with the parents as to the needs their child has, the staff will accept this child without bias and enable him/her to have a very enjoyable, full experience of the pre-school curriculum. We believe that the development of young children with special educational needs or disabilities is

more likely to be enhanced through attending services for all children. We ensure that our staff will receive training where necessary and the environment is appropriate. See S.E.N.policy.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to:

- Providing all children with the opportunity to access the service regardless of their ability within the expertise and resources available and in accordance with the best interests of the child
- Respecting the rights of all children to participate in a quality children's programme
- Providing a family-based approach which recognises that parents know their children best and want the best for their children
- Recognising that families are different and unique
- Recognising that all children learn in different ways and at different rates
- Recognising a child's right to social inclusion.
- Regularly reviewing with staff, the planning and resourcing provided for children with additional needs participating at the pre-school
- Linking with other groups that support the child, HSE, Voluntary Services etc
- Working with the staff and families to identify and apply for additional resources/support for children with additional needs
- Providing appropriate physical and staffing resources within the budget constraints of the pre-school
- Supporting staff to gain the appropriate knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy

St Gabriel's Pre-School will work in consultation with the staff, the parents/guardians of the child, and other professionals and/or agencies working with the family to determine additional resources required to meet the functional and developmental needs of the child and to determine the suitability of St Gabriel's Pre-School in meeting these needs

We ask parents/guardians to:

- Share information about their child and their child's needs within the service whilst maintaining the right to decide who will receive information about their child.
- Raise any issues/concerns they have about their child's participation in the programme
- Be involved in, and fully informed about, any support proposed for their child.
- Give consent to any observations or reports on their child, request copies of such documents if required.

1.10 CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND MORAL VALUES

In line with our mission statement, the staff will promote team-work and co-operation. By their example, the children will learn the importance of respect for others, inclusion of everyone and justice and fairness for all.

1.11 CHILDCARE CURRICULUM

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to offering the children in our care a comprehensive child centred curriculum combined with good practice methods.

Our play based curriculum is based on the highscope model in line with Siolta standards and Aistear. It is centred on each child's individuality, strengths, rights and needs. Activities will take a holistic approach to the development and learning needs of the child, it will include a combination of child-initiated, staff-initiated activities. It will also be mindful of the need to support the child in the transition to primary school. Subject areas will include Language, Maths, Practical Life, Sensorial experiences, and Social, Personal and Health education. St Gabriel's Pre-School offers a range of learning opportunities to children, which are appropriate to the child's stage of development. The service is fully committed to being guided by the principles of Siolta and the new curriculum framework Aistear. We recognise how important high-quality early childhood experience can be in children's lives. Our Curriculum aims to encourage active learning, problem solving, effective communication, creativity and socialization. It aims to give children a good start which will benefit their long-term success in life. St Gabriel's Pre-School recognises the diversity of experiences and relationships that shape children's lives.

We believe children learn best when they:

- Participate in making decisions as much as possible
- Make choices and contribute to learning experiences
- Share their opinions and diverse experiences and discuss their learning
- Have positive role models within the staff team
- Learn in a responsive and supportive social environment
- Learn through multi-sensory experiences
- Participate actively in experiences that engage them emotionally, physically, cognitively and socially

Staff will:

- Plan collaboratively with children as part of the curriculum decision making. Plan a responsive curriculum that reflects their needs and interests
- Organise environments that are dynamic and responsive to children's needs and interests
- be positive role models
- offer guidance, support and encouragement
- be calm and gentle in approach
- Use a range of learning methods including free play, real-life experiences, focused learning, routines, equipment and play materials, etc

- Celebrate diversity and challenge/question any racism, inequality and negative attitudes
- be non-judgemental and to be aware of our own values and assumptions
- Work in close partnership with parents
- Collect evidence on how children learn and recording this evidence through observation
- Ensure the layout of the room is carefully designed, and the equipment is low level and accessible for the children
- Ensure new materials are introduced on a regular basis, based on the children's developmental needs and interests
- Staff are responsible for the materials ensuring that all materials/equipment used is clean, safe and well maintained at all times

After-School:

The programme followed will be activities based with the aim of raising the children's self-esteem, developing good social skills and interaction with others.

1.12 OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

St Gabriel's Pre-School recognises that observation is a useful tool and enables staff plan the curriculum to meet the individual needs of children.

In order to plan, prepare and organise for good quality care, adults need to observe children, review and evaluate the curriculum regularly and maintain systematic records.

By observing how children respond to activities, staff will be able to evaluate if the activities and resources they have provided meet the needs of all the children. It helps them to plan a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum. Observations also enable staff to provide challenge and extend the programme so that each child is able to progress.

Assessment will be an ongoing process of collecting, documenting, reflecting on, and using information to develop rich portraits of children as learners in order to support and enhance their future learning. A portfolio of each child's work will be compiled throughout the year, this will be sent home during the year for parents to view/comment/add photos, etc. we believe sharing observations with parents/carers strengthens the partnership between the home and the service, giving understanding and information and allows staff and parents/carers to do their best for each child

Staff will receive training in observation. Observations may be planned or spontaneous and are best carried out by an adult who knows the children well, eg. Child's key worker. The child's key worker will carry out regular observations on the child, record and monitor children's development.

All observations / records / assessments will be treated with confidentiality.

Effective Record Keeping

The service has to keep documented records. It is an important part of Child Care and a requirement set down by law that records for each child including the following are kept

- Accidents
- Administered medication
- Child's general information
- Development of each child
- Correspondence with parents

All **active** records will be held for use in the child's room. When these records become **retrospective** (no longer in use) they will be stored securely. The only exception to this is Observation Records which should be held in the rooms at all times so that a learning/developmental plan can be drawn up

Children's Learning Portfolios A portfolio is a helpful way of compiling information about children's learning and development, they contain objects made by the children, photographs, stories, notes, records of care, checklists, and test scores (where relevant). This collection tells the story of each child's learning journey—his/her efforts, progress and achievement over time.

Portfolios can help give children a sense of pride in and ownership of their own learning and development. For example, children can select work samples and photographs for their portfolios, reflect on these, and, with the adult's help, plan ahead. This experience can make learning more enjoyable and interesting for them.

Confidentiality It is important to remember that reports may be used for other reasons than just sharing information with parents. Due regard should be given to the principles of the Freedom of Information Acts and the Data Protection Acts when compiling reports. Any queries on this matter should be directed to the Manager.

Confidentiality in report writing and sharing information must be maintained at all times except in Child Protection circumstances. The Manager should be consulted regarding any issues. A breach of confidentiality may invoke the Disciplinary Procedure. Please refer to Confidentiality Policy and Procedure.

1.13 St. Gabriel's Pre-school & After –school Child & Adult protection policy

Principles

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being abused. Any reasonable suspicion of abuse must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child. The welfare of children must always come first, regardless of all other considerations.

All staff and persons who work for St Gabriel's Pre-School must observe the following policy and procedures. Clarification on any point may be sought from the Manager.

(Child Care (Pre-school Services) (no 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Early years Services) Regulations 2016)Part II 9 (2) Child Protection) (Siolta Standard 15 Legislation and Regulation, Siolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 4: Records, National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 7: Complaints, National Standard 11; Child Protection)

Statement of Intent

At St Gabriel's Pre-School the welfare of the child is paramount. Therefore we want to make sure that the children in St Gabriel's Pre-School are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with the staff and the students in this organisation by:

- Making sure that our staff and students are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Making sure all staff are Garda vetted prior to engagement
- Having clear codes of behaviour for staff and students For example: children sit on chair rather than lap, walk by themselves (if able) are greeted appropriately no excessive hugging, (be aware of showing favouritism)
- Giving parents, children and workers information about what we do and what to expect from us
- Letting parents and children know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy about.
- We have a clear reporting procedure to be followed should a staff member have a concern about a child
- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Management

Policy

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children published by the Department of Health and Children in 2011 and Our Duty to Care form the basis of our services child protection policy and procedures. Copies of these books are in the Pre-school child protection file.

All staff and persons who work within St Gabriel's Pre-School must read and understand this policy and procedures and it will be part of a new staff member's induction training. Clarification on any point may be sought from the Manager.

RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

Page 8 *Children First* – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children

There are four principal types of child abuse as follows:

Neglect: An omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to affection from adults, medical care Children First 2.2.1

Emotional Abuse: When a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child Children First 2.3.1

Physical Abuse: Any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child Children First 2.4.1

Sexual Abuse: When a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others Children First 2.5.1

St Gabriel's Pre-School endorses that the National Guidelines advise that the ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always readily visible.

The recognition of abuse normally runs along three stages:

Considering the possibility – if a child appears to have suffered an inexplicable and suspicious looking injury, seems distressed without obvious reason, displays unusual behavioural problems or appears – fearful in the company of parents.

Observing signs of abuse – a cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. Children may make direct or indirect disclosures, which should always be taken seriously. Less obvious disclosures may be gently explored with a child, without direct questioning (which Tusla or An Garda Síochána may more usefully carry out). Play situations such as drawing or story telling may reveal significant information. Indications of harm must always be considered in relation to the child's social and family context, and it is important to always be open to alternative explanations

Recording of information – it is important to establish the grounds for concern by obtaining as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information which could be considered relevant or which might facilitate further assessment/investigation

Page 10-11 *Children First* – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children

THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

St Gabriel's Pre-School will at all times have an appointed Designated Liaison Person and a deputy in the event of the Designated Liaison Person being unavailable.

We will endeavour to send the Designated Liaison Person(s) on any necessary or new training courses available. **St Gabriel's Pre-School Designated Liaison Person is the School Principal and Chairperson on the BOM Loretta Dunphy the deputy designated person is Suzanne Smith and their details will be displayed on the notice board.**

The Role of the Designated Liaison Persons is to:

Establish contact with the Duty Social Worker responsible for child protection in the organisations catchment area and ensure that the organisation's child protection policy and procedures are followed where reasonable grounds for concerns exist about individual children.

- To provide information and advice on child protection and training within the organization.
- Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover.
- Liaise with Tusla Duty Social Worker Department/An Garda Siochana and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep relevant people within the organisation, particularly the Manager of the organisation informed.
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.

The Designated Liaison Person is Responsible for

- Acting as a source of advice on child protection matters.
- For co-ordinating action within the organisation, and
- For liaising with the Tusla and An Garda Siochana and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse where reasonable grounds for concern exist.
- Being accessible to staff and have good listening and feedback skills.
- Being familiar and updated in relation to the topic of child abuse and associated issues.

DISCLOSURES, WHAT TO DO, HOW TO REACT and LISTEN

There may be a time when a child approaches a staff member or volunteer in the service as a trusted adult to discuss their life outside the organisation. It is vital that individual adults in our centre know how to react to this in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

Response if a Child Discloses Abuse

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked.

- Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosure can be very difficult for the child.
- Remember the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to. Do not pressurise the child. Allow him/her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Be careful when asking questions. Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification. Avoid leading questions such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also, avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else could have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate the official investigation.
- Assure the child that you believe them. False disclosures are very rare.
- It is important that the adult differentiates in their own mind between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child, quite possibly, may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to him/her.
- It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards, the alleged perpetrator, while talking with the child.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him/her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what she/he has disclosed.
- Do not promise to keep secrets. Explain to the child that you will only tell the people that really need to know so that they are kept safe.
- By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything or indeed anything, there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely, that the child will return to you at another time.

Do not make promises as you may not be in a position to follow through on them

At the Earliest Possible Opportunity

- Inform the Designated Liaison Person immediately and the following internal reporting procedure will be followed.
- Record in writing what the child has said, including, as far as possible, the exact wording utilised by the child.

Ongoing Support

Following a disclosure by a child, it is important that childcare staff continue in a supportive relationship with the child.

Disclosure is a huge step for many children.

Workers should continue to offer support, particularly through:

- Maintaining a positive relationship with the child.
- Keeping lines of communication open by listening carefully to the child.
- Continue to include the child in the usual activities.
- Any further disclosure should be treated as a first disclosure and responded to as in Reporting Procedures in this policy.

Response to a concern of child protection or welfare

In situations where a suspicion/concern may be deemed vague i.e. where there is no specific allegation but there is some concern based on the emotional behaviour and/or physical presentation of behaviour of a child. It is recommended that the Designated Liaison Person consult with the Duty Social Worker in the Tusla in order to assess whether or not a report is warranted. Details of the consultation should be recorded. A formal report to the Tusla may follow as advised.

RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

For an adult to recognise child abuse they have to accept the fact that it does exist. Child care workers should be aware that child abuse is not always obvious to the worker, it is also very important to remember that there may be alternative explanations to your suspicions.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern- *Children First 3.2.2*

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- Specific indication from the child that he/she was abused.
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused.
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
- An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- See also appendix 2 Signs and Symptoms of Abuse.

A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. It is important that persons reporting suspected child abuse to the Tusla should establish the basis for their concerns. However, they should not interview the child or the child's parents in any detail about the alleged abuse. This may be more appropriately carried out by tusla Duty Social Worker or An Garda Síochána. If staff, students or volunteers have any concerns these should be discussed with the Designated Liaison Person.

RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT *Children First 3.2*

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. This responsibility is particularly relevant for professionals such as teachers, child care workers, health professionals and those working with adults with serious parenting difficulties. It is also an important responsibility for staff and people involved in sports clubs, community activities, youth clubs, religious/faith sector and other organisations catering for children.

Employees and Volunteers should be aware of the centre's internal reporting procedures. Management, employees and volunteers should also be aware of the appropriate authorities to whom they should report outside the organisation if they are inhibited for any reason in reporting the incident internally or where they are dissatisfied with the internal response.

In making any report the following should be considered:

- The safety and protection of the child must take priority.
- That the principles of natural justice apply being a person is innocent until proven otherwise.
- Confidentiality is vital, a need to know basis should apply.

Tusla Children and Family Services 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.

- Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect.
- A concern about a *potential risk* to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to Tusla Children and Family Services.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

- (i) the safety and well-being of the child must take priority;
- (ii) reports should be made without delay to Tusla Children and Family Services.

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.

Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

'A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by –

- (a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or

(b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.'

The penalty for a person found guilty of this offence is a fine (no upper limit) and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

Tusla has a statutory obligation to identify children who are not receiving adequate care and protection, to provide family support services and, where necessary, to take children into the care of Tusla. People who report concerns need to be assured that their information will be carefully considered with any other information available, and a child protection assessment will only proceed where sufficient risk is identified.

Any professional who suspects child abuse or neglect should inform the parents/carers if a report is to be submitted to Tusla Children and Family Services or to An Garda Síochána, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Tusla will respect the wishes of non-professionals reporting concerns in good faith who ask to remain anonymous in as much as possible, but cannot give a guarantee that the information would not be sought and given within judicial proceedings. (The Data Protection Acts offer protection under privacy, but should the information be sought directly within legal proceedings, there is no guarantee.)

THE REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any member of staff who has a concern about a child in the service currently being abused, abused in the past, or likely to be at risk of abuse, is obliged to verbally relay their concern to the Designated Liaison Person as a matter of urgency.

1. The member of staff, who has the concern should record in writing what the child has said, including as far as possible, the exact words utilised by the child.
2. The Designated Liaison Person must then record the details of this report, on Tusla Standard Reporting Form, which is in the Forms Folder in the Office, which must then be signed by the person making the report. See Appendix 1 for Standard Reporting Form.
3. Unless it would put the child at further risk to do so, the Designated Liaison Person will make every effort to contact the parents to discuss the concern made by the child. A written record will be kept of this meeting with the parents.
4. The Designated Liaison Person will examine the information received to determine if it constitutes reasonable grounds for concern see Reasonable Grounds for Concern paragraph above.
5. Immediate action must be taken to protect the child in question and indeed any other children who may be considered at 'risk'.

6. A child will never be interviewed regarding the concern by any staff of the service however all comments made by the child will be noted.
7. Allegations against staff will be dealt with separately and the disciplinary procedure will be followed as necessary.
8. In cases of emergency, where a child is deemed to be at immediate and serious risk and a Duty Social worker is unavailable, An Garda Síochána should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending HSE intervention.
9. St Gabriel's Pre-School will take care to ensure that actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. Close liaisons will be maintained with these authorities to achieve this.
10. Where there are reasonable grounds a report should be made to Tusla in person, by phone or in writing without delay by the Designated Liaison Person. Each HSE has a social worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty social worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone, to persons wishing to report child protection concerns. The Duty Social Worker will assess the information available.
11. Once a report is submitted, the duty social worker may need to speak with the person who had the initial concern.

In the event that the Designated Liaison Person makes a decision not to report to Tusla full details of the decision must be recorded including the reasons for not reporting plus any action taken. This report should be stored as confidential by the Designated Liaison Person in the child's records and kept by the service in a secure place, until the child will have reached the age of twenty one. Allegations or concerns should not be investigated by the Designated Liaison Person or a staff member but passed on to the Health Service Executive /Gardaí to follow through.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

The same person should not have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the employment issues. It is preferable to separate these issues and manage them independently. These reporting procedures should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against an employee. Staff/volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff including counselling where necessary. However, the primary goal is to protect the child while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

The Person for dealing with allegations against staff at St Gabriel's Pre-School is the School Principal/ Chairperson of the BOM Loreta Dunphy and her details will be displayed on the parent's board.

Policy and Procedure on Response to Allegations of Abuse against Employees, Volunteers and Students

Child Protection is about promoting the welfare of children who attend a service. To this end it also encompasses the monitoring of professional practice within an organisation.

An organisation has a legal and moral responsibility to respond to any allegation of abuse either verbal or physical of a child by a member of staff, student or volunteer.

St Gabriel's Pre-School procedure, is in line with the guidance given in Children First- National Guidance.

Response to allegations of abuse against employees, volunteers, students
Page 43 *Children First* – 6.2. Guidance on allegations against employees and volunteers

Allegations of abuse may be made against adults working with children, employees, volunteers, students and childminders. The National Guidance is there to assist the Principal and Designated Liaison Persons in having due regard for the rights and interests of the child on the one hand, and those of the employee against whom the allegation is made on the other hand.

The following guidelines should be followed in the event of such an allegation of abuse against an employee during the execution of that employee's duties or where information about an employee in relation to a situation outside of the work context is reported.

Our first duty of care in this situation is to the child and our first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk.

- If an allegation is made against an employee or other person working within the service to another employee or other person they must inform the Designated Liaison Person and the Principal verbally simultaneously and record what they have been told or what they may have observed. Action taken in reporting an allegation of child abuse against an employee should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith.
- The details of this concern must be recorded on the Standard Reporting Form, which is in the Forms Folder in the Office, which must then be signed by the person making the report and they will be reminded of the need for confidentiality in this matter.
- The Principal will inform the member of staff that an allegation has been made against them. The disciplinary procedure for staff will be followed in this instance.

The Principal must privately inform the employee, about whom the allegation is made, of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her.
- The nature of the allegation.
- The employee should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Principal should note the response and pass on this information when making a formal report to Tusla.

- The employee should also be informed of their right to an adjournment of the meeting until such time as they can seek appropriate representation (e.g. Union Rep./Legal Rep.). The action will be guided by the agreed procedures (Disciplinary Procedure), the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice. While adhering to the principle of natural justice enshrined within our constitution in relation to the rights of the accused, the vulnerability of the alleged victim must be foremost in our mind, therefore any postponement must be afforded within a reasonable time frame that is 24 hours.
- The Parents/guardian of the alleged victim must be informed immediately by the Designated Liaison Person.
- The name or any identifying information of the reporting adult will not be given to the staff member or other worker against whom the allegation has been made by the Principal, pending HSE advice or consultation.
- When an allegation is received it will be assessed promptly and carefully.
- The Principal may then ask the member of staff who the allegation has been made against to leave the premises immediately and they will be suspended on full pay until the matter has been fully investigated.
- However all allegations may not require a worker to be sent home i.e. allegations of poor practice where increased levels of supervision may be sufficient until matter is sorted out. Poor practice will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as necessary.
- At this point in the process it will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to Tusla – this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.
- If it is felt that there are grounds for concern all matters relating to the allegations, it should be reported to the Duty Social Worker.
- At this point the Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked. This will be a separate process and will be overseen by the Principal not the Designated Liaison Person.
- Should a staff member, following the investigation, be re-instated with no disciplinary action this should be taken as evidence that no blame/fault/suspicion attaches to them.
- Where the complaint is not upheld, management should ensure that the reputation and career prospects of the staff member concerned are not adversely affected by reason of the complaint having been brought against him/her. The staff member (who had the allegation made against them) should be offered counselling and any other support necessary to restore his/her confidence and morale.

- The staff member who made the complaint should be reassured that management appreciates that the complaint was made in good faith. If required the service will ensure that the staff member receives support e.g. external counselling, if requested or warranted.

The **Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998** makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of Tusla or to any member of An Garda Síochána. This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals. This means that even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. A person who makes a report in good faith and in the child's best interests may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege.

In the case where the Designated Liaison Person reaches the conclusion that reasonable grounds do not exist that she will not report the concern of the staff/volunteer to the relevant Health Service Executive or An Garda Síochána, the individual staff member or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the centre is not taking action. The staff member or volunteer should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the Health Service Executive or An Garda Síochána.

1.14 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF

Childcare Good Practice

For the protection of staff, volunteers and children this code of behaviour has been introduced to provide clarity on what is expected and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour.

- Workers should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or other activities
- While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only be in response to the need of the child not the adult. Staff should not request hugs/kisses from children.
- Appropriate greetings should be modelled for all children, no excessive hugging or kissing.
- Workers should not carry children around the room or in corridors.
- Workers should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children.
- Workers should be sensitive to the possibility of developing favouritism, or becoming over involved or spending a lot of time with any one child. Workers should encourage pre-school and after-school children to sit on their own chairs (as in school) rather than on staff laps.
- Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to a worker of their choice. Complaints must be brought to the attention of management.
- Workers should have a positive attitude & respect personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.
- Workers **will only use the pre-school camera** to take photos of children, parental consent will be sought at registration for the use of photos for observation purposes. Staff should refrain from taking 'selfies' as photos are observation purposes. Photos will not be removed from St. Gabriel's without written permission. The camera is not for use by children.
- It is not recommended that workers give lifts in their cars to individual children, especially for long journeys.
- Relationships with parents should be professional, Workers should avoid becoming overly involved with any one parent or family. Personal conversations should be avoided. Staff should not befriend parents or children on social network sites.
- Staff may not bring their own child or any other child to work with them.
- Staff may not arrange to drop children home from either pre-school or after-school, children must always be collected by an authorised person. Follow the 'late collections' procedure for children who have not been collected on time.

- Staff may never take children from the premises without following the correct outings procedure. If breached disciplinary action will be taken.
- Staff should refrain from having adult conversations around the children. All conversations should relate to the children. Staff should try to discourage disruptions to the sessions, keep conversations to a minimum, eg. Visitors.
- Staff should always work as a team, offering support & assistance particularly to newer members of staff or staff doing training. Arrange a suitable time with your line manager if staff need assistance for college assignments.
- No member of the team should be isolated or left out. All staff should be included when planning work social events, eg. Nights out, lunch, etc.
- Staff should be aware of the impact they may have on others in the room when planning activities, another room should be used to avoid disruption or discomfort to other children & staff, Eg. Noise, disruption, etc.
- Staff must comply with all reasonable requests from line manager and senior management.
- Staff should balance their home life & work life to ensure one doesn't negatively impact the other. Staff should avoid bringing issues from home into work and always act professional in the workplace.
- Grievances/disagreements should be kept outside of the play room as children will pick up on the tension. Staff should remain professional at all times when working with young children, never raise their voice, argue, use verbal or physical violence towards any person. Disciplinary action will be taken for breaches.
- Staff should seek permission from management to leave the workplace during work hours. For fire safety purposes staff must always sign in and out of the building even when leaving for short periods.

(This code has been adapted from Our Duty to Care Fact sheet 1)

1.15 COMPLAINTS

It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to welcome children's and parents views in the development of the service. Our children/staff/parents have the right to voice their opinions and concerns. It is our policy to welcome all suggestions, or comments in relation to our service any comments or suggestions can be made to any member of staff. We will give careful attention and prompt and courteous response to any suggestions, comments or complaints.

- All complaints must be made to the manager, If a complaint is made to a staff member it must be passed to the manager and not to a member of the board of management (management committee) in the first instance
- They will be dealt with in an open and impartial manner.
- The complaint will be documented and remain confidential.
- The complaint will be investigated to assess if the service has breached our policy and procedures document.
- Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and amicable as possible, and to the parents satisfaction.
- If agreement cannot be reached, the parents must make a formal complaint in writing to the manager of St Gabriel's Pre-School.
- The parent will be sent an acknowledgement that the complaint has been received and told how it will be dealt with, by whom and within a time frame specified by the Manager.
- The Manager will keep dated records summarising what was said and by whom.
- In the case of a complaint made against a staff member, the staff member involved will be informed that a formal complaint has been made and given full details.
- The Manager will arrange to meet with the staff member and discuss the lodged complaint.
- The Manager will keep a record and document what was discussed.
- The Manager will review the complaint and consider all the relevant information as discussed and a decision will be made and recommendations if necessary.
- If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome, they may make a further written request to go to an independent mediator.
- If a complaint involves a child protection concern, a separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with our child protection policy.
- The Manager will inform all parties involved of the outcome of the complaint made.

If the complaint is not resolved

It is forwarded to the Management Committee who will endeavour to resolve the complaint immediately. If the Manager is the subject of the complaint it will be dealt with by a representative of the Management Committee. The details of all conversations and the resolution will be recorded. If no resolution is found it is

forwarded to a nominated Board of Management representative who will follow the same procedure as above.

1.16 POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Principles

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we believe in children's ability to control their own lives, to make choices and accept responsibility for their actions. We also believe that all children have the right to expect positive approaches to behaviour management which are consistent with these goals. Any punishment that humiliates, that attacks children's sense of self and makes them feel helpless is damaging and will NEVER be permitted in our service.

Statement of Intent

St Gabriel's Pre-School sets high expectations of behaviour through encouraging and praising good behaviour. We apply simple rules fairly and consistently. Under no circumstances do we use any form of **corporal punishment**. We encourage children to respect themselves, each other and property. We aim to provide a happy, caring environment with challenging activities. In the case of a particular incident or persistent unacceptable behaviour we always discuss ways forward with parents. (We strive to manage behaviour consistently in order that children have the security of what to expect and can build up good patterns of self-discipline

- Children learn and develop in a caring environment which values their individual and combined strengths.
- The voice of the child is heard and mutually respectful relationships are fostered.
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will always be acknowledged so as to promote self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Staff will be good role models showing respect for each other and the children in their care.

Procedures for encouraging acceptable behaviour:

Through induction all new staff are introduced to this policy.

- Staff will adopt a positive approach to situations and provide a positive role model.
- Staff will offer quiet encouragement and endorse desirable behaviour, sometimes moving the child to a different activity.
- Staff will ensure rules are applied consistently.
- Staff will promote respect for each other.

In some cases, in collaboration with the parents we may seek additional advice and support from professionals such as speech therapists and other professionals as appropriate or ask parents to stay with the child for short periods.

Staff promote appropriate behaviour by:

- Building trusting relationships with the children in our care and getting to know them.

- Acknowledging positive behaviour.
- Providing choice for the children in their activities.
- Providing children with personal space.
- Having set daily routines.
- Modelling appropriate behaviour (eg good manners).
- Sharing their attention among the children and making time to listen to them.
- Recognising and treating children as individuals and respecting them as such.
- Consistently engaging children in resolving their conflicts so the social skills they will need as they progress through life are practised, such as problem solving, turn taking, sharing and seeing others points of view.
- Ensuring correct staff: child ratios are implemented and organising staff so all areas are supervised.
- Anticipating inappropriate behaviour in the service and intervening before an incident may occur.

Procedures for managing unacceptable behaviour

- Children will be given the chance to resolve their own disputes with appropriate guidance and support, a chance to negotiate.
- Calm intervention – this involves distracting the child and sometimes offering them an alternative activity.
- Children will be given the opportunity to calm down and talk quietly about what has happened. Helping children to cope with their emotions through naming them (eg 'you look sad, angry' etc)
- Reinforce boundaries: these will be clear and reasonable. Children, where possible will be consulted regarding what rules or codes of behaviour should be implemented.
- Staff will Never humiliate or attack child's self esteem.
- Staff will Divert child's attention.
- And Use appropriate strategies, Allowing the child time to respond to requests and for them to comply with any rules or codes of behaviour bearing in mind their age and stage of development. Staff will Positively reinforce a change in behaviour using words and gestures and encourage positive behaviour.
- Staff will let children know that it is the behaviour that is not liked and that they are still liked and cared for. Offering comfort to children throughout the process.
- Implementing the conflict resolution steps (see below).
- Explaining to children the "rules"

No hurting bodies & No hurting feelings

- Staff will Deal with any incidents immediately.
- Using active listening skills.
- Being respectful by not talking about the child in front of other adults or children.
- Giving children advance warnings that if behaviour continues they may be removed from activity.
- Maintain appropriate staff: child ratios to enable one to one attention at certain times.
- Observing persistent behaviour over time to get an insight into possible triggers or patterns.
- Offering follow up support.

Conflict Resolution Steps

- ✓ Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
- ✓ Place yourself between the children, on their level.
- ✓ Use a calm voice and gentle touch.
- ✓ Remain neutral rather than take sides.
- ✓ Acknowledge children's feeling "You seem pretty upset".
- ✓ Let the children know you need to hold the object in question.
- ✓ Gather information. "It looks like the problem is...Is that right?"
- ✓ Restate the problem "So the problem is..."
- ✓ Ask for ideas for solutions, and choose one together "What can we do to solve this problem?"
- ✓ Encourage *children* to think of a solution.
- ✓ Check to make sure the solution is acceptable to both children.
- ✓ Be prepared to give follow-up support. "You solved the problem!"
- ✓ Stay near the children.

Working with Parents

It is our policy to work in close collaboration with parents. We recognise and value the role of parents in managing children's behaviour. It is our policy to inform parents, at the enrolment stage, of the policies and procedures in relation to behaviour. Management will explain how behaviour is dealt with so a consistent approach can be adopted.

Parents are encouraged to tell staff of any difficulties that they are experiencing at home and to inform them of any situation that might impact on a child's behaviour such as bereavement, illness, relationship breakdown, a new baby etc. If a parent needs to be contacted in relation to a concern about behaviour it is our policy to do this in a consultative rather than a complaining manner and staff will endeavour to work in partnership with the parent to develop a strategy for dealing with the situation. Discussing a child's behaviour in front of the child or other children/parents will be avoided.

Record Keeping

Records should be kept of any significant incidents including:

- The child's name
- Time and location of the incident
- Events leading up to the incident
- What happened
- Others involved
- Witnesses
- How the situation was handled
- Whether physical restraint was used, and in what form and the reason for it
- Any consequences

Recurring problems will be dealt with in an inclusive manner following observations and involving other adults/parents etc.

1.17 ANTI-BULLYING

Children need their own time and space. It is not always appropriate to expect a child to share and it is important to acknowledge children's feelings and to help them understand how others might be feeling. Children must be encouraged to recognise that bullying, fighting, hurting and racist comments are not acceptable behaviour. We want children to recognise that certain actions are right and that others are wrong.

Bullying takes many forms. It can be physical, verbal or emotional, but it is always a repeated behaviour that makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened.

Any form of bullying is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

At our service, staff follow the guidelines below to enable them to deal with challenging behaviour:

- Staff are encouraged to ensure that all children feel safe, happy and secure.
- Staff are encouraged to recognise that active physical aggression in the early years is part of the child's development and that it should be channelled in a positive way.
- Children need to be helped to understand that using aggression to get things is wrong and will be encouraged to resolve problems in other ways.
- Our staff are encouraged to adopt a policy of intervention when they think a child is being bullied, however mild or "harmless" it may seem.
- The staff are ready to initiate games and activities with children, when they feel play has become aggressive, both indoors or out.
- Any instance of bullying will be discussed fully with the parents of all involved, to look for a consistent resolution to the behaviour.
- If any parent has a concern about their child, a member of staff will be available to discuss those concerns. It is only by co-operation that we can ensure our children feel confident and secure in their environment, both at home and in the service.

By positively promoting good behaviour, valuing co-operation and a caring attitude we hope to ensure that children will develop as responsible members of society.

BULLYING AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IS NOT TOLERATED WITHIN THE SERVICE, WHETHER INFLICTED ON ADULTS OR CHILDREN

What causes children to be aggressive?

Sometimes, the aggression takes the form of instigating fights, sometimes the child simply provokes others to fight, or antagonizes and threatens other children. These aggressive children, often referred to as "bullies," usually have few true friends, poor social skills, and little self confidence.

Because the aggressor will rarely have self-confidence and they gain it through aggressive behaviour. Aggressors are attention seekers and they enjoy the attention they gain from being aggressive. Power brings attention and the aggressor has learned this. Due to the child's weaker self-image and the fact that he or she doesn't fit in, they try aggressive behaviour and soon become leaders, even though they usually know that they are behaving inappropriately.

What can we do about It?

Never ignore inappropriate aggressions and do not get drawn into a power struggle with the aggressor.

- Be firm but gentle in your approach. Remember, the aggressor can handle the tough side of you but he/she will succumb to gentleness and it's really what he wants - the right kind of attention.
- Deal one to one with the aggressor and devise a plan for him/her to take control of their own behaviour.
- Provide opportunities for this child to act appropriately and get some badly needed attention, give him/her responsibilities and provide praise.
- Catch the aggressor behaving well and provide immediate, positive feedback. In time, you will see that the aggressive behaviours will start to diminish.
- Provide him/her with activities that bring forth leadership in a positive way, always let him/her know that you care, trust and respect him. Remind him/her that it's the inappropriate behaviours that you don't like.
- Provide as many methods as you can for this child to take ownership for his/her inappropriate behaviour. Probe him/her with how should that have been handled and how will it be handled next time.
- Never forget that ALL children need to know you care about them and that they can contribute in a positive way.
- Be consistent, patient and understand that change will take time.

Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes - such as superhero and weapon play. Some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to bullying, although it may be inconsiderate, or even hurtful, at times and may need addressing.

- We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or 'aggressive'.
- We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies - blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong and alternatives to blowing up or shooting.
- We should be able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

BITING

Biting happens in almost every early years setting where young children are together. It is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. The safety of the children at St Gabriel's Pre-School is our primary concern.

As Childcare Practitioners we will:

- Recognise children's reasons for biting
- React appropriately
- Take the proper measures to prevent further incidents

All biting incidents are upsetting for the children. Dealing with biting is challenging as each situation is unique because of the different personalities involved. Children bite for a variety of reasons however here at St Gabriel's Pre-School it will be dealt with in a calm and clear manner making it known that biting is unacceptable behaviour. The staff will use clear language and be consistent in their approach. Our aim is in the efforts made in our prevention procedures to help the child take a further step to self control.

Why do young children bite?

- Biting is a natural part of children's development
- Infants and toddlers put everything into their mouths. It feels good to bite and chew while they are teething
- Toddlers and young preschoolers don't have the verbal skills to fully express themselves
- Biting brings about a quick and dramatic response
- Children experience many emotions (positive and negative) that are difficult to express and, at times control. These emotions may be caused by a number of things; over-excitement, frustration, fatigue, fear of being separated from people they love etc
- Biting sometimes occurs for no apparent reason

Biting Prevention

We examine and develop our programmes so that the children are happy, stimulated and engaged in activities to prevent these incidents

- We organise activities that allow our children to release frustration
- We provide age-appropriate materials that stimulate interest
- We provide close supervision and monitor each situation
- Staff will be aware of possible conflict of personality between children and act accordingly and separate the children if necessary
- Staff will be aware that a simple conflict over a toy or personal space could be enough to cause a child to bite
- Staff will know the temperaments of the children and look for patterns in a frequent biter
- Does the biter focus on one child? Look at ways of separating children as much as possible
- Do toys seem to cause many biting incidences? we may need more or duplicate toys so every child has several to choose from
- Encourage the use of words to express feelings and emotions
- Help children understand that words can be used to express feelings
- Staff may need to teach the children words that are appropriate
- Children who can verbally express themselves will be less likely to lash out physically

Procedures we will follow when biting occurs

- The appropriate first aid will be administered. The wound will be cleaned and cold compress applied if necessary to help with swelling or bruising
- We will comfort the child and let them know that 'we are sorry that they got hurt'.
- The staff will explain to the child who has bitten using clear language that 'biting is not allowed'
- The Manager will be informed and an accident report filled out. (These records will be kept on file and used later if necessary to analyse a behaviour pattern)
- Both sets of parents will be informed independently of the incident and what measures we took
- All biting incidents will be dealt with complete confidentiality
- Each situation is dealt with in a professional manner
- The parents will be asked to sign the accident report form
- We will aim to resolve the problem as quickly as possible, having open communication and co-operation is very important with the parents/staff
- If the child bites again they will be closely observed and followed by the staff and when possible will be given 1-1 attention
- An accident form will have to be signed by the parent and a record of it filed.
- In the event of a child who continues to repeatedly bite, the manager will ask to speak with the parents
- If the manager feels they have exhausted all biting procedures consistently and fairly ensuring that it meets the need of the child, the manager may need to suggest seeking outside professional help if the biting was to continue and became difficult to handle

Staff members will maintain a close and constant supervision of all children

Methods for Dealing with Difficult Behaviour

Encouraging good behaviour requires effort and planning. It is our policy to create an atmosphere and routine that is child-centred stimulating and secure.

The following strategies are used to reduce conflict in the pre-school:

- We will reduce boredom by offering variety
- We will tell children in advance what is happening and what is expected of them
- We will explain what children are permitted/not permitted to do. Children will be involved in making the rules for day
- We will offer choice
- We will give clear instructions
- We will speak at the child's level
- We will encourage good behaviour and effort
- We will allow children choose activities
- We will use positive reinforcement when children are behaving well
- We will give children responsibility to increase self-esteem
- We will keep calm and we will never be aggressive towards children
- We will use positive language – we will not use words like naughty or bold
- We will not label children because of their behaviour
- We will try to distract children in order to diffuse a situation
- We will extend or remove privileges in response to behaviour.
- We will only use sanctions if they are fair and linked to the behaviour (e.g. picking up litter for dropping it)

- We do not use physical punishment of any kind
- We do not use the bold corner, in some situations it may be appropriate to use 'time away' or 'time out' for short periods of time to enable the child to calm down, adult support will be provide throughout this intervention. The child will not be isolated.

1.18 COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Principle

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to ensuring the safety and care of the children upon arriving and leaving the service

Statement of Intent

All Parents/employees must follow the collections and arrivals policy and procedure.

Attendance

It is essential to the efficient running of the service that parents inform the Manager of St Gabriel's Pre-School if their child is unable to attend the service and follow up with a telephone call to inform the service when the child will be returning. This is a requirement of the ECCE free pre-school scheme. A register of the times and days that children attend is kept.

Parents should also advise the service if a child will not be attending the after school.

Arrivals

- Children & parents will be greeted by a member of staff at the entrance.
- Support your child to remove coats and to find their coat pegs.
- Please ensure that all external doors are securely closed for the safety of all the children when you leave.
- If a child will not be attending we request that parents advise us.

Collection Policy

The Collection Policy of St Gabriel's Pre-school will be achieved by:

- ❖ Parents/guardians must collect their child by the agreed collection time. Parents will be asked to give the names of at least two other people who are authorised to collect the child. If the parent is late arriving to collect the child the Manager will endeavour to contact the parent. In the event of being unable to contact the parent the Manager will contact the other named persons to collect the child. Older siblings under 18 may collect children with permission from parents.
- ❖ Children will not be released into the care of a person who appears to be incapable of caring for the child. Should this situation arise the staff will contact an authorised collector. If no one is available to collect the child then the staff should contact Tusla social work child protection team.
- ❖ At St Gabriel's Pre-School we ask that parents do not collect their child from the service while under the influence of alcohol. This can lead to embarrassment and worry within the team. If parents feel that this situation may arise they should arrange for an authorised collector to collect their child.
- ❖ Children should be collected only by the adult/s named on the registration form, should the person responsible be unable to collect the child, parents should let staff know in advance & the name of the person will be recorded.

- ❖ No parking is available on school grounds. Please do not park at the school gates as this causes obstruction to the Lollypop lady's view.
- ❖ In the event of a parent collecting another fellow child a prior arrangement must be made.
- ❖ In order to comply with childcare legislation which determines the staff/ child ratios and in the best interest of the children (children can become distressed when no-one comes for them when all the others have been collected) it is important that children are collected on time from the service.
- ❖ For safety reasons: if a parent needs to speak to a member of staff or Manager at home time, please wait until all of the children have been collected as staff can become distracted. Or make an appointment at a time that suits you.

Late Collection of Children

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we quite understand that sometimes a parent is unavoidably delayed when coming to collect their child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. Parents in this situation must contact The Manager to say that they will be late and arrange with staff what to do. Children are only released from St Gabriel's Pre-School to individuals named by the parent. To cover the cost of paying staff a €10 late fee will be charged if the child has not been collected 15 minutes after home time, this will increase by €10 for every 15 minutes the child is in the service.

Early Collection of Children

We ask that parents let us know if you will be picking up your child early so that we can have the child ready for you and to minimise disrupting the rest of the group.

Late Arrival

We ask parents to drop children off at the correct time to avoid disrupting the group once they have started and so that your child benefits from our full daily programme.

Arrivals to the After School Service

- Children arrive with their teacher/SNA.
- Older children: as per parents instructions usually walk down in a group from their class or the parent will drop them in.

From the Service Home

- **Please collect child/children on time**
- If a child is to walk home unaccompanied or to the school gate, the parent will be required to sign a statement accepting full responsibility for their child/children's safety.
- It is the policy of the service not to allow children less than 10 years old to walk home unaccompanied.

Separated and Divorced Parents

Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this.

- We cannot refuse either parent to collect their child unless a court order is in place.
- We ask that parents give us information on any person that **does not** have legal access to the child.
- Where custody of a child is granted to one parent, we would ask you to clarify the circumstances with us. This information will remain confidential and will only be made known to the relevant staff. If there is any legal documents i.e. custody order, barring order we would ask you to provide us with a copy to keep on file.

Attempted collection by a parent who has been denied access in a court order

- A parent who has been denied access to a child through a court order will not be permitted on to the premises
- If the parent who has been denied access becomes threatening or violent and insists on removing the child from the service this will be viewed as trespassing. The service will in this event contact the Local Gardai.

By law, an unmarried mother is the sole [guardian](#) of a child born outside of marriage. Unless the mother agrees to sign a [statutory declaration](#), an unmarried father must apply to the court in order to become a legal guardian of his child

1.19 CAR PARKING

Statement of Intent

There are no parking spaces available in the school grounds for parents.

Policy and Procedure

- At St Gabriel's Pre-School we cannot accept responsibility for cars parked, or damage done while parking in the area.
- Parents must accompany their child into the service.
- We request that parents do not park in front of neighboring houses or cause obstruction when parking.
- Parents are advised not to leave their car running while dropping off or collecting a child.
- We suggest that parents do quick drop off/and pick up to avoid road and parking congestion.

1.20 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance at St Gabriel's Pre-School. It is our policy to keep all personal information about our children, families, and staff private. Confidential and personal information about our children/parents will only be shared by the manager in relation to child safety, in line with our child protection policy

Policy and Procedures

We will ensure that:

- All registration forms and records of children attending the service will be kept by the Manager confidentially.
- Parents may have access to the records of their own children but may not have access to information about any other child.
- Any confidential information given by parents/carers to the service will not be passed on to other adults without permission.
- Any information relating to a child's personal circumstances will be kept in a confidential file and will not be shared within except with the child's key worker, on a 'need to-know basis'.
- Where a child is believed to be at risk we will take a decision to share information with the statutory authorities, under child protection guidelines.
- All staff, volunteers, students, parents/carers will be made aware of this confidentiality policy. The policy implementation will be reviewed regularly at staff meetings.
- All the above points are subject to the overall commitment of the service which is to the safety and well being of the children who attend it.
- Any breach of confidentiality by any member of staff will lead to disciplinary action.
- In the case that a child's welfare is at risk, it is permissible for the Manager at St Gabriel's Pre-School to share confidential information with Tusla. This is in line with our Child Protection Policy.

1.21 Record Keeping

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we keep records under two areas i.e. Child/Family records and Personal and Operation Details. All of these records are stored securely.

- We aim to ensure that all records are factual and written impartially.
- Under the *Freedom of Information Act 1997*, parents will have access to all records pertaining to their child only.
- Staff members will only have access to records of children in their care and will be used to inform staff on how best to meet the needs of each child and plan for further learning.
- The service will only share information with other professionals or agencies, with consent from parents or without their consent in terms of legal responsibility in relation to a Child Protection issues.
- Staff use the guided approach of *Aistear* and *Síolta, The National Quality Frameworks for Early Childhood Education* in relation to various aspects of record keeping within the service.

Details of the records kept are as follows:

Child/Family Records

- A Register which includes details of the Children attending the Service
- Details in relation to Parent/Guardians
- Details in relation to the Children's Health

Personal and Operational Details

- Details of Staff Members
- Details of the Services Operations
- Details of Accidents and Administration of Medicines
- Details of Fire Procedures

1.22 DATA PROTECTION

St Gabriel's Pre-School will conform to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003. Under the provisions of the Act's St Gabriel's Pre-School has appointed the Manager as a "Data Controller" to manage the storage of personal information about staff, children and families in its computerised and manual records.

Policy and Procedure

St Gabriel's Pre-School will follow the following principles in relation to keeping data:

- Obtain and process information fairly.
- Ensure that the data subjects know what information is being held about them and for what purpose.
- Keep information for lawful purposes.
- Process information in ways compatible with the purpose for which it was given originally.
- Ensure that the information is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Retain the information no longer than is necessary.
- Give a copy of personal information to the individual concerned on request.
- Amend information held on employees if the employee indicates that the information is incorrect.
- Adhere to the 'need to know principle' – only personal data necessary for the purpose should be collected and staff should only be able to access the personal data that they need to carry out their functions.
- Have adequate access controls, firewalls and virus protection and do not forget manual files.
- Have retention policies for the various categories of data

Storage of Data

The security of personal information relating to children and families is a very important consideration under the Data Protection Acts. Appropriate security measures will be taken by St Gabriel's Pre-School against unauthorised access to this data and to the data it is collecting and storing on behalf of the DCYA.

- A minimum standard of security will include the following measures:
- Access to the information should be restricted to authorised staff on a "need-to-know" basis.
- Manual files will be stored in a lockable filing cabinet located away from public areas.
- Computerised data will be held under password protected files with a limited number of users.
- Any information which needs to be disposed of will be done so carefully and thoroughly.
- Premises will be secured when unoccupied.

Data collected on behalf of DCYA for ECCE

The personal information which parents will be required to provide on application forms for the above schemes including their Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) are protected by the Data Protection legislation.

The following principles should be observed to ensure that the information supplied by parents meets the required levels of data protection.

Obtain and process information fairly

To fairly obtain the data, the data subject must, at the time the personal data is being collected, be made aware of the identity of the data controller/the purpose in collecting the data, and the persons or categories of persons to whom the data may be disclosed. To fairly process the data it must have been fairly obtained and in this case, the data subject must have consented to the processing.

Parents who return completed forms to a service provider for the purpose of the ECCE scheme should be aware of and consent to the transmission of the information to the DCYA.

Where a parent's declaration is not verified by the DCYA's checks, a letter will be issued to inform them that the subvention applied for does not apply. We will correct our register of the subventions due to parents, and supply the parent with the letter, stating that as a result we will not receive grant aid to reduce the fee charged. We will not retain this letter, or a copy of it, for more than 1 month.

If in the verification of information a parent disputes the outcome, they should contact the DCYA directly.

Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes and use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes

Under data protection legislation, St Gabriel's Pre-School will only keep data for specific, lawful and clearly stated purposes and the data will only be processed in a manner compatible with the purpose(s).

In this case, only information required on the ECCE official form is to be requested from parents for the purposes of the scheme. We will not retain copies of this form which will be forwarded to the DCYA. Unless otherwise directed.

The information contained in these forms should not be used for further purposes or disclosed to third parties, other than the DCYA, by St Gabriel's Pre-School. Requests for information from third parties should be referred to the DCYA for reply. The PPSN in particular is also protected under Social Welfare legislation.

Retain the information for no longer than is necessary for the purpose

In order to comply with this requirement, St Gabriel's Pre-School will comply with the retention period set out for these schemes by the DCYA.

Data collected through Garda Vetting

St Gabriel's Pre-School process their Garda Vetting requests through Barnardos for employees. St Gabriel's Pre-School understands that sensitive information may be identified through Garda Vetting. In the event that an employee's Garda vetting raises concerns the information will be dealt with on a confidential basis. St Gabriel's Pre-School appointed liaison person in relation to Garda vetting will share the information with the Manager. The Manager with the liaison person will meet with the employee to address the concerns in relation to Gardai Vetting. All

information pertaining to such a situation must be stored in the same way as other data.

St Gabriel's Pre-School will not pass on a copy of an employee's Garda Vetting Form to any other party.

Dealing with Access Requests

St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that they follow the guidelines set down by the Data Protection Office. Every individual about whom a data controller keeps personal information has a right to request a copy of the data which is kept about them. The service provider should only hold limited personal information on an individual. A copy of this information should be included along with other personal information held about the individual making the access request.

On making an access request any individual about whom you keep personal data is entitled to:

- A copy of the data you are keeping about him or her
- Know the categories of their data and your purpose/s for processing it
- Know the identity of those to whom you disclose the data
- Know the source of the data, unless it is contrary to public interest
- know the logic involved in automated decisions
- Data held in the form of opinions, except where such opinions were given in confidence and even in such cases where the person's fundamental rights suggest that they should access the data in question it should be given.

To make an access request the data subject must:

- Apply to in writing (which can include email);
- Give any details which might be needed to help you identify him/her and locate all the information you may keep about him/her e.g. previous addresses, date of birth, etc.
- Pay an access fee (if charged by the service)

Every individual about whom a data controller keeps personal information has a number of other rights under the Act, in addition to the Right of Access. These include the right to have any inaccurate information rectified or erased, to have personal data taken off a direct marketing or direct mailing list and the right to complain to the Data Protection Commissioner.

In response to an access request the data controller must:

- Supply the information to the individual promptly and within 40 days of receiving the request;
- Provide the information in a form which will be clear to the ordinary person

Retention of Records

Personnel Records	In general 6 years. Some employment legislation Acts require that information is held for longer periods.
Child Records	Until child is 21 years
Financial Records	6 years for pay slips. Accounting practices and company law apply to other records
Child Photographs/video recording	As per policy

1.23 FUNDRAISING POLICY

Principle

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to ensuring that fundraising activities are carried out in an ethical manner. This policy applies to the management, casual, permanent and contract staff and volunteers.

Policy

St Gabriel's Pre-School guiding fundraising principle is a simple one – we will only use techniques that we would be happy to be used on ourselves. In doing so, the organisation will adhere to the following standards:

- Fundraising activities carried out by St Gabriel's Pre-School will comply with all relevant laws.
- Any communications to the public made in the course of carrying out a fundraising activity shall be truthful and non-deceptive.
- All monies raised via fundraising activities will be for the stated purpose of the appeal and will comply with the organisation's stated mission and purpose.
- Nobody directly or indirectly employed by or volunteering for St Gabriel's Pre-School shall accept commissions, bonuses or payments for fundraising activities on behalf of the organisation.
- No general solicitations shall be undertaken by telephone or door-to-door.
- All fundraising activities must have the prior approval of the Manager.
- Fundraising activities should not be undertaken if they may be detrimental to the good name or community standing of St Gabriel's Pre-School.

1.24 CODE OF ETHICS - WORKING WITH CHILDREN

St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure staff are fully informed and knowledgeable about their critical role in the lives of the children in their care.

We understand that young children develop best through close affectionate relationships and positive, responsive interaction with others, particularly adults

but also with other children. Warm relationships are fundamental to meeting the young child's need for love, security, recognition and encouragement.

Policies and Procedures

Adult/child interaction is a key element of working with children. Adults should in principle allow the children lead the activity. Adults can invite the child to participate, look and listen.

This applies to ALL those working in St Gabriel's Pre-School including employees, students, volunteers, SNA's, external agency staff

Adults should adopt the following practices when interacting with children

DO...

- Provide constant supervision to ensure children are safe
- Make strong eye contact
- Be at the child's level – focus on the child/children.
- Check the child is understood
- Give encouragement and positive feedback
- Work with the child to develop their skills in relation to mediation and conflict resolution
- Extend the child's language
- Use clear communication skills – questions, responses, discussion, leading to other subjects
- Ask questions – how did you do that? - tell me about that? how? why?
- Use props
- Be sensitive to the child's needs and partnering play
- Ensure the child is comfortable
- Language – short repeat words, extend language – in line with the child's developmental age
- Use all occasions to engage children – greetings – lunch
- Repeat your message if something is not correct (not in negative way)
- Organise activities – that reflect children's interests – enjoyable, accessible to child
- Allow children – freedom of choices, within reason
- Listen, encourage and praise – applies to adults, children, parents
- Be a positive role model. Remember children learn what they see and hear
- Encourage children to engage in activities which will calm or relax them
- Be aware that the weather can effect children – rain, wind, heat
- Follow the child's lead
- Have FUN!

DON'T...

- Use mobile phones when supervising children
- Use abusive/threatening behaviour
- Use raised voices – speak in soft tones
- Isolate children

1.25 IRISH LANGUAGE POLICY

St Gabriel's Pre-School will support children to acquire the Irish language naturally by introducing Irish to the children we aim to foster the child's confidence in Irish and to develop their sense of pride in the language and to develop the child's listening and communication skills.

The staff members understand that language development varies with individual children and that each child's experience is unique.

Procedures

- We have a bear called Babog, he teaches colours, and numbers, we do counting in Irish, body parts and few other words, ie . door, window, milk, water.
- The children answer the roll call in Irish.
- We have some Irish books in the library and some words and pictures around the room.
- Use verbal and non-verbal encouragement (e.g. a nod and a smile) to prompt continued speech.
- Provide a quiet time to help children to refine their listening skills.
- Use rhymes, songs, and jokes to allow children to play with words.

1.26 EQUIPMENT AND TOYS

There will be a wide range of safe, age appropriate toys and equipment.

These will include items for water play, sand play, home corner, library corner, painting area and quiet area. Toys and equipment will be checked on a monthly basis for damage/ breakage. Toys and Equipment will be cleaned in accordance with a cleaning rota or when needed.

2. EMPLOYMENT/PERSONNEL

2.1 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to recruit and select the best candidate for any vacant position within our childcare service. Our staff are one of the key resources we have in achieving our aims and objectives of providing good quality care to the children in our service. Our primary concern is selecting the right candidate that will cherish the children in our care and help each one of them to reach their potential. The following is how our service operates its recruitment process to ensure the best candidate is chosen for every position, with particular reference to the suitability to work with young children.

St Gabriel's Pre-School has updated job specifications and job descriptions for each position. These are available from the Manager.

This policy outlines St Gabriel's Pre-School's commitment to compliance with the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 – 2012, by providing equality of opportunity in our recruitment procedures.

This policy applies to all applicants for employment with St Gabriel's Pre-School and to existing Employees applying for internal positions in St Gabriel's Pre-School. Anyone involved in recruitment and selection on behalf of St Gabriel's Pre-School is expected to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Advertisement

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to providing equality of opportunity with respect to vacancies that arise. As such, the Organisation strives to ensure a recruitment process free from any form of illegal discrimination.

Advertisements and the selection process will not discriminate on any of the nine grounds protected by the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2012. These 9 grounds are gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community, and recruitment decisions will be taken without reference to these grounds unless there are legitimate requirements for the post as permitted in the relevant legislation. In order to source the best candidates, selection criteria will be based on the skills, qualifications and experience necessary for successful performance in the role. Applicants will be screened against these requirements. After careful review of the applications against our job description and personal specification we short-list candidates and invite them for interview.

Application Forms

Candidates will be required to complete an Application form or requested to submit a CV. All advertisements will include instructions on the application procedure and how interested parties may apply.

Our aim is to draw out as much relevant information from each candidate as possible to enable us to make an accurate assessment of their suitability for the job.

After each interview is held, every candidate is assessed against the criteria set out in the job description, personal specification and their own qualifications. The interview sheet is then signed off by the interviewers.

Records of all applications, screening criteria and interview notes will be kept for up to 13 months by the Management following the appointment of the successful candidate.

Other selection methods may be employed where appropriate, for example reference checking.

A candidate for employment who has a disability will be provided reasonable accommodation to facilitate their ability to compete for a post, and to fulfil a post where he/she is the most suitable candidate for the role. Reasonable accommodation will only be provided where it does not present a disproportionate burden on the Organisation

Garda Vetting

In accordance with the Childcare (Pre-school Services) Regulations 2016 we ensure that all staff members are Garda vetted through Barnardos.

Probation

The purpose of this policy is to set out St. Gabriel's Pre-School's approach to managing the probation process. This policy applies to all Employees during their probation period.

It is the policy of St. Gabriel's Pre-School to use a probationary period at the commencement of employment in order to assess the suitability of newly appointed Employees, and to assist their integration into their role and the Organisation. The period is used to ensure that the new hire is performing in their new role, and that they are settling into the Organisation. The duration of probation is outlined in the individual statement of terms and conditions of employment and may be extended at the discretion of Management.

During probation there should be dialogue between the Manager and the Employee with regard to performance, conduct, attendance and any other issues impacting on the new Employee's ability to settle into the role and the Organisation. Issues may also be addressed formally by way of probation review meeting(s).

Reviews will be carried out throughout the probation period and in particular mid-way and at the end of the probation period. This gives St Gabriel's Pre-School an opportunity to assess the suitability of a new worker to work with children and to implement the organisation's policies on safe practices.

Where an Employee successfully completes probation, this will be confirmed to them by their Manager.

Where there are issues which affect an Employee's ability to successfully complete probation, then probation may be extended at the discretion of Management. Where there are serious misgivings with an Employee's fit in the Organisation or their role, then the employment relationship may be terminated at the end of the probation period.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to terminate employment during probation, due to the nature of the issue(s) arising. Dismissal may arise without application of the full rigours of the disciplinary process during probation.

2.2 DOUBLE EMPLOYMENT

This policy sets out to ensure compliance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 provisions with regard to double employment. This policy applies to all Employees. It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to ensure that no Employee works in excess of the maximum working week applicable to them, and is permitted to avail of their minimum weekly and daily rest periods as set down by statute. It is the responsibility of the Organisation to ensure that these rights are upheld, and these rights exist irrespective of how many employments an Employee may hold.

Therefore, where an Employee is engaged in more than one employment, this can become a difficult responsibility for the Organisation to protect. In order to ensure that an Employee is not engaging in a secondary employment which may result in their failure to protect their rights under the relevant legislation, Employees are required to seek Management approval in writing prior to engaging in secondary employment or other

work. Approval will only be given to engage in secondary employment or other work where deemed appropriate in light of the Organisation's legal obligations and the Employee's contractual commitments to the Organisation.

Any Employee seeking to engage in a secondary employment must consult their Manager and apply formally in writing for approval to hold secondary employment. Where approval is given, the Employee will be required to submit details of the working hours and details of the duties entailed by the other employment to their Manager on a weekly basis, in order that working time and your contractual commitments may be monitored. In certain instances records may not be required, e.g. employment by a family member, however the Organisation must still be informed of such secondary employments.

2.3 DATA PROTECTION

Under the Data Protection Acts, Employees have a right to obtain a copy of any information relating to them kept on a computer or in a structured manual filing system regardless of when the data was created. Personnel records held by Employers come within the terms of the Acts. Employees can make access requests for information held about them. Under the Data Protection Acts, data must be:

- Obtained and processed fairly
- Accurate, complete and kept up to date
- Obtained only for one or more specified, explicit and legitimate purpose
- Shall not be processed in a manner incompatible with these purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Shall not be kept longer than is necessary
- Should be controlled with appropriate security measures
- Storage of personal data

Personal data kept shall normally be stored on the Employee's personnel file. Highly sensitive data such as medical reports will be stored in a separate file in order to ensure the highest levels of confidentiality. St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that only authorised personnel have access to an Employee's personnel file. It may be necessary to store certain other personal data e.g. salary details. The Employee's Manager may have access to certain personal data where necessary. St Gabriel's Pre-School processes certain data relevant to the nature of the Employment and will ensure that personal data will be processed in accordance with the principles of data protection, as described in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003.

Personal data is normally obtained directly from the Employee concerned. In certain circumstances, it will, however, be necessary to obtain data from third parties e.g. references from previous Employers. Employees are responsible for ensuring that they inform their Manager of any changes in their personal details e.g. change of address. St Gabriel's Pre-School will endeavour to ensure personal data held by is up to date and accurate.

St Gabriel's Pre-School is under a legal obligation to keep certain data for a specified period of time. In addition the company will need to keep personnel data for a period of time in order to protect its legitimate interests.

Security and Disclosure of Data

The Organisation shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that appropriate security measures are in place to protect the confidentiality of both electronic and manual data. Security measures will be reviewed from time-to-time having regard to the technology available, the cost and the risk of unauthorised access. Employees must implement all company security policies and procedures e.g. use of computer passwords, locking filing cabinets etc. HR data will only be processed for Employment-related purposes and in general will not be disclosed to third parties, except where required or authorised by law or with the agreement of the Employee. Employees must maintain the confidentiality of any data they have access to in the course of their Employment. Employees must adhere to the data protection principles set out above. If Employees are in any doubt regarding their obligations they should contact the Data Protection Officer. Any breach of the data protection principles is a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Medical Data

Occasionally, it may be necessary to refer Employees to the company doctor for a medical opinion and all Employees are required by their contract of Employment to attend in this case. St Gabriel's Pre-School will receive a copy of the medical report, which will be stored in a secure manner with the utmost regard for the confidentiality of the document.

Employees are entitled to request access to their medical reports. Should an Employee wish to do so, please contact the HR department who will consult with the doctor who examined you and request the data. The final decision lies with the doctor to decide whether the data should be disclosed to you or not in accordance with Statutory Instrument No. 82 of 1989.

Employees are required to submit sick certificates in accordance with the sick pay policy. These will be stored by the Organisation having the utmost regard for their confidentiality.

Interview Records

St Gabriel's Pre-School will retain records of interview notes, application forms etc in order to ensure compliance with the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2012 and with the company's Equal Opportunities Policy for a period of 12 months.

Email Monitoring

St Gabriel's Pre-School provides email facilities and access to the internet for work purposes. In order to protect against the dangers associated with email and internet use, screening software is in place to monitor email and web usage

Mailboxes are only opened upon specific authorisation by a Manager in cases where the screening software or a complaint indicates that a particular mailbox may contain material which is dangerous or offensive; where there is a legitimate work reason or in legitimate interest of the Organisation. Please see the Email and Internet Usage Policy for further details.

Close Circuit Monitoring

The Organisation has close circuit television cameras located at the entrance to the school. This is necessary in order to protect against theft or pilferage, for the security of staff and company property. Access to the recorded material will be strictly limited to authorized personnel. Close circuit surveillance is not used to manage performance.

Data Protection Officer

Loretta Dunphy is the data protection officer for St Gabriel's Pre-School. The Data Protection Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with data protection legislation. All Employees must co-operate with the Data Protection Officer when carrying out his/her duties. The Data Protection Officer is also available to answer queries or deal with Employee's concerns about data protection.

Access Requests

Employees are entitled to request data held about them on computer or in relevant filing sets. This includes personnel records held by [the Organisation]. St Gabriel's Pre-School will provide this data within 40 days. There is a charge of €6.35 for requesting this data. An Employee should make a request in writing to the Data Protection Officer, stating the exact data required.

Employees are only entitled to data about themselves and will not be provided with data relating to other Employees or third parties. It may be possible to block out the data relating to a third party or conceal his/her identity, and if this is possible the company may do so. Data that is classified as the opinion of another person, will be provided unless it was given on the understanding that it will be treated confidentially. Employees who express opinions about other Employees in the course of their Employment should bear in mind that their opinion may be disclosed in an access request, e.g. performance appraisals. An Employee who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an access request has the option of using the Organisation's grievance procedure.

Right to Object

Employees have the right to object to data processing which is causing them distress. Where such objection is justified, St Gabriel's Pre-School will cease processing the data unless it has a legitimate interest that prevents this. St Gabriel's Pre-School will make every effort to alleviate the distress caused to the individual. An objection should be made in writing to the Data Protection Officer, outlining the data in question and the harm being caused to the Employee

2.4 PERSONAL PROPERTY

All Employees are expected to take reasonable care of their personal belongings at work to protect them from theft, damage or loss. St Gabriel's Pre-School does not accept liability for any personal belongings which are lost, damaged or stolen while in the workplace.

2.5 PROTECTED DISCLOSURE

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate this Organisation's commitment to observing and maintaining the highest standards of honesty, openness and accountability in all of our practices. Our whistleblowing policy is intended to encourage and enable workers to raise concerns or disclose information within our workplace rather than overlooking a problem without fear of penalisation or threat of less favourable treatment, discrimination or disadvantage.

Scope

This policy applies to all workers within the Organisation, including Employees, Volunteers, Consultants, Contractors, Trainees, Agency Workers, Interns and those on work experience.

This policy is not appropriate for dealing with issues of harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or individual grievances which may relate to dissatisfaction with workplace relationships, the work environment or a term or condition of employment. Such matters should be addressed through the appropriate procedures as set out by the Organisation.

In addition, this policy is not designed to replace any legal reporting or disclosure requirements arising under other legislation. Where statutory reporting requirements or procedures exist, these must be fully complied with.

Policy

What is 'Whistleblowing'?

Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker raises a concern about a relevant wrongdoing such as possible fraud, crime, danger or failure to comply with any legal obligation which came to the worker's attention in connection with the worker's employment. 'Relevant wrongdoings' are broadly defined in the Act and include the following:

- That an offence has been, is being or is likely to be committed;
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation, other than one arising under the individual's contract of employment or other contract whereby the individual undertakes to do or perform personally any work or services;
- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- That the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered;
- That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged;
- That an unlawful or otherwise improper use of funds or resources of a public body, or of other public money, has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- That an act or omission by or on behalf of a public body is oppressive, discriminatory or grossly negligent or constitutes gross mismanagement; or
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any of the points above has been, is being or is likely to be concealed or destroyed.

What is meant by a Reasonable Belief?

Although a worker is not expected to prove the truth of the facts in a disclosure, they must have a 'reasonable belief' that there are grounds for their concern when making a disclosure using the internal procedure. A reasonable belief means that the belief is based on reasonable grounds. This does not mean the belief has to be correct. The individual should also not have unlawful and / or unethical objectives in reporting a concern.

If an individual is uncertain as to whether a concern is a Protected Disclosure within the scope of this policy he/she should seek guidance from their Manager or the Protected Disclosures Officer.

Procedure for Raising a Concern

This procedure enables all workers to raise any genuine concern(s) relating to the Organisation in the right way and at an early stage in the confidence that he/she will not be penalised or suffer detriment for having done so.

Raising a Concern Internally

In the first instance, a worker is encouraged to raise any concern(s) to their Manager. However, should the worker feel that it is not appropriate or feel uncomfortable disclosing such information to their Manager, the worker should raise any concern(s) to a more Senior Manager or the Protected Disclosure Officer and confirm that a Protected Disclosure is being made in accordance with this policy.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Should a worker raise a concern verbally a written record of the conversation will be kept and a copy provided to the worker.

The disclosure should state:

- The name of the person(s), body or otherwise referred to;
- Give a description of the 'relevant wrongdoing';
- Provide any information that tends to show the 'relevant wrongdoing', including dates/times and locations so as to assist the investigation of the matters raised in the disclosure;
- Name of witnesses to any 'relevant wrongdoing'

Confidentiality

St. Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to taking all reasonable steps to protect the identity of the worker making a disclosure and to ensure that relevant disclosures are treated in confidence. However, there are circumstances, as outlined in the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, where confidentiality cannot be maintained. This may include instances in which the worker has made it clear that he/she has no objection to his/her identity being disclosed or the identity of the person making the disclosure is critical to an investigation of the matter raised. Should such a situation arise, the Organisation will make every effort to inform the worker that his/her identity may be disclosed.

All workers involved in the process must respect the need for confidentiality. A failure to do so may represent a serious disciplinary offence, up to and including dismissal or other sanction.

Raising a Concern Anonymously

A concern(s) may be raised anonymously. However on a practical level it may be difficult to investigate such a concern(s). The Organisation encourages all workers to put their names to allegations, with our assurance of confidentiality where possible, in order to facilitate appropriate follow-up. This will make it easier for the Organisation to assess the disclosure and take appropriate action including an investigation if necessary.

How the Organisation will deal with a Concern

In the event of a concern being raised, the Organisation will arrange a meeting with the worker to discuss the matter on a strictly confidential basis. The meeting will be conducted by an independent member of Management or external assistance may be

necessary in some circumstances so as to ensure impartiality, objectivity and fairness. A worker is permitted to have a representative present (colleague or trade union representative).

St. Gabriel's Pre-School will clarify at this point if the concern is appropriate to this procedure or is a matter more appropriate to our other procedures, for example our Grievance or Dignity in the Workplace procedures.

Having met with a worker in regard to concerns raised and clarified that the matter is in fact appropriate to this procedure, the concerns raised may be subject to an initial examination by a designated independent member of management or other appropriate person, with a view to determining an appropriate course of action. This may involve simply clarifying certain matters, clearing up misunderstandings or resolving the matter by agreed action without the need for an investigation.

Should this approach be deemed inappropriate or inconclusive or where deemed appropriate, matters raised in the disclosure may:

- Be investigated internally by an appropriate independent member of management or other appropriate person;
- Be referred to an external enforcement agency or regulator;
- Be referred to An Garda Síochána.

Where an internal investigation takes place, this will be governed by the terms of reference which will detail the likely time frame for its completion (an indicative timeframe will be outlined) and the scope of the investigation.

The investigation will be conducted by an independent member of Management or external assistance may be necessary in some circumstances so as to ensure impartiality, objectivity and fairness. Any worker making a protected disclosure or any worker against whom a concern has been made is entitled to be accompanied by a representative (colleague or trade union representative). The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively and with sensitivity. Utmost confidentiality will be protected in so far as it is reasonably practicable.

Where possible or appropriate, the Organisation will keep the worker who made the disclosure informed of actions taken. Such information should be treated as confidential. Sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the Organisation however from giving specific details of any steps, including the outcome of any investigation or sanctions taken as a result.

Internal Investigation Outcomes

Every reported issue will be taken seriously. Appropriate action will be taken based on the outcome of any actions or investigation undertaken.

Measures will be taken against a worker where an investigation finds sufficient evidence to conclude that the concern(s) raised by the whistleblower was justified. This may include formal disciplinary action, or other appropriate sanction or intervention deemed

necessary to prevent a recurrence of the 'relevant wrongdoing'. Prior to any disciplinary action being taken, a fair disciplinary hearing will be held in line with the Organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Where an investigation is inconclusive or the concern is not upheld, there will be no negative inference against any party to the concern raised. All parties to the disclosure(s) will be expected to continue working as normal, and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at work.

A worker is not expected to prove the truth of any concern raised. However, the worker must have a reasonable belief that there are grounds for their concern. An appropriate sanction may be taken against any worker who is found to have made a deliberately false disclosure or raised a concern with malicious intent.

Safeguards and Penalisation

No worker engaging in the procedures outlined here will be penalised or subject to unfavourable treatment for their role in the process, whether they are making a protected disclosure in good faith, supporting a disclosure, giving evidence in proceedings or giving notice of any intention to do any of the foregoing. Penalisation means any act or omission that affects a worker to the individual's detriment and may include suspension, lay-off, dismissal, demotion, loss of opportunity for promotion, transfer of duties, change of location of place of work, reduction in wages, change in working hours, the imposition or administering of any discipline, reprimand or other penalty (including a financial penalty), unfair treatment, coercion, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, disadvantage, unfair treatment, injury, damage, loss or threat of reprisal.

Each worker is also responsible for not causing detriment to another person because the other person or a third person has made a protected disclosure. A detriment in this context includes coercion, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, disadvantage, adverse treatment in relation to employment (or prospective employment), injury, damage, loss or threat of reprisal.

Any worker involved in such conduct may, depending on the seriousness of the issue, be deemed gross misconduct by the Organisation and may result in summary dismissal or other appropriate action.

A worker who believes that they have suffered any such treatment should inform their Manager, Senior Manager or the Protected Disclosures Officer immediately. If the matter is not remedied a worker should raise it formally using the Organisation Grievance Procedure.

Other Channels – Raising Concerns Outside of the Workplace

Raising Concerns Externally

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal avenue within the workplace in which a concern(s) or in regard to a 'relevant wrongdoing' can be raised. The Organisation is confident that such concerns can be dealt with 'in house' and strongly encourages all workers to report such concerns internally. However, it is recognised that in some limited circumstances it may not always be appropriate to report any genuine concerns internally and that it may be necessary to raise a concern(s) externally. The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 provides for a number of avenues in this regard. It is important to note however, that the evidential criteria for making an external disclosure is set at a

higher level than that applying to raising a concern(s) internally. While a worker need only have a reasonable belief as to wrongdoing to make a disclosure internally, if a worker is considering an external disclosure, different and potentially more onerous obligations apply depending on to whom the disclosure is made.

Responsibilities

Management will endeavour to ensure that this policy is communicated to all workers and will ensure that the policy is maintained and updated in line with legislative changes and any amendments to the relevant Code of Practice. Where required, measures will be taken to ensure the accessibility of policies and procedures for all workers.

All workers are expected to comply with this policy and to raise issues of concern through the procedures outlined in the policy.

Protected Disclosures Officer

Loretta Dunphy

principal@stgabrielsprimary.ie

.

2.6 EMPLOYMENT/PERSONNEL FILES

The purpose of this policy is to promote compliance with the Data Protection Acts as they apply to the collection and retention of Employee information. This applies to all Employees. In order to administer each Employee's employment it is necessary to collect, retain and process certain personal data. Personal data which may be required can include Employee names and addresses, their date of birth, their rate of pay, their application form or C.V., any records related to disciplinary situations, etc. It is the policy of this Organisation that this information will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Acts and Employees consent to such processing of data, including sensitive personal data. Legislation requires that we keep certain records on our staff members. It is our policy to keep the following records for each staff member:

- C.V.
- Copy of Advertisement
- Job Description
- Person/Job Specification (selection criteria)
- Questions for Interview
- Proof of identity (passport, driving license)
- Score Sheet and Interview Notes
- Medical Results
- Two References (Verbal and Written)
- Processed Garda Vetting Form
- Copies of letters sent to the candidate
- Contract signed by employee and employer
- Confirmation of Hire Form
- Sign Off sheet on all policies and Procedures
- Copies of validated Qualifications
- Completed Induction Form
- Letter confirming successful probation completed
- Training Record (individual)

- Copies of any other correspondence with the employee during the tenure of their employment

In order to uphold the requirements of the legislation, every effort will be taken to adhere to the principles of data protection as established by the Data Protection Commissioner.

Personal data will be stored in a safe location and used in the manner outlined when it is collected. Personal data will not be disclosed to any person other than members of Management, the Employee themselves, or other third parties who may process the information on behalf of St Gabriel's Pre-School from time to time. Any person who is provided access to the information will be required to comply with the Data Protection Acts when processing the information.

Data will only be retained for as long as it is necessary, and will be kept accurate and up to date in so far as reasonably practicable. To this end, Employees are requested to notify their manager of any changes to personal data retained by St Gabriel's Pre-School. An Employee wishing to access personal data held about them may do so by making a request to their Manager to do this. Access will be provided within a reasonable timeframe.

2.7 PAYMENT OF WAGES / SALARIES

Full & part time staff will be paid weekly in arrears. Each employee will be given a written statement (pay slip) with his/her wages. This will detail the gross amount of wages payable to the employee and itemize the nature and amount of each deduction.

St Gabriel's Pre-School will make any relevant statutory deductions i.e. PAYE and PRSI, and will also make any other deductions authorised in the Employee's contract of Employment e.g. pension. No other deductions will be made from the Employee's wages unless St Gabriel's Pre-School gets prior authorisation for the deductions. This will detail:

- The purpose of the deduction
- The total amount of the deduction
- The duration of the deduction (start and end date)
- The amount of each deduction
- The signature of the Employee authorising the deduction
- Any other deductions made will be in line with the Payment of Wages Act 1991.

In cases of inadvertent overpayment, St Gabriel's Pre-School will, providing the amount of the deduction does not exceed the amount of the overpayment, recover the amount of the overpayment. Depending on the individual circumstances, the Organisation may come to an agreement with the Employee on the method of recovering the overpayment.

2.8 TIME KEEPING

Normal working hours are as per the statement of terms and conditions of employment. Staff members are required to arrive in the pre-school or after-school room before their start time & be ready to start work at their starting time. St. Gabriel's Pre-School requires that all Employees be punctual for work as per their statement of terms and conditions of employment. The pre-school and after school care will operate strictly within the specified opening hours. Continued lateness may result in the implementation of the disciplinary procedure as St Gabriel's Pre-School must always operate within the

appropriate ratios. In general, issues will initially be addressed informally, however the Organisation may commence the disciplinary procedure at whichever stage is deemed appropriate.

2.9 WORKING HOURS AND BREAKS

St. Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to ensuring that no Employee works in excess of the maximum average working week, as determined by the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997. Breaks are permitted as per each Employee's statement of terms and conditions of employment. It is the policy of this Organisation to ensure that all Employees are afforded their minimum entitlements to daily and weekly rest as per the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Full time staff will work from 8:30am to 4:00pm, with a half hour for lunch from 12:45 until 1:15. Part time staff will work on a flexible basis between the hours of 8.30am – 4.00pm as specified in their contract. Part-time staff will have the same entitlement to breaks as full time staff.

Should an Employee have a query in relation to their working hours, breaks or rest periods, or where they have been unable to avail of same, this should be brought to the attention of their Manager, or raised through the Organisation's grievance procedure.

2.10 ANNUAL LEAVE & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Annual leave is leave provided for rest and recreation and to facilitate Employees to reconcile their work and family responsibilities. This policy demonstrates compliance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 in relation to annual leave and public holidays. It also sets out Employee rights and obligations in relation to these forms of leave.

All leave must be taken during school closure periods.

All Employees are entitled to avail of annual leave. Employees are encouraged to avail of their annual leave during the leave year to which it relates. Employees may apply to take their annual leave in any pattern which they feel is appropriate to their own personal needs, however the approval of leave lies at the discretion of Management.

Pay for annual leave will be provided at the normal daily rate. Payment in lieu of statutory annual leave is not permitted other than on termination of employment. Where, on termination of employment, an Employee has availed of more annual leave than has been accrued in the leave year, a deduction may be made from the Employees final pay.

All applications for annual leave must be made in writing. Annual leave is granted subject to Management approval in advance of the leave being taken.

Public Holidays

It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to provide a benefit in respect of nine public holidays, namely;

- January 1st
- March 17th
- Easter Monday
- First Monday of May

- First Monday of June
- First Monday of August
- Last Monday of October
- December 25th
- December 26th

The pre-school and after-school will be closed on all public and bank holidays. All staff are paid for these days, subject to meeting the qualification requirements. This payment is included in full-time staff salaries. Part-time staff will be paid for these days as they occur on a pro-rata basis and subject to the relevant qualification criteria.

2.11 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that St Gabriel's Pre School operates a fair disciplinary process which has regard to the rights of Employees under both the Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and the Unfair Dismissals Acts. The policy is to be applied in order to assist and encourage Employees to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct, attendance and performance where shortcomings are identified. The policy and procedure aim, where appropriate, to be corrective rather than punitive. This policy applies to all Employees.

The primary objective of this procedure is to ensure that Employees are made aware of any shortcomings in their performance/conduct/attendance and provided with an opportunity to resolve this situation. To this end, issues will generally be addressed through the informal procedure whereby the Manager will raise the issue with the Employee and agree a corrective action plan in order to resolve the situation without recourse to the formal procedure. However, where this fails to resolve a situation, or the informal process is deemed inappropriate in the given circumstances, then the formal process may be initiated.

During the formal stages of the procedure, Employees have the right to be accompanied by a representative at a meeting. The role of this representative is to provide support, to ensure that the procedures followed are fair, and, if appropriate, to help the Employee present their case. However, it should be noted that the contractual relationship exists between the Employee and the Employer. Therefore, questioning will be directed to the Employee, and where possible the Employee must speak on their own behalf. The stage at which any Employee enters the disciplinary procedure depends upon the severity of the issue being dealt with.

At all formal stages of the procedure the Employee is entitled to be made aware of the case against him/her, and to be provided with any evidence to be used against him/her. The Employee will be afforded an opportunity to respond to any allegations and evidence, and Management will give due consideration to all responses received. Representation is permitted at all formal stages of the procedure. The Employee is also permitted to appeal the findings of any formal disciplinary investigation or any sanction imposed under the procedure.

Misconduct

The following behaviours may be considered to be misconduct and may result in disciplinary action being initiated under the disciplinary procedure. Note that these

examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and this list is not exhaustive. All cases are considered on their own merits:

Minor breach of a workplace policy or procedure;

- Poor timekeeping;
- Abuse of sick leave policy;
- Insubordination;
- A refusal to carry out a reasonable request;
- Minor breaches of health and safety regulations;
- Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation, or any act of discrimination;
- Downloading, display or distribution of pornography or other inappropriate material;
- Bringing the Organisation into disrepute;
- Misuse of Organisation property.

Gross Misconduct

The following behaviours may be considered to be gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal, depending on the circumstances of the case. Note that these examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and this list is not exhaustive. All cases are considered on their own merits:

- Serious harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, victimisation or other act of discrimination;
- Serious abuse of sick leave;
- Theft or other fraudulent behaviour;
- Serious breaches of health and safety rules or endangerment of another person in the workplace;
- Serious breaches of confidentiality;
- Being under the influence of an intoxicant at work or in the course of employment;
- Possession, sale or distribution of a controlled substance in the workplace
- Violent or threatening behaviour;
- Refusal to participate in a workplace investigation or other action;
- Serious failure to adhere to an agreed workplace procedure or other agreed terms of employment;
- Child Protection Charges;
- False declaration of information;
- Deliberately bringing the Organisation into Disrepute;
- Malicious mischief resulting in danger to other people or destruction of the Organisation's property or equipment.

Informal Procedure

In general, where there is an allegation of poor performance, attendance or conduct, the direct Manager of the Employee concerned will address the issue informally with him/her. This may be done by way of an informal counselling meeting, or through the normal performance management process. The objective of the informal discussion is to correct the issue of concern in a frank and constructive manner. The informal discussion will:

- focus on helping the Employee to understand how their performance/ conduct/ attendance has fallen short of the acceptable level; and

- suggest possible solutions and timeframes for improvement.

After the discussion, brief notes will be taken and held by the Manager who led the informal discussion. Provided the Employee achieves and sustains the necessary level of improvement, no further action will be taken. If the necessary improvements have not been made within the agreed timeframe the formal disciplinary procedure will commence.

Formal Procedure

In all cases where an Employee's standards of performance, attendance and/or conduct fall below those expected by the Organisation, the formal disciplinary procedure may be initiated. In all cases in which the Formal Procedure is initiated, a hearing will be held with the Employee to put the allegation to him/her, and to hear his/her responses to the issue. It may be necessary to formally investigate the facts surrounding a case and this may occur prior to the hearing, but in the majority of cases a hearing will suffice to ensure that the Employee is afforded a fair opportunity to respond. Where there is a dispute of the facts of a case, and an investigation is necessary, the investigation procedure will be explained to the Employee by Management.

Disciplinary Hearing Process

Prior to any formal disciplinary sanction being decided upon and imposed a fair disciplinary hearing will be held with the Employee. The purpose of this meeting is to put the complaint to the Employee and to hear the reasons behind the issue from the Employee's perspective. An Employee will always be treated in a fair manner at a disciplinary hearing. The following principles will apply to a disciplinary hearing:

- Advance notification of the requirement to attend a disciplinary hearing will be provided together with the fact that the outcome of the meeting may be disciplinary action.
- Throughout the hearing, the Employee will be permitted to have a representative present.
- The Employee will be notified of the complaint in advance of the meeting in order to have an opportunity to prepare his/her responses.
- The Employee will be afforded an opportunity to respond to any allegations/evidence at the meeting, and to present any other relevant factors including any mitigating circumstances.
- Further meetings may be held with the Employee as necessary.
- Conclusions will only be formed following a fair hearing where the Employee is allowed to respond to complaints and these responses are considered in the given circumstances.
- An Employee may be suspended on full pay at any stage during the disciplinary process, even before any allegation is presented to the Employee. This is done with no inference of guilt or otherwise against the Employee. Suspension will be for a reasonable period only and will often depend on the duration of the disciplinary investigation process.
- Due consideration will be given to all responses received.
- In order to ensure that Management have the time to fully consider the facts, there will always be an adjournment at the end of any disciplinary hearing in order to allow time to consider the facts of the case, and to make a fair decision on the next steps.

- The decision on what level of disciplinary sanction, if any, is to be imposed will be taken during the adjournment.
- A follow up disciplinary meeting will be held with the Employee where this decision will be communicated to the Employee. The Employee may have a representative present at this meeting.
- Formal disciplinary action will be confirmed in writing.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Where the informal process fails to resolve an issue, or where it is deemed inappropriate given the particular circumstances of a situation, then the following sanctions may be imposed by Management. Disciplinary action, if required, will normally follow an incremental warning process as set out in this policy.

However, in appropriate circumstances, St Gabriel's Pre-School reserves the right to initiate the process at any particular stage, or to move to any particular stage in the process, where the matters of concern are deemed sufficiently serious. The decision on what level of sanction to be imposed will only be taken following a formal disciplinary hearing having considered the circumstances of the particular situation.

Stage 1. Formal Verbal Warning

Where the informal procedure fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a formal verbal warning may be issued by the Appropriate Manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the verbal warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the Employee file.

The verbal warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the formal verbal warning document. A formal verbal warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy. Failure to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

Stage 2. First Written Warning

Where a formal verbal warning fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a first written warning may be issued by the Appropriate Manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the first written warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the Employee file.

The first written warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the first written warning document. A first written warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy. Failure

to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

Stage 3. Final Written Warning

Where a first written warning fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a final written warning may be issued by the Appropriate Manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the final written warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the Employee file.

The final written warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the final written warning document. A final written warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy. Failure to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

Stage 4. Dismissal

There are two ways in which dismissal may occur. Generally, the Employee will have been notified of concerns and have been provided with an opportunity to improve through one or more stages of the disciplinary procedure.

The other form of dismissal is a summary dismissal, which normally results from an act of gross misconduct. An act of misconduct will be considered as gross misconduct where the act is so serious that St Gabriel's Pre-School cannot reasonably be expected to retain the Employee in employment. Summary dismissal occurs without recourse to the earlier stages of the disciplinary procedure.

In all cases an appropriate and fair hearing, which adheres to the principles set out in this procedure, will be undertaken and careful consideration given to the decision on whether or not dismissal is the appropriate sanction given the circumstances of the case. In cases of alleged gross misconduct, an in-depth investigation may be necessary, and an Employee will be suspended on pay pending the outcome of this investigation. Suspension on pay is not deemed a disciplinary sanction, and there will be no negative inference against an Employee as a consequence of any such suspension.

Where there is an allegation of gross misconduct or gross incompetence it may be appropriate after a formal investigation to initiate the procedure at stage 4. In such circumstances, there is no obligation on the Organisation to provide advance notice of dismissal. Decisions to dismiss in such circumstances may only be taken by a senior Manager in the Organisation, or a nominated officer, following a full and fair investigation and hearing process. The decision will be confirmed in writing to the Employee.

Alternative Disciplinary Sanctions

In addition to the sanctions outlined in stages 1 to 4 of the disciplinary procedure, the Organisation also retains the right to impose alternative disciplinary sanctions as outlined in this section. This will only occur where deemed appropriate. Such action is an optional stage of the procedure, rather than a required stage. Where deemed

appropriate, alternative sanctions which may be imposed may include a transfer, demotion, suspension without pay, or withholding of a salary review for a period or removal of another benefit.

Note on Probation

During the period of an Employee's probation, including extended probation, the full rigours of the disciplinary process may not apply, and St Gabriel's Pre-School retains the right not to exhaust the disciplinary procedure during probation.

Appeals

All disciplinary sanctions may be appealed within five working days of being issued to an Employee. The details of whom the appeal should be made to will be included in the warning document, or letter of dismissal. A finding will be issued within a reasonable timeframe, generally 10 working days. This may be extended where necessary to facilitate a full and fair appeals process.

All timeframes in this policy assume Employees are attending work. If Employees have had time out of work, the duration of the disciplinary steps may be extended.

2.12 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that St Gabriel's Pre-School operates a fair grievance procedure which has regard to the rights of Employees as set out in the Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. The policy is to be applied in order to assist and encourage Employees to raise any issues of concern to them in order that St Gabriel's Pre-School may take appropriate action to resolve these concerns.

This policy applies to the individual grievances of all Employees. The policy is not appropriate for dealing with issues of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying, which should be addressed through the appropriate procedures set out by St Gabriel's Pre-School. Further information may be sought from your Manager.

Policy

It is recognised that from time to time in all employment situations, grievances may arise. A grievance is a formal expression of dissatisfaction with workplace relationships, the work environment or a term or condition of employment. It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to recognise that situations of this nature may arise, therefore this procedure is in place to assist Employees to resolve such matters. It is acknowledged that grievances which are not raised and addressed may escalate and become serious distractions in the workplace. Therefore, all Employees are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have through the procedure set out here.

Management are responsible for listening and responding to all Employee concerns raised through this procedure. In all cases, matters will be dealt with in as confidential a manner as possible. Employees may utilise the procedure whenever they feel it is required. An Employee will not be treated adversely for raising a grievance. During the formal stages of the procedure, Employees have the right to be accompanied at a meeting by a representative. The role of the Employee's representative is to ensure that the Employee is afforded a fair opportunity to raise their issue and afforded fair consideration.

Informal Discussion

Employees are encouraged to approach their Manager in the first instance to discuss issues and attempt to resolve them informally. Should the Employee feel uncomfortable approaching their Manager regarding a particular issue, they may approach another Manager to raise the issue. At this stage the Manager will consider the grievance carefully and respond to the Employee within a reasonable and agreed timeframe. If the Employee is not satisfied with the response provided, the issue may be escalated through the formal grievance procedure.

Stage 1. Formal Procedure

- Where the informal procedure fails to resolve a situation to the Employee's satisfaction, or where it is deemed inappropriate, the Employee is encouraged to raise their grievance formally. The employee is encouraged to approach their **line manager** when a grievance first arises and not a member of the Board of Management (A Board member can be contacted if the grievance reaches stage 2 of this process)
- In order to raise a formal grievance it is necessary to put the grievance in writing, or to meet with the Manager to put the grievance in writing. The written grievance may be submitted to the Employee's Manager, or where this is deemed inappropriate, to any other Manager.
- A grievance hearing will be arranged within an agreed timeframe, to which the Employee is entitled to bring a representative. Advance notification of this meeting will be provided in writing.
- The Employee will be invited to provide more information regarding their grievance at this meeting.
- The meeting will be adjourned to allow Management to explore the issue further and to identify possible solutions where appropriate.
- A prompt decision will be provided to the Employee, in writing, within a reasonable agreed timeframe.
- A record of the meeting will be kept and given to those in attendance.

Stage 2. Formal Procedure

- Should an Employee feel dissatisfied with the response given at stage 1, he / she may appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing. Details of the procedure to be followed in the event of an appeal will be outlined in the written decision on the grievance, as outlined above.
- A grievance appeal hearing will be arranged within an agreed timeframe, to which the Employee is entitled to bring a representative. Advance notification of this meeting will be provided in writing.
- A senior member of Management, and/or an appropriate third party will be present at the meeting to ensure that the grievance is given due consideration.
- The issue will be discussed in an effort to explore satisfactory outcomes.
- A prompt decision will be provided to the Employee within an agreed reasonable timeframe.
- A record of the meeting will be kept and given to those in attendance.

The decision after Stage 2 will be binding on all parties in the dispute. If the Employee is dissatisfied with the response given to the grievance, he/she will have to accept that it cannot be resolved to his/her satisfaction, as the procedure has been exhausted.

2.13 DIGNITY AT WORK, ANTI-HARASSMENT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This policy is designed to assist St Gabriel's Pre-School in providing a work environment free from workplace harassment and/or sexual harassment. The complaints procedure is in place to ensure that any Employee who feels that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour, as defined in this policy, may raise the matter and have it resolved in an appropriate manner. This procedure is supported by the disciplinary procedure, which may be utilised where an Employee is found guilty of engaging in behaviour constituting harassment and/or sexual harassment. This policy sets out to ensure compliance with the relevant sections of the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2012, which provide that every individual has a right to a work environment free from harassment or sexual harassment. This policy also complies with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at work.

This policy is in place to protect all Employees from acts of harassment and/or sexual harassment perpetrated by other Employees, members of Management, or any other person with whom the Employee comes into contact within the course of employment with whom St Gabriel's Pre-School has a business relationship e.g. a supplier or contractor. This policy applies where the unacceptable behaviour occurs in the workplace, or any other place attended in the course of employment e.g. an off-site training event.

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to providing a work environment free from harassment or sexual harassment. All Employees are protected by this policy and are urged to raise any concerns in relation to harassment or sexual harassment through the complaints procedures outlined in this policy. If you are a witness to harassing behaviour, you should make the recipient of the behaviour aware of this policy and urge them to raise the matter through the complaints procedures. You are also expected to bring the matter to the attention of Management.

Harassment is defined as any form of unwanted conduct relating to any of the discriminatory grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and/or membership of the Traveller community, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. A single incident may constitute harassment. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display, circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

The following list contains examples of harassing behaviour, however this is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not an exhaustive list of behaviours. All situations will be considered on their own merits:

- Verbal harassment – jokes, comments, ridicule or songs
- Written harassment – including faxes, text messages, emails or notices
- Physical harassment – jostling, shoving or any form of assault
- Intimidatory harassment – gestures, posturing or threatening poses
- Visual displays such as posters, emblems or badges
- Excessive monitoring of work

- Isolation or exclusion from social activities
- Unreasonably changing a person's job content or targets, pressure to behave in a manner that the Employee thinks is inappropriate, for example being required to dress in a manner unsuited to a person's ethnic or religious background

Sexual Harassment is defined as any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. A single incident may constitute sexual harassment.

The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

The following list contains examples of sexually harassing behaviours, however this is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not an exhaustive list of behaviours. All situations will be considered on their own merits:

- Physical conduct of a sexual nature — This may include unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching, patting or pinching or brushing against another Employee's body, assault and coercive sexual intercourse.
- Verbal conduct of a sexual nature — This includes unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity outside the work place after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, unwanted or offensive flirtations, suggestive remarks, innuendos or lewd comments.
- Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature — This may include the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects, written materials, emails, text-messages or faxes. It may also include leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures.
- Gender-based conduct — This includes conduct that denigrates or ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive of an Employee because of his or her sex such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are gender related.

An essential characteristic of the type of behaviour which constitutes sexual harassment is that it is unwanted by the recipient. This distinguishes it from behaviour which is welcome or reciprocated.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable whether from superiors, peers, juniors, non-Employees or by persons of the same sex.

It is important that all Employees understand that St Gabriel's Pre-School is obliged to investigate all complaints of sexual harassment whether or not it was the intention of the alleged harasser to engage in such behaviour.

Procedure

There are both informal and formal procedures to deal with the issues of harassment and/or sexual harassment at work. Although St Gabriel's Pre-School would prefer that issues are addressed through the informal procedure in the first instance, it is acknowledged that this is not always suitable, therefore there is no requirement to exhaust the informal procedure before progressing an issue through the formal process.

Informal Procedure

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints under this policy are dealt with and resolved informally between the parties whenever possible. This is likely to produce solutions which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality, while also protecting the working relationship. The objective of the informal approach is to stop the harassment or sexual harassment with the minimum conflict and stress for the individuals concerned.

In many cases, the Employee whose behaviour is causing offence may be unaware that his or her actions are inappropriate, or it may be that his or her words or actions have been misinterpreted. In such cases, every attempt should be made to clear up any misunderstanding quickly, on an informal basis. The informal process provides options for resolving disputes including mediation, where appropriate.

The informal procedure consists of a low key and non-confrontational approach by the recipient of the behaviour to the party causing offence to advise him/her of the impact of their behaviour and to ask them to cease behaving in this manner.

The approach should be made in private, and should be non-confrontational. Advice in relation to this procedure should be sought from any Manager in St Gabriel's Pre-School.

Formal Procedure

It is acknowledged that it may not always be practical to use the informal procedure to resolve an issue. An Employee may not feel comfortable to approach the other party, or the Employee may feel that the issue is too serious to be addressed through the informal procedure. In such circumstances, or where the informal process has failed to resolve an issue, the formal procedure set out in this policy should be followed.

In order to make a formal complaint an initial approach may be made to any Manager regarding the issue. Although the initial complaint may be provided verbally, it is a requirement that the complaint is lodged in writing to ensure that a fair process may be followed. Where assistance is required to put the complaint in writing, the Employee should consult their Manager to arrange this. The complaint should state:

- The name of the alleged perpetrator;
- The nature of alleged harassment i.e. the behaviours/ conduct constituting harassment/sexual harassment;
- Dates/times and locations of where and when the alleged harassment / sexual harassment occurred;
- Names of witnesses to any alleged incidents;
- Details of any action already taken to stop the harassment / sexual harassment.
- Consent to your identity and the facts of the allegation being disclosed to the alleged perpetrator. This is required in order to allow the Organisation to investigate and to take action in appropriate circumstances.

If the behaviour complained of does not concern harassment or sexual harassment as defined, an alternative approach may be put in place and a rationale recorded. If there are no concrete examples given, it will be deemed that there is no complaint to be answered by the alleged perpetrator as they have no recourse to repudiating an accusation that doesn't give any specifics.

Where an alternative approach is not deemed appropriate, the alleged perpetrator(s) will

be notified in writing that a complaint has been made against him/her, and provided with a copy of this complaint. The person investigating the complaint will indicate a timeframe for the resolution of the complaint, however such timeframes may be extended where necessary. He/she shall be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation(s), normally five working days.

Prior to commencing an investigation, the complaint and the response may be subject to an initial examination by a designated impartial member of Management or other appropriate person, with a view to determining an appropriate course of action. An appropriate course of action at this stage could, for example, include exploring a mediated solution or a view that the issue can be resolved in accordance with the Informal Procedure. Should either of these approaches be deemed inappropriate or inconclusive, a formal investigation of the complaint will be undertaken with a view to determining the facts of the case. In all cases there will be no inference of guilt against the alleged perpetrator, and they will be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation. The principles of natural justice will be adhered to throughout the investigation process.

All Employees involved in an investigation must respect the need for confidentiality; a failure to do so may represent a serious disciplinary offence. Confidentiality is assured in so far as it is reasonably practicable. Both parties may be suspended with pay, without any negative inference, pending the outcome of an investigation, where deemed appropriate by Management. However, where this is not possible, the parties to the complaint will be expected to maintain a positive working relationship.

Investigation Procedure

The investigation will be conducted in accordance with St Gabriel's Pre-School's Anti-Harassment & Sexual Harassment Policy and will be governed by terms of reference which will detail the likely time scale for its completion (an indicative timeframe will be outlined) and the scope of the investigation, indicating that the investigator(s) will consider whether the complaint falls within the definition of harassment or sexual harassment and whether the complaint has been upheld.

The investigation will be conducted by either an independent member of Management or external assistance may be necessary to deal with complaints in some circumstances so as to ensure impartiality, objectivity and fairness. The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively and with sensitivity. Utmost confidentiality will be protected in so far as it is reasonably practicable. Due respect will be had for the rights of the complainant, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses involved in the process.

The investigator(s) will meet with the complainant in the first instance to learn more regarding the complaint and to put the alleged perpetrator's responses to the complainant. Next, the alleged perpetrator will be invited to a meeting to explore their responses to the complaint and to put any relevant evidence to them. Evidence will be provided in advance of the meetings in order to allow the Employee to prepare their response to that evidence. As many interviews as are necessary will be conducted until the investigator(s) is/are satisfied that all evidence has been collected and all parties have had a fair opportunity to state their case. Witnesses may also be interviewed with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegation(s). Statements from the complainant, the alleged perpetrator and any witnesses will be recorded in writing.

All parties required to attend investigation meetings are entitled to be accompanied by a representative, whose role is to provide moral support, oversee the process and ensure that the Employee is afforded a fair opportunity to respond and provide evidence at any investigation meetings.

Every effort will be made to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible and preferably within an agreed timeframe. On completion of the investigation, the investigator(s) will submit a written report to a member of Management, containing the findings of the investigation. Both parties will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings before any action is decided upon by Management.

The complainant and the alleged perpetrator(s) will be informed in writing of the findings of the investigation, i.e. whether the complaint is upheld, not upheld, or whether the complaint is deemed to be malicious or vexatious.

Investigation Outcomes

Where a complaint is upheld, both parties will be informed of this outcome, and the relevant level of Management will also be advised. Management will take appropriate action based on the outcome of the investigation. This may include formal disciplinary action in line with the Organisation's disciplinary procedure, or training, or another appropriate intervention deemed necessary to prevent a recurrence of the behaviour.

St Gabriel's Pre-School will also consider providing further supervision, reassignment or re-organisation of work. Prior to any disciplinary action being taken, a fair disciplinary hearing will be held in line with St Gabriel's Pre School's disciplinary procedure. It is important that Employees are aware that certain acts of harassment or sexual harassment may be deemed gross misconduct by St Gabriel's Pre-School and may result in summary dismissal.

Where an investigation is inconclusive and the complaint is not upheld, there will be no negative inference against any party to the complaint. All parties to the complaint will be expected to continue working as normal, and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at work. Where it is found that the complaint was malicious or vexatious, then a disciplinary hearing will be held with the complainant to explore this further. In this situation only may a disciplinary sanction be imposed on the complainant. Lodging a malicious or vexatious complaint is a serious disciplinary offence, and, depending on the seriousness of the issue, may be deemed gross misconduct by the Organisation and may result in summary dismissal.

In all cases, whether the complaint is upheld or otherwise, the workplace will be monitored to ensure that the parties to the complaint conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and do not engage in any improper conduct. Appropriate support will be made available to both parties. St Gabriel's Pre-School will take such action as is required to eliminate the risk of that behaviour recurring or continuing and will keep records of interventions used for this purpose.

Appeal

Either party may appeal the decision, outlining in writing to Management the reason for the appeal. Such appeals will be heard by a Manager not previously involved in the investigation and independent advice and support will be sought if required.

Victimisation

No person engaging in the procedures outlined here will be subject to unfavorable treatment for their role in the process, whether they are making a complaint in good faith, supporting a complainant, giving evidence in the proceedings or giving notice of intention to do any of the foregoing, except where they are found guilty of an offence under the policy.

Third Party Harassment/ Sexual Harassment

The procedures outlined in this policy should be employed to deal with harassment or sexual harassment by a third party. Sanctions which may be imposed on a third party may include exclusion from the premises, termination of a contract, or other measures to prevent the recurrence of the inappropriate behaviour.

Responsibilities

Management will endeavour to ensure that this policy is communicated to all Employees and will ensure that the policy is maintained and updated in line with legislative changes and any amendments to the relevant Code of Practice. Where required, measures will be taken to ensure the accessibility of policies and procedures for all Employees.

Management has a particular responsibility to prevent workplace harassment and is expected to lead by example, promote awareness of this policy, be vigilant for signs of harassment, tackle problems before they escalate, deal sensitively with Employees involved in a harassment complaint and monitor the situation in the workplace so that harassment or sexual harassment does not occur or reoccur.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves so as to respect the rights of others to dignity in the workplace, to comply with this policy and to raise issues of concern through the procedures outlined in the policy.

2.14 DIGNITY AT WORK – ANTI-BULLYING

This policy is designed to assist St Gabriel's Pre-School in providing a work environment free from workplace bullying. The complaints procedure is in place to ensure that any Employee who feels that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour, as defined in this policy, may raise the matter and have it resolved in an appropriate manner. This procedure is supported by the disciplinary procedure, which may be utilised where an Employee is found guilty of engaging in behaviour constituting bullying. This policy sets out to ensure that St Gabriel's Pre-School fulfils its legal responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, with regard to workplace bullying. This policy also complies with the requirements set out in the Codes of Practice relating to workplace bullying.

This policy is in place to protect all Employees from acts of bullying perpetrated by other Employees, members of Management, or any other person with whom the Employee comes into contact in the course of employment e.g. a supplier or contractor. This policy applies where the unacceptable behaviour occurs in the workplace, or any other place attended in the course of employment e.g. an off-site training event.

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to providing a work environment free from bullying and ensuring that all Employees are treated with dignity and respect. All Employees are protected by this policy and are urged to raise any concerns in relation to workplace bullying through the complaints procedures outlined in this policy. If you are a witness to bullying behaviour, you should make the recipient of the behaviour aware of this policy

and urge them to raise the matter through the complaints procedures. You are also expected to bring the matter to the attention of Management.

All Employees have a responsibility in creating and contributing to the maintenance of a work environment free from bullying or conduct likely to contribute to bullying. Employees will not be victimised for involvement in complaints.

Workplace Bullying is defined as repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and / or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying. The following list contains examples of bullying behaviours, however this is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not an exhaustive list. All situations will be considered on their own merits:

- Exclusion with negative consequences;
- Verbal abuse/insults
- Menacing behaviour
- Taking credit for other peoples' ideas;
- Public humiliation;
- Constantly undervaluing effort;
- Persistent or unfounded criticism;
- Shouting or other intimidatory behaviour;
- Sneering, ridicule, innuendo;
- Withholding work related information

It is important to note that reasonable and essential discipline arising from the good management of an Employee's performance, conduct or attendance is not considered to be bullying. Actions taken which may be justified on health and safety grounds will also not be considered to be bullying.

Procedure

There are both informal and formal procedures to deal with the issue of bullying at work. Although St Gabriel's Pre-School would prefer that issues are addressed through the informal procedure in the first instance, it is acknowledged that this is not always suitable, therefore there is no requirement to exhaust the informal procedure before progressing an issue through the formal process.

Informal Procedure

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints under this policy are dealt with and resolved informally between the parties whenever possible. This is likely to produce solutions which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality, while also protecting the working relationship. The objective of the informal approach is to stop the bullying with the minimum conflict and stress for the individuals concerned. In many cases, the Employee whose behaviour is causing offence may be unaware that his or her actions are inappropriate, or it may be that his or her words or actions have been misinterpreted. In such cases, every attempt should be made to clear up any misunderstanding quickly, on an informal basis. The informal process provides options for resolving disputes including mediation, where appropriate.

The informal procedure consists of a low key and non-confrontational approach by the recipient of the behaviour to the party causing offence to advise him/her of the impact of their behaviour and to ask them to cease behaving in this manner. The approach should be made in private, and should be non-confrontational. Advice in relation to this procedure should be sought from any Manager.

Formal Procedure

It is acknowledged that it may not always be practical to use the informal procedure to resolve an issue. An Employee may not feel comfortable approaching the other party, or the Employee may feel that the issue is too serious to be addressed through the informal procedure. In such circumstances, or where the informal process has failed to resolve an issue, the formal procedure set out in this policy should be followed.

In order to make a formal complaint an initial approach may be made to any Manager regarding the issue. Although the initial complaint may be provided verbally, it is a requirement that the complaint is lodged in writing to ensure that a fair process may be followed. Where assistance is required to put the complaint in writing, the Employee should consult their Manager to arrange this. The complaint should state:

- The name of the person(s) complained of (alleged bully);
- The nature of alleged bullying i.e. the behaviours/ conduct constituting bullying;
- Dates/times and locations of where and when the alleged bullying occurred;
- Names of witnesses to any alleged incidents;
- Details of any action already taken to stop the bullying.
- Consent to your identity and the facts of the allegation being disclosed to the alleged bully. This is required in order to allow the Organisation to take action in appropriate circumstances.

If the behaviour complained of does not concern bullying as defined, an alternative approach may be put in place and a rationale recorded. If there are no concrete examples given, it will be deemed that there is no complaint to be answered by the person(s) complained of as they have no recourse to repudiating an accusation that doesn't give any specifics.

Where an alternative approach is not deemed appropriate, the person (s) complained of will be notified in writing that a complaint has been made against him/her, and provided a copy of this complaint. The person investigating the complaint will indicate a timeframe for the resolution of the complaint, however such timeframes may be extended where necessary. He/ she shall be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation(s), normally five working days.

Prior to commencing an investigation, the complaint and the response may be subject to an initial examination by a designated impartial member of Management or other appropriate person, with a view to determining an appropriate course of action. An appropriate course of action at this stage could, for example, include exploring a mediated solution or a view that the issue can be resolved in accordance with the Informal Procedure.

Should either of these approaches be deemed inappropriate or inconclusive, a formal investigation of the complaint will be undertaken with a view to determining the facts of the case. In all cases there will be no inference of guilt against the person(s)

complained of, and they will be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation(s). The principles of natural justice will be adhered to throughout the investigation process.

All Employees involved in an investigation must respect the need for confidentiality – failure to do so may represent a serious disciplinary offence. Confidentiality is assured in so far as it is reasonably practicable. Both parties may be suspended with pay, without any negative inference, pending the outcome of an investigation, where deemed appropriate by Management. However, where this is not possible, the parties to the complaint will be expected to maintain a positive working relationship.

Investigation Procedure

The investigation will be conducted in accordance with St Gabriel's Pre-School's Anti-Bullying Policy and will be governed by terms of reference which will detail the likely time scale for its completion (an indicative timeframe will be outlined) and the scope of the investigation, indicating that the investigator(s) will consider whether the complaint falls within the definition of bullying at work and whether the complaint has been upheld.

The investigation will be conducted by an independent member of Management or external assistance may be necessary to deal with complaints in some circumstances so as to ensure impartiality, objectivity and fairness. The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively and with sensitivity. Utmost confidentiality will be protected in so far as it is reasonably practicable. Due respect will be had for the rights of the complainant, the person(s) complained of and any witnesses involved in the process.

The investigator(s) will meet with the complainant in the first instance to learn more regarding the complaint and to put the responses of the person(s) complained of to the complainant. Next, the person(s) complained of will be invited to a meeting to explore their responses to the complaint and to put any relevant evidence to them. Evidence will be provided in advance of the meetings in order to allow the Employee to prepare their responses to that evidence. As many interviews as are necessary will be conducted until the investigator(s) is/are satisfied that all evidence has been collected and all parties have had a fair opportunity to state their case. Witnesses may also be interviewed with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegation(s). Statements from the complainant, the person(s) complained of and any witnesses will be recorded in writing. All parties required to attend investigation meetings are entitled to be accompanied by a representative, whose role is to provide moral support, oversee the process and ensure that the interviewee is afforded a fair opportunity to respond and provide evidence at any investigation meetings.

Every effort will be made to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible and preferably within an agreed timeframe. On completion of the investigation, the investigator(s) will submit a written report to a member of Management, containing the findings of the investigation. Both parties will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings before any action is decided upon by Management.

The complainant and the person(s) complained of will be informed in writing of the findings of the investigation, i.e. whether the complaint is upheld, not upheld, or whether the complaint is deemed to be malicious or vexatious.

Investigation Outcomes

Where a complaint is upheld, both parties will be informed of this outcome, and the

relevant level of Management will also be advised. Management will take appropriate action based on the outcome of the investigation. This may include formal disciplinary action in line with St Gabriel's Pre-School's disciplinary procedure, or training, or another appropriate intervention deemed necessary to prevent a recurrence of the behaviour.

St Gabriel's Pre-School will also consider providing further supervision, re-assignment or re-organisation of work. Prior to any disciplinary action being taken, a fair disciplinary hearing will be held in line with St Gabriel's Pre School's disciplinary procedure. It is important that Employees are aware that certain acts of bullying may be deemed gross misconduct by St Gabriel's Pre-School and may result in summary dismissal.

Where an investigation is inconclusive, and therefore not upheld, there will be no negative inference against any party to the complaint. All parties to the complaint will be expected to continue working as normal, and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at work. Where it is found that the complaint was malicious or vexatious, then a disciplinary hearing will be held with the complainant to explore this further. In this situation only may a disciplinary sanction be imposed on the complainant. Lodging a malicious or vexatious complaint is a serious disciplinary offence, and, depending on the seriousness of the issue, may be deemed gross misconduct by the Organisation and may result in summary dismissal.

In all cases, whether the complaint is upheld or otherwise, the workplace will be monitored to ensure that the parties to the complaint conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and do not engage in any improper conduct. Appropriate support will be made available to both parties. St Gabriel's Pre-School will take such action as is required to eliminate the risk of that behaviour recurring or continuing and will keep records of interventions used for this purpose.

Appeal

Either party may appeal the decision, outlining in writing to Management the reason for the appeal. Such appeals will be heard by a Manager not previously involved in the investigation and independent advice and support will be sought if required.

Victimisation

No person engaging in the procedures outlined here will be subject to unfavourable treatment for their role in the process, whether they are making a complaint in good faith, supporting a complainant, giving evidence in the proceedings or giving notice of intention to do any of the foregoing, whether they are making a complaint in good faith, supporting a complainant, giving evidence in proceedings or giving notice of intention to do any of the foregoing, except where they are found guilty of an offence under this policy.

Third Party Bullying

The procedures outlined in this policy should be employed to deal with bullying by a third party. Sanctions which may be imposed on a third party may include exclusion from the premises, termination of a contract, or other measures to prevent the recurrence of the inappropriate behaviour.

Responsibilities

Management will endeavour to ensure that this policy is communicated to all Employees and will ensure that the policy is maintained and updated in line with legislative changes and any amendments to the relevant Codes of Practice. Management will act

appropriately and in line with this policy in order to eliminate workplace bullying. Management has a particular responsibility to prevent workplace bullying and is expected to lead by example, promote awareness of this policy, be vigilant for signs of bullying, tackle problems before they escalate, deal sensitively with Employees involved in a bullying complaint and monitor the situation in the workplace so that bullying does not occur or reoccur. Employees are expected to comply with this policy and to raise issues of concern through the procedures outlined in the policy.

2.15 SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

The management committee will give support and encouragement to all the staff. They will be available to give guidance in the day to day running of the service. The childcare Team Leader will also direct, supervise and support the staff in the day to day running of the project.

2.16 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

The management committee will allow for compassionate leave as per the terms agreed in the employees contract of employment.

2.17 MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Staff are requested not to arrange medical appointments during working hours. However, where this is unavoidable, the management, may permit absence, so long as advance notice has been given to enable substitute cover to be arranged. In this case the appointment time should be arranged as close as possible to your finish time. Time off to attend medical appointments is unpaid.

2.18 STAFF TRAINING/QUALIFICATIONS and CPD

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to providing excellent service to all our children. We are also committed to training and developing of staff in order to meet and exceed our customers' expectations.

St Gabriel's Pre-School recognises that the continuous development of the knowledge and skills of all employees is key to the success of the business.

St Gabriel's Pre-School is an equal opportunities employer. In this regard, all decisions relating to the provision of training will be taken with reference to the requirements of an Employee's position, their individual development needs and the requirements of St Gabriel's Pre-School. Therefore all employees regardless of age, disability, gender, marital or family status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or a member of a travelling community, except where these present objective determining requirements for the training, will be given the opportunity and will be expected to undertake training in any field of learning which is pertinent to the achievement of corporate and operational goals. Training may be provided in a number of ways, varying from formal classroom style lectures to on the job training provided by a colleague or Manager. In all cases, training is a valuable method of ensuring that Employees are familiar with their role and capable of fulfilling that role to the requirements of the Organisation. The majority of training and development takes place informally on the job

Staff must attend training programmes. It is also assumed that staff would participate in external training every year as part of their Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Where possible, reasonable accommodation will be provided to facilitate an Employee with a disability to participate fully in training. Although every effort will be made to arrange training to facilitate attendance by part-time Employees during their working hours, there is an expectation that part-time Employee will make themselves available, from time to time, to attend training outside their normal hours of work. Reasonable notice of such a requirement will be provided.

Personal development is the individual responsibility of each Employee; therefore Employees should seek to establish their own training needs. These requirements should be discussed with the Employee's Manager where appropriate, and the Employee's Manager will consider requests for training in line with any needs identified by St Gabriel's Pre School. Where appropriate, training may be approved by the Employee's Direct Manager.

Staff are expected to engage in ongoing education and training programmes and adhere to the Child Care (Pre-School) Services Regulations 2016 All staff are required to hold qualifications which are necessary by law or required by any funding scheme (e.g ECCE Free Pre-school Year)

"The individual requirements in relation to each role will be outlined in the Employee's terms and conditions of employment. All qualifications will be validated. Employees are expected to submit original copies of qualifications for validation. Records are kept.

Induction Training

Every staff member will be provided with an induction training programme when they commence work to ensure they are fully trained in the first number of months of work. The Induction will be recorded on the appropriate form.

On the Job Training

Training is organised for each employee or groups of employees to fulfill identified training needs in their current positions. This enables the employees to significantly improve their effectiveness and performance in their current positions.

Practice Reviews

Management of St Gabriel's Pre-School, through observation, consultation and meetings will identify the training needs of the staff team and ensure any weaknesses in performance are addressed and remedied by an appropriate action. These will be addressed by:

- One to one supervision
- Staff meetings
- Training
- Support Sessions

All meetings (group and individual) will be recorded.

All instruction /direction and training of individual staff members will be recorded on the appropriate Training form and placed on the individual staff member's file.

All minutes of staff meetings are filed in the Staff Meetings Minutes File.

All training will be recorded on the staff member's individual training record.

As a childcare service, our commitment to each employee is to:

Create an environment where training and development is genuinely valued.

- Put in place processes to assist in conducting training and development activities, and to monitor the effectiveness of these processes.
- Invest in training and development.
- Plan and review training and development activities at all levels in the organization.
- Ensure Management have clearly defined training and development responsibilities for themselves and their employees which are regularly reviewed.
- Measure effectiveness through use of evaluation tools, assessing progress of the plan, and using appropriate external benchmarks.
- Share with the employees the progress of their training and development activities, what has worked, the business benefits, where improvements are needed and so on.
- Continue to improve and develop our training resources so that they actively support the employees as well as the business.

St Gabriel's Pre-School wants each employee to:

- Take responsibility for their own training and development.
- Recognise and meet their full potential.
- Perceive training and development as a continuous process.
- Understand that development means more than just attending training courses.
- Realise the importance of ensuring that training and development is aligned with the needs of the business

2.19 MATERNITY LEAVE

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate St Gabriel's Pre-School's compliance with the Maternity Protection Acts, 1994 and 2004, and associated regulations as issued, whilst also protecting the rights of Employees under this legislation. This policy applies to all Employees, and provides protection and leave entitlements for expectant mothers. The policy also outlines the entitlement of an expectant father to paid time off to attend ante-natal classes.

All female Employees are entitled to avail of up to 26 weeks basic maternity leave. Leave must commence at least 2 weeks before the end of the expected week of confinement and at least 4 weeks leave must be taken following the birth of the child. An additional period of up to 16 weeks leave may be taken at the discretion of the Employee immediately following the initial maternity leave period.

Maternity Leave Applications and Notification of Pregnancy/Breastfeeding

A pregnant Employee should advise St Gabriel's Pre-School of her pregnancy as soon as possible in order that measures may be taken to protect her health and safety at work and that of her developing child. In addition, mothers who are breastfeeding for up to 6

months following the birth of their child should also notify St Gabriel's Pre-School.

A minimum of 4 weeks notice is required from an Employee intending to avail of maternity leave and/or additional maternity leave prior to the leave commencing. A medical certificate confirming the pregnancy and the expected date of confinement must be provided at this time. Notification of leave must be made on the appropriate form which may be obtained from the Employee's Manager.

Ante-Natal and Post-Natal Care Appointments

A pregnant Employee is entitled to paid time off to attend ante-natal medical care appointments, and for post-natal medical appointments for up to 14 weeks after the birth of her child. The entitlement to paid time off for post-natal care is extended to 26 weeks where the Employee is breastfeeding. At least 2 weeks written notification must be provided to St Gabriel's Pre-School, except in the case of the first appointment. Where possible, appointments should be scheduled at the end of the working day as close to your finish time as possible. If the appointment finishes during the working day, the Employee is expected to return to work.

Time Off for Ante-Natal Classes

Female Employees are entitled to paid time off to attend 1 complete set of ante-natal classes (other than the last 3 classes in a set). An expectant father is entitled to paid time off to attend the last 2 ante-natal classes in a set. This is a once off entitlement in respect of one pregnancy only. However where an Employee is unable to attend a class through no fault of their own, they may be permitted to attend that class on a subsequent birth. At least 2 weeks notice of the intention to avail of this leave must be provided before the class and appropriate documentation submitted.

Return to Work

Employees are required to provide at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to work following leave. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Where possible Employees will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, he/she may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Breastfeeding on Return to Work

Should an Employee be breastfeeding on return to work, and their child is under 6 months old, the Organisation will facilitate a temporary reduction of working hours, without loss of pay, for the purposes of breastfeeding. The Employee must provide notification of her intention to avail of this entitlement at least 4 weeks before her proposed return to work date.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue during the period of maternity leave and additional maternity leave.

Maternity Benefit

No payment is made in respect of absence by an Employee during her maternity leave. However, an Employee may be entitled to claim maternity benefit from the Department of Social Protection, subject to qualification criteria. In order to claim this benefit, an Employee is required to submit a claim form (MB10) at least 6 weeks prior to

commencement of maternity leave. This form is available from the Department of Social Protection. St Gabriel's Pre-School will complete Part 4 of the form confirming Employment and PRSI details on request.

2.20 ADOPTIVE LEAVE

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate St Gabriel's Pre-School's compliance with the Adoptive Leave Acts, 1995 and 2005, and associated regulations as issued, whilst also protecting the rights of Employees under this legislation. This policy applies to all Employees, and provides protection and leave entitlements for both adoptive mothers and fathers in the circumstances outlined. In line with current legislation, all employed adopting females or sole male adopters are entitled to avail of up to 24 weeks adoptive leave. Leave commences on the actual date of placement. An additional period of up to 16 weeks leave may be taken at the discretion of the Employee immediately following the initial adoptive leave period.

Adoptive Leave Applications Procedure

A minimum of 4 weeks notice is required from an Employee intending to avail of adoptive leave and/or additional adoptive leave prior to the expected date of placement. In the case of an Irish adoption a certificate of placement should be forwarded within 4 weeks of the date of placement. In the case of a foreign adoption, a declaration of eligibility and suitability must be produced as soon as reasonably practicable, with a certificate of placement to be forwarded as soon as it is received by the Employee. Notification of leave must be made on the appropriate form which may be obtained from the Employee's Manager.

Leave to Attend Classes and Meetings in Advance of the Adoption

Any Employee involved in the adoption process is permitted to avail of paid time off to attend pre-adoption classes and meetings which they are obliged to attend, provided the meetings are held within the state. 2 weeks written notice of the first request must be provided. Evidence of the requirement to attend the class or meeting may be sought by St Gabriel's Pre-School.

Leave in Advance of Foreign Adoptions

In the case of a foreign adoption, an adopting mother or sole male adopter may avail of some of their additional leave before the placement of the child for the purposes of familiarisation with the child in advance of the adoption. 4 weeks written notice of this intention must be provided, and a declaration of suitability and eligibility must also be supplied. This entitlement is in addition to the time permitted to attend classes and meetings in the state.

Return to Work

Employees are required to provide at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to work following leave. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Where possible the Employee will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, the Employee may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue for the period of adoptive leave and additional adoptive leave.

Adoptive Benefit

No payment is made in respect of absence by an Employee during their adoptive leave. However, an Employee may be entitled to claim adoptive benefit from the Department of Social Protection, subject to qualification criteria. In order to claim this, an Employee is required to submit a claim form (AB1) prior to commencement of adoptive leave. This form is available from the Department of Social Protection. St Gabriel's Pre-School will complete Part 4 of the form confirming Employment and PRSI details on request.

2.21 FORCE MAJEURE LEAVE

Force majeure leave is leave provided for Employees to deal with emergency situations arising from the illness or injury of a person named in this policy. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Parental Leave Acts 1998 and 2006 in relation to force majeure leave, and to protect Employee rights in this regard. This policy applies to all Employees of St Gabriel's Pre-School.

It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to provide short-term paid leave for Employees where, due to the illness or injury of one of the following persons, the presence of the Employee at the location of that person is indispensable. Force majeure leave is permitted in respect of the illness or injury of one of the following persons:

- a child or adoptive child of the Employee;
- a spouse or partner of the Employee;
- a person to whom the Employee is acting in loco parentis;
- a brother or sister of the Employee;
- a parent or grandparent of the Employee;
- a person with whom the Employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency, including, but not limited to, same sex partners.

Entitlement to force majeure leave is limited to circumstances:

- where the immediate presence of the Employee is indispensable,
- where the Employee is present at the place where the ill or injured person is situated.

Force Majeure entitlement is a maximum of 3 days paid leave in a 12 month period, or a maximum of 5 days in a 36 month period. An Employee who is on force majeure leave for part of a working day shall be deemed to have taken 1 force majeure day.

Procedure

Where possible, an Employee should contact their Manager, or another Manager where their own Manager is not available, to notify St Gabriel's Pre-School of their absence as soon as possible. In all cases, the Employee will be required to complete a formal force majeure leave notification form detailing the duration of, and the reasons for, the leave on their return to work. This form may be obtained from the Employee's Manager.

St Gabriel's Pre-School will inform Employees if their application for Force Majeure Leave has been successful and will hold records of all Force Majeure Leave taken by Employees.

2.22 CARERS LEAVE

This policy is designed to demonstrate St Gabriel's Pre-School's compliance with the

Carer's Leave Act, 2001 and 2006 and associated regulations. This policy applies to all Employees with at least 12 months service.

It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to permit Employees to avail of unpaid leave from employment to fulfil their caring responsibilities where appropriate as determined in conjunction with the Department of Social Protection. Carer's leave of at least 13 weeks and up to 104 weeks may be applied for. This may be extended to 208 weeks in respect of two persons in need of care in certain circumstances. To be eligible for leave the Employee must have completed 1 year of service and be approved by the Department of Social Protection to provide full-time care to the relevant person. The Department of Social Protection also determine whether the person is deemed a relevant person.

Carer's leave may be taken as a continuous block of leave, or broken into shorter periods of leave. Where the leave is broken down, the Employee may not commence a subsequent period of leave until 6 weeks have elapsed since the termination of the previous period of leave.

Applications Procedure

An Employee is required to give 6 weeks' notice of their intention to avail of carer's leave. This application should set out the manner in which it is proposed to take the leave and confirm that an application has been made to the Department of Social Protection for approval to be deemed a carer for the relevant person. A response will be issued in respect of the application at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed commencement of the leave. Where the leave is approved a confirmation document will be produced for signature by the Employee and this will be retained by St Gabriel's Pre-School. Notification of leave must be made on the appropriate form which may be obtained from the Employee's Manager.

Termination of Carer's Leave

Carer's leave shall terminate on the pre-agreed date in the confirmation document, or in the following circumstances, whichever is the sooner:

- on an alternative date agreed between the Employee and Management,
- where the person in respect of whom carer's leave is taken ceases to qualify as a relevant person, or the Employee ceases to qualify as a carer,
- where a deciding officer from the Department of Social Protection determines that it should end,
- where the relevant person dies during a period of carer's leave. In such circumstances the Employee should return to work on a date within 6 weeks of the date of death, or as agreed in the initial confirmation document, whichever is the sooner.

Employment Rights

An Employee availing of carer's leave will be regarded as still being in employment, and none of their rights relating to employment shall be affected, with the exception of remuneration, annual leave (after 13 weeks), public holidays (after 13 weeks), superannuation benefits or any obligation to pay contributions in, or in respect of, the employment. Such absence will be reckonable for redundancy purposes. Existing PRSI rights will be protected by the award of credited contributions during the period of carer's leave by arrangement with the Department of Social Protection.

Return to Work

An Employee on carer's leave must provide at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to work. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Where possible the Employee will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, they may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

2.23 JURY SERVICE LEAVE

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate St Gabriel's Pre-School's commitment to permit Employees to fulfil their civic duty to attend as a jury member where summonsed by the court in line with the relevant provisions of the Jury's Act, 1976. This policy applies to all Employees summonsed to attend court for jury service.

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to providing paid leave for any Employee required to attend court for jury service. Jury service leave is provided for the period that an Employee is required to attend court for possible selection as a juror, and for the duration of the case on which they will sit if they are selected to sit on a jury. In order to avail of this leave, an Employee must present the summons for jury service to their Manager as soon as they receive this notification. Their Manager will then approve the leave. In exceptional circumstances St Gabriel's Pre-School may seek to have an Employee excused from jury service, however this will only occur where business requirements are such that it is not feasible to permit the Employee to avail of the leave.

Where leave is granted, an Employee will generally be required to attend the court for a period of each day for selection as a juror, usually for a few hours in the morning each day. Where the Employee is not selected as a juror, he/she must return to work for the remainder of the day. A certificate of attendance will be produced by the clerk of the court on request, and this should be presented to the Employee's Manager on return to work each day for record keeping purposes.

Where an Employee is called for jury service, he/she should also obtain daily certificates of attendance from the Clerk of the Court confirming attendance at court. Again, where an Employee is excused from the court for part of the day he/she is expected to return to work, where appropriate.

Employment rights, including remuneration, are protected during this leave.

2.24 PARENTAL LEAVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide unpaid leave to qualifying parents in order to facilitate them to care for their child. This policy demonstrates St Gabriel's Pre-School's compliance with the Parental Leave Acts 1998 and 2006 and subsequent amendments. This policy is designed to protect the rights of Employees under this legislation. This policy applies to all Employees who are natural or adoptive parents or acting in loco parentis to a child under the relevant age.

All qualifying Employees who are natural or adoptive parents of, or who are persons acting in loco parentis to, a child under the relevant age have an entitlement to avail of up to 18 working weeks parental leave in respect of that child over a defined period of time.

Parental leave is unpaid leave. However, Employees should note that where a block of leave is taken with the result that no PRSI contributions will be made by St Gabriel's Pre School or Employee in that week, then the Department of Social Protection may make PRSI contributions on the Employee's behalf. This is subject to the Employee notifying the Department of Social Protection of the fact that they are on leave.

Who is a qualifying Employee?

In order to qualify for parental leave an Employee must meet the following criteria;

- He/ she must have completed 12 months' service with the Organisation to qualify for 18 working weeks leave, or
- Where the child is about to go over the relevant age, and the Employee has completed more than 3 months service but less than 12, he/she will be entitled to avail of 1 working week of leave per completed month of service.

What age must the child be in order to be deemed under the relevant age?

The relevant age of the child in respect of whom leave may be taken may vary depending on certain factors. Parental leave is allowed in respect of a child:

- aged under 8 years of age, or
- within two years of an adoption order where the child is adopted between the ages of 6 and 8 years, or
- aged under 16 years in the case of a child with a disability/ long term illness.

Applications Procedure

Applications for parental leave must be made in writing at least 6 weeks prior to the intended commencement of leave. A response to this application will be issued by St Gabriel's Pre School 4 weeks before the intended commencement of leave indicating whether the leave can be approved, or whether it is necessary to postpone the leave. Postponement of leave will not exceed 6 months except where this is permitted by legislation and necessary for operational reasons. In all cases discussion will be held to establish a suitable new timing for the leave. Where the leave is approved, a confirmation document will be produced for signature and filing.

If both parents are Employees of St Gabriel's Pre School, Employees may request that a portion of the leave (not more than 14 weeks) be transferred to the other parent, approval of such a transfer of leave will be at the discretion of the Organisation.

Patterns of Leave Permitted

Leave may be availed of as a continuous period of 6 weeks or greater at any one time. Periods of leave of a lesser duration are entirely at the discretion of Management, and it may not be possible to permit these. Consult your Manager for further information.

Sickness During Parental Leave

Should an Employee fall ill during parental leave, and as a result is unable to care for their child, they may suspend their parental leave and the time may be treated as certified sick leave. This is subject to the Employee complying with normal sick leave reporting procedures and submission of a doctors certificate confirming the illness irrespective of the number of days of sickness. This certificate should confirm that the Employee is incapable of caring for the child in respect of whom leave is being taken.

Abuse of Leave

An Employee must use parental leave for the purpose of caring for the child in respect of whom it is taken. Employees may not work in alternative employment while on this leave. Abuse of parental leave may be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave entitlements continue to accrue and public holiday benefits will continue to be provided during the period of an Employee's parental leave.

Returning to Work

Employees are entitled to return to work to the same job and under the same terms and conditions of employment following parental leave. Where this is not reasonably practicable, St Gabriel's Pre School will provide suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Employees may request a change in working hours / patterns, or both, to apply for a set period of time following their return from Parental leave. Such requests must be submitted not later than 6 weeks prior to the proposed commencement of this set period. St Gabriel's Pre-School will consider all requests having regard for the Organisational needs, and the Employee's needs at the time and will respond within 4 weeks of receiving the request.

2.25 TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate compliance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973-2005 and to outline an Employee's responsibilities in the event of their decision to terminate employment with St Gabriel's Pre-School. The policy also sets out steps for Management to follow in the event of an Employee leaving service. This policy applies to all Employees.

It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School that all Employee's terminating employment are required to provide adequate notice of their departure in order to facilitate St Gabriel's Pre-School to arrange cover for their position and to ensure a smooth handover of work. Therefore, all Employees are required, as a minimum, to provide notice as per their statement of terms and conditions of employment when terminating employment. In all cases notice must be confirmed in writing and submitted to the Employee's Manager. St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to provide notice as per the statement of terms and conditions of employment or the relevant legislation, whichever the greater. In the case of summary dismissal for acts of gross misconduct, there is no obligation on St Gabriel's Pre-School to provide notice of termination or pay in lieu of notice.

St Gabriel's Pre-School retains the right to pay in lieu of notice where deemed appropriate. Prior to leaving employment, all property belonging to St Gabriel's Pre-School must be returned to the Employee's Manager, including items such as keys/access cards, IT equipment, or other facilities provided in the course of employment. All Employee benefits will be cancelled on the date of termination of employment.

The Employee will be paid their final pay as per normal payroll procedures. Final pay may include, where appropriate, payment in lieu of annual leave not availed of during employment, or alternatively may include a deduction for annual leave taken without having been accrued prior to departure. The Employee's P45 and payslip will be issued at the date of termination, or by post soon after termination. Where these documents

are to be posted to the Employee, it is important that the Employee ensures that they leave up to date contact details with their Manager

2.26 REFERENCES

All employees will be required to provide two recent references. It will be the responsibility of the management committee to check and verify each reference.

2.27 VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

St. Gabriel's will take childcare students for work experience especially if they are from the Ballyfermot area.

- St Gabriel's Pre-School will offer students a variety of learning opportunities in the area of early education
- All volunteers and students will be over the age of sixteen with the exception of transition year students
- Validated References and Garda vetting will be obtained for all students.
- The duration and timing of placement will be agreed in advance of the placement with the Manager.
- Students/volunteers will be required to read all policies and procedures of the service as part of their induction & 'sign-off' that they had read and understood the policies and procedures of the service.
- Students/volunteers will not work unsupervised with either individuals or groups of children.
- The Manager will be responsible for students.
- Students/volunteers should have a clear defined role, i.e. duties and responsibilities of the student. Students/volunteers should have a clear defined role, and will sign a declaration.
- Students/volunteers will not deal with parents.

Prior to Placement of Students

- St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that there are appropriate links with colleges.
- Colleges should, in writing, introduce the student, giving the service a profile of the student, highlighting any additional needs and an outline of the course content.
- All students must attend an interview with the Manager.
- St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that they receive confirmation (copy of insurance certificate) from the college confirming that students are insured by the college while on placement.
- All students must attend an induction programme to enable them to develop an awareness of the service.
- A file will be maintained on all students containing such information pertaining to the college placement, college, tutor etc.

During Placement

- The Manager is responsible for assessing the training needs of students on placement and ensuring that they are given the opportunities to build on existing

skills and to develop new skills & Providing the information and support necessary for students to carry out any written assignments and prepare for assessment visits by the placement supervisor.

- The Manager will monitor the student's progress and liaise with the student's assessor at regular intervals throughout the period of the placement.
- Students must adhere to the service's policies and procedures.
- Students who are required to conduct child studies or work with children must obtain written permission from the parents of that child. Parents will have access to any written study. Students will consult with the Manager on all written records.
- Students are required to switch off their mobile phones while working in the pre school and after school projects. Taking of photographs on mobile phones is strictly prohibited anywhere in the St Gabriel's Pre-School site.

Dress Code

- Dress must be neat, clean and tidy. It must be non-revealing.
- Any tattoos should not be on view.
- Hair should be clean, washed, neat and tied back at all times.
- Nails should be short and clean at all times. Painted nails are not considered appropriate for a childcare setting.
- Comfortable shoes should be worn at all times. High-heels, toe-less sandals (flip flops) or backless shoes should be avoided in light of the dangers these can present to staff and children.

Confidentiality

Working as a student/volunteer within the service may on occasion give rise to students being aware of confidential information in relation to children and families attending the service.

- Students/Volunteers must not disclose or permit to be disclosed any information which concerns any child/children and/or families to any other person or agency/organisation unless you are required to do so in the context of child protection procedures or as required under legislation.
- Students/Volunteers should not share any information about other students or staff colleagues with a third party.
- Students/Volunteers will be advised as to the setting of boundaries between the working relationship and friendship with parents. Do not engage them in unnecessary conversations of a personal nature. Conversations should be restricted to greetings. Parents requesting information from students should be directed to the senior staff member in the room. If parents have an issue/complaint they should be referred immediately to the Manager.
- Students/Volunteers may not use social networking sites to befriend parents whose children attend St Gabriel's Pre-School or to exchange any information about the service or children attending the service.

Volunteers

The hours that volunteers work will be arranged according to the hours the volunteer is available and the needs of the service in consultation with the Manager. There will be no minimum or maximum hours or any guarantee of voluntary work.

- Working as a Volunteer in St Gabriel's does not preclude you from employment elsewhere.
- All voluntary work is unpaid. Volunteers may be reimbursed for agreed expenses in consultation with the Manager / BOM).
- Volunteers should be present in the service and ready to commence their voluntary work at the arranged and agreed times. Volunteers unable to attend at the arranged and agreed times should inform the Manager by telephone as soon as possible in advance.

2.28 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate this St Gabriel's Pres-School's commitment to equality of opportunity in line with the requirements of the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2012. The policy also supports the rights of persons availing of good or services under the Equal Status Acts, 2000-2011.

Our aim is to promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all Employees, job applicants, customers and people with whom our Employees come into contact with in the course of their day-to-day work. This policy applies to all Employees and applicants for employment. We promote a work environment free from unlawful discrimination. The Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts set out nine protected grounds in relation to which no discrimination should occur. These grounds are gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community.

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to equality of opportunity, and operates non-discriminatory practices in relation to access to employment, conditions of employment, access to training and experience, promotion or re-grading of posts, and classification of posts. Employment decisions will not be made with reference to these grounds unless these are legitimate criteria given the particular situation, as permitted by legislation.

Direct discrimination occurs where a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation due to one of the nine grounds specified in this policy. Indirect discrimination is taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, requirement, policy or rule puts a person with one characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with others without that characteristic.

Procedure

Access to Employment:

- All recruitment and selection competitions will be open to all suitably qualified applicants.
- Recruitment decisions will be made against specified criteria as required for the particular vacancy.
- The Organisation will seek to ensure that the recruitment process is free from any direct or indirect discrimination on any of the nine grounds.
- Every applicant, external or internal, will be assessed against fair and consistent

- criteria relating to the job.
- Where an applicant indicates that they have special needs, to facilitate their participation in the recruitment and selection process, reasonable accommodation will be provided, subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.

Access to Training and Experience:

- Training will be provided on the basis of individual needs and the requirements of the post held by the Employee.
- Selection for training will not be based on any of the nine grounds.
- Where an individual's disability impedes their ability to fully participate and engage in training activities, reasonable accommodation will be provided subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.
- Although every effort will be made to arrange training to facilitate attendance by part-time Employees, there is an expectation that part-time Employees will make themselves available, from time to time, to attend training outside their normal hours of work.

Conditions of Employment:

- Terms and conditions of employment will be applied fairly to all Employees, with no reference to any of the grounds in the Employment Equality Acts.
- The Organisation seeks to provide equal pay for like work.
- The Organisation endeavours to provide a work environment free from bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.

Promotion and Re-grading:

- There will be equality of opportunity at all stages of the promotions and/or re-grading process.
- Selection for promotion will be based on defined criteria related to the requirements of the post, and no reference will be made to the nine grounds in the selection process.

Classification of Posts:

- Gender neutral job titles will be used and no reference will be made to any of the other eight grounds in classifying positions.

Reasonable Accommodation:

- Reasonable accommodation shall be provided in order to facilitate a person with a disability to apply for positions with the Organisation, to attend for interview, to engage in employment and to participate in training activities as applicable.
- This commitment is subject to such reasonable accommodation not presenting a disproportionate burden on the Organisation, unless otherwise deemed appropriate.

Equal Status:

- No person will be discriminated against or treated adversely while availing of goods or services provided by this Organisation, except where this is legally permitted and undertaken with a legitimate aim. No person availing of goods or services should be subject to harassment or sexual harassment while availing of these.
- Any complaints in this respect should be brought to the attention of your

Manager.

Any Employee who feels that there has been a breach of this policy or procedure may raise the matter through St Gabriel's Pres-School's grievance procedure. No Employee will be subject to adverse treatment as a consequence of raising a complaint in relation to this policy. St Gabriel's Pres-School will monitor the workplace for incidents of victimisation following a complaint. St Gabriel's Pre-School's will take appropriate disciplinary action towards an Employee who fails to follow this Equal Opportunities Policy.

2.29 USE OF MOBILE PHONES/ CAMERAS/ MULTIMEDIA POLICY (RELATING TO CHILDREN)

Staff members are required to switch off their mobile phones while working in the pre-school and after school projects. Taking of photographs on mobile phones is strictly prohibited anywhere in the St Gabriel's Pre-School premises or on any work related excursion with children.

Computers and the Internet

St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that the use of multimedia in its service will be age appropriate and supervised when used.

Children do not have access to computers or the internet

On-line Communications and Social networking

Staff will not discuss individual children or St. Gabriel's Pre-school/after-school or their setting on Facebook, twitter or any other social networking site. Staff will not befriend children or parents of children from St. Gabriel's.

Handling complaints

Any complaints about the appropriate use of the internet or other technologies will be handled through the Complaints procedure.

Television/ DVD's

The use of TV and DVD will be kept to a minimum and will be used occasionally as a treat. If and when such media is employed the programme/film chosen will be age and stage appropriate and will be educational in content. Should parents not wish their child to watch television/DVD alternative activities will be engaged with by the childcare workers with those children.

Gaming Machines EG Play Station, Nintendo Wii, Xbox

Children do not have access to gaming machines

Music CD's

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we value music because it is a powerful and unique form of communication that can change the way children feel, think and act. It also increases self-discipline and creativity, aesthetic sensitivity and fulfilment.

The CD's used are appropriate for young children and will contain no offensive or inappropriate language.

Radios stations will not be listened to in areas where children can hear them as the content may not be suitable.

Music will not be played too loud so that the children's voices may still be heard.

CAMERA and PHOTOGRAPH USE

We aim to use photographs and cameras at St Gabriel's Pre-School for:

- Assessment, planning and recording
- Observation tools
- Information for visitors and parents
- Training purposes
- Language extension
- Teaching and learning resources

Policy and Procedure

We are aware of the need for sensitivity when taking photographs and observe the following:

- Parental permission will always be sought before photos are taken.
- Only the services camera/video camera may be used to take pictures.
- The camera will remain on St Gabriel's Pre-School property at all times and is stored in the office.
- Staff must enter the date and sign the camera usage book each time it is removed from the office and upon its return.
- Staff are not allowed to take pictures with picture phones or their own personal cameras. (If this is breached disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including dismissal).
- The child does not object to having his/her photograph taken.
- Photographs are used to show positive issues (e.g. a piece of work that the child has worked hard on or is pleased with, children playing co operatively together.....).
- We are inclusive so that gender, race, special educational needs, and differing abilities are reflected in a balanced way.
- There may be cultural issues of which we need to be aware when taking photographs of children from different ethnic minority groups.

Where photographs, videos or even samples of children's work are to be displayed outside St Gabriel's Pre-School we seek parental permission for this to happen. Examples of this are newspaper reports, articles in early year's publications or exhibitions of children's work.

Students, visiting professionals or researchers, who need to take photographs or videos as part of their work, are made aware of the need for confidentiality and that children will not be named or identified in any other way. Further parental permission will be sought in this instance.

Parents are made aware of our use of cameras, and have the opportunity to voice any concerns.

Use of Photographs

Photographs are used throughout St Gabriel's Pre-School for a variety of purposes. Generally childcare practitioners take photographs of the children throughout the year to

capture a particular example of play or something that a child has achieved. In addition we use photographs for:

Camcorders are also occasionally used in St Gabriel's Pre-School for many of the above purposes. In particular we may use them for observations of children's play to further our understanding, or for assessment and planning tools

Parents Photographing and Videoing Children

Parents may not take photographs or record children in St Gabriel's Pre-School without the consent of the Management.

Storage of Photos

Photographic or video recording will not be stored on devices in St Gabriel's Pre-School for extended periods of time.

If a photograph is likely to be used again it will be stored securely and only accessed by those people authorised to do so.

Disposal of Photographs

In the event that we no longer require a photo it will be disposed of.

2.30 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, INTERNET AND EMAIL

This sets out St Gabriel's Pre-School's policy with regards to acceptable internet, e-mail and Information Technology (I.T.) usage. This policy applies to all Employees of the Organisation, and any other person using business I.T. resources.

It is the policy of St. Gabriel's Pre-School that all I.T. facilities, including telephones, e-mail internet, PCs, laptops & other mobile devices are used solely for business purposes. Occasional personal use may be permitted with Management approval. However, excessive use for personal purposes during working time or otherwise will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence. Usage of I.T. facilities may be monitored in accordance with law, and as these are systems belonging to the Organisation, Employees should not expect privacy on these systems. At all times the Organisation retains the right to access an Employee's e-mail, internet or phone records and other records relating to information technology usage to ensure compliance with the Organisation's standards and policies, to ensure that Employees' obligations to the Organisation are being complied with and to ensure that the Employee is not engaging in prohibited activities as identified in this policy or activities otherwise deemed inappropriate.

This policy also sets out to provide guidelines on the acceptable usage of I.T. facilities. All Employees are required to be familiar with these requirements and to adhere to same. Should an Employee have a query in this regard, they should consult their Manager.

I.T. Usage Policy

All I.T. facilities should be used solely for business purposes. Employees who have access to any password restricted systems are required not to disclose that password to any other person, except with the prior approval of their Manager. Employees should make arrangements to permit their Manager access to password restricted systems prior

to or during any period of absence, where necessary. Passwords should be carefully selected so that they cannot be easily guessed. In order to ensure the security of physical data and equipment, Employees are required to ensure that laptops and other mobile devices are appropriately stored and locked away whilst in their possession.

Internet

The internet can be a valuable source of information, and when used for research purposes can be a powerful business tool. However, it is important to take care when using the internet to make decisions, as the information can be misleading, or inaccurate in some cases.

If internet access is provided, it should only be used to fulfil Organisational requirements. The internet should never be used for personal purposes during working time. Outside of working time authorisation may be sought to access the internet for personal use, e.g. to make purchases, or to conduct research for personal purposes. However, such use should be limited, and the user must accept liability for any losses incurred while using the systems for personal use. No software should be downloaded from the internet, due to the risk of infection by viruses or infringement of licence agreements.

Only appropriate material should be accessed on the Organisation's systems. Any use of the internet to send, view, display, request, print or download pornographic or other potentially harassing or sexually harassing material, obscene material, or material which is fraudulent, offensive or otherwise unlawful will be deemed to be a disciplinary offence and may constitute gross misconduct.

Prohibited activities include those defined elsewhere in this policy and also include wasting computer resources by, among other things, sending mass mailings or chain letters, spending excessive amounts of time on the internet for non-business purposes, using the internet for personal use or downloading and sending large files, such as pictures, music, audio files which are not work-related, playing games, engaging in on-line chat rooms or otherwise creating unnecessary traffic or over burdening the computer system, accessing or using any material, including another Employee's computer equipment, without authorisation or under false pretences or inadvertently or otherwise, engaging in unauthorised exchanges which may result in the Organisation being contractually bound to a third party.

E-mail

The Organisation's e-mail systems should be used for business purposes only. Limited personal use may be permitted with Management approval, however, users should have no expectation of privacy when using a resource belonging to the Organisation. Employees must also take care to ensure that they do not bring the Organisation into disrepute through the distribution of inappropriate or illegal e-mails using the Organisation's systems.

Attachments should not be accessed unless they are received from a trusted source with which the Organisation has a business relationship. Employees should be aware of the risks associated with downloading of information from sources which cannot be trusted. Further information should be sought from Management if required.

Employees should ensure that they do not make defamatory remarks or engage in any libellous behaviour on e-mail.

Personal data should not be transmitted relating to any individual without their prior consent.

General

PCs, laptops and other mobile devices, where provided, should not be used for personal purposes except as outlined above. Printing for personal purposes should be limited, and excessive use will be dealt with as a disciplinary offence.

Laptops and other mobile devices, if provided, should be stored in the boot of the Employee's car when travelling, and taken indoors rather than left unattended in vehicles. If a laptop/mobile device is left in the open in a vehicle it may attract thieves or vandals, resulting in possible damage to the vehicle, and theft of the laptop as well as personal items contained within the vehicle. Screensavers should not be downloaded from the internet, and only screensavers approved by Management may be used.

Employees should not transfer digital photographs or music, DVD or movie files onto their PC, laptop/mobile device without prior permission from their Manager. Employees must observe copyright regulations in relation to any content they upload/download to business systems.

The Organisation's I.T. systems should not be used for the purposes of engaging in secondary employment. The Organisation's telephone systems should not be used for personal use, without the consent of your Manager. Employees are not permitted to have their phones switched on whilst at work.

Social Media

Social networking and social media are communication tools which can have significant impact on Organisational and professional reputations. Examples of social media may include blogs, twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, wikis etc. Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online.

Personal usage of Social Media

You must not disclose the Organisation's name or details on your own personal social media platform. Your work e-mail address should not be used as your primary means of identification on your personal social media platform. The Organisation may impose the disciplinary process up to and including dismissal for posting inappropriate material on social networking sites in circumstances where the posts breach confidentiality, dignity at work, Anti-Bullying, Harassment or Sexual Harassment, internal policy or brings the Organisation into disrepute.

Respect your audience. Employees should refrain from engaging in the use of inappropriate slurs and personal insults referring to work colleagues, clients and/or the Organisation, as this may lead to disciplinary action.

St. Gabriel's Pre-School IT equipment, where provided, should not be used for personal purposes. The use of social media for personal purposes is prohibited on the Organisation's systems.

Using Social Media for Work Purposes

Any contact details or business information acquired and maintained on the Organisation's systems remain the property of the Organisation. This includes any uploaded information (including personal contacts) brought by an Employee from a previous employment.

Where it is a requirement as part of your role to engage in social media, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Respect copyright, fair use and data protection.
2. Do not provide the Organisation's or another's confidential or other proprietary information and never discuss the Organisation's business performance or other sensitive matters publicly.
3. Do not cite or reference clients, partners or suppliers without their approval. When you do make a reference, link back to the source. Don't publish anything that might allow inferences to be drawn which could embarrass or damage a client.
4. Refrain from the inappropriate use of ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace. Employees should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
5. Refrain from using the Organisation's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so.
6. Do not post material that could be deemed to be threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous or hostile towards an individual or entity.
7. Ensure that the content you are posting is accurate and reviewed for grammatical and spelling errors.

Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

All queries in relation to this policy should be addressed to the Employee's Manager.

2.31 REDUNDANCY

We will plan and organise workforce requirements, deciding on size, structure and deployment, in line with funding. However, it may be necessary to reduce the number of employees due to, for example, a reduction in funding or a change in organisational direction. To minimise the impact of such circumstances, the following procedure will be adopted whenever possible. However, it must be recognised that on occasion where the circumstances or needs of the business so dictate, the procedure may be adapted to suit the particular circumstances in question. This policy applies to all Employees.

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to treating all Employees whose employment may be terminated by reason of redundancy with dignity and respect. Where the possibility of redundancy arises, St Gabriel's Pre-School will first establish whether any steps can be taken to avoid compulsory redundancies.

Where after consideration of alternatives the Organisation believes that need for redundancy potentially still remains, potentially affected Employees will be informed of the situation facing the business. This may take the form of an 'at risk' meeting with the

Employees prior to making any possible decision to dismiss due to redundancy. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the Employees that there is a possibility that redundancies may arise and that St Gabriel's Pre-School is looking at all suitable alternatives to making redundancies. At this stage, the Organisation will give Employees an opportunity to explore other options that they may see as an alternative to redundancy.

Management will consider any representations made by employees and, if it rejects any of their representations, will state its reasons, which will be considered final. In the case of compulsory redundancy, selection will be based where all things are equal on the principle of 'last in, first out', except where there are special circumstances justifying departure from this selection procedure.

Please note that the selection criteria for redundancy will always be subject to the need to retain the specific knowledge and skills required to meet our existing and anticipated business needs. At any 'at risk' meeting the Employee will have the right to be accompanied by a single companion who is a work colleague.

If no alternative has been found following the meeting the Employee will be given notice of termination in accordance with their contractual entitlements. In some circumstances the Employee may leave with payment in lieu of notice.

2.32 DRESS CODE

St Gabriel's Pre-School considers the way their staff dress and their appearance is of significant importance in portraying a professional image to parents, visitors, clients and colleagues. Staff are role models for young children so must exercise a high level of personal care and hygiene at all times.

- Members of staff will be required to be well groomed and neatly dressed. Clothing and shoes must be clean tidy and neat at all times.
- Jewelry is to be kept to a minimum, eg. No large hoop earrings,
- Body/ facial/ tongue piercings are not permitted. Any tattoos should not be on view.
- Hair should be clean, washed, neat and tied back at all times.
- Nails should be short and clean at all times. Painted nails are not considered appropriate for a childcare setting as all staff are basic food handlers and non polished nails reduce the risk of contamination. False or gel nails are not permitted.

Any queries in relation to the dress code may be directed to the Employee's Manager. Employees who have a grievance in relation to the dress code should raise this through the normal grievance procedure. Breaches of this procedure will initially be dealt with informally, however disciplinary action may be required where an Employee fails to adhere to the policy.

Procedure

Staff are expected to report for work each day unless incapacitated by illness. The Organisation has an expectation of regular attendance at work by all Employees. However, it is acknowledged that Employees may, from time to time, be absent from

work due to illness. It is the policy of this Organisation to treat all such absences in a fair and consistent manner, while weighing up the impact of such absences on the ability of the Organisation to function effectively.

St. Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to protecting the rights of any Employee who has a disability, and where a disability is affecting an individual's ability to perform in their role, reasonable accommodation may be provided. All cases of disability will be dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

2.33 ABSENCE POLICY, SICK LEAVE & FITNESS TO WORK

It is essential that St Gabriel's Pre-School has an adequate number of childcare workers to care for the children. It is therefore essential that all employees adhere to the following in the event of personal illness.

Employees Will:

- Employees suffering from a contagious illness should not work with children, i.e. gastro-enteritis, etc. and must inform the Manager immediately.
- If unable to attend work employees must phone in and personally speak with the Manager at least 30 minutes prior to the opening of pre-school at 8.30am.
- If an employee knows that they will be absent on the day before you should telephone the Manager as soon as possible. Where their Manager is unavailable a message may only be left with another Manager, and not a colleague of the Employee at the same level. It is the responsibility of the Employee to notify the Organisation of their absence personally. Notification from a friend, other family member etc. will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. Emails, voice mails or text messages are not an appropriate way of conveying this information and to do so may invoke the disciplinary process.
- When speaking with Management employees should indicate the nature of illness, the possible duration and when they will return to work. It is also required that employees speak with Management either on the day of absenteeism or the day before they are due to return to work before the service closes in order to confirm that they will in fact be returning to work. This will give St Gabriel's Pre-School management sufficient time to arrange cover if you are not fully recovered and are unable to return to work due to this fact. Where an absence extends beyond this expected return to work date, there is a requirement that the Employee will again notify the Organisation of their ongoing absence in advance of their normal start time.
- Records will be retained of Employee sick leave and where this is deemed excessive, or where patterns of leave are identified, the Employee will be notified of the Organisation's concerns and the steps that will be taken. Such matters may be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure where appropriate.
- In the event of an employee being absent for (3) three days or more, the employee will need to present a doctor's certificate to Management.
- In the case of long-term illness a certificate must be provided at weekly intervals unless an alternative agreement has been approved by Management. Where

absence is expected to be of a duration exceeding one month, an Employee may make an arrangement to forward certificates less frequently than this, e.g. monthly. However, such an arrangement may only be initiated subject to prior approval by Management. Where approval is not expressly provided, a failure to provide weekly certificates in respect of absence on sick leave may constitute a serious disciplinary offence.

- St Gabriel's Pre-School expects acceptable levels of attendance from Employees in fulfilling their statement of terms and conditions of employment. To this end, Management retain the right at any time during employment to refer an Employee to a suitable medical practitioner nominated solely and exclusively by the Organisation and to seek a full medical report in order to make reasonable decisions in relation to the Employee's capacity to fulfil their terms and conditions of employment. Circumstances which are likely to give rise to such a report being sought are where absence is excessive or there are patterns of absence leading to a suspicion of abuse of sick leave or where it is felt that Employee's health is having a negative impact on work performance. The Organisation is committed to encouraging Employees to return to work following periods of absence. However, persistent and/or excessive absenteeism may result in disciplinary action or frustration of the Employee's contract of employment.
- In the case of longer term absence, medical certificates must be forwarded to your Manager at the beginning of each week.
- Following each period of absence an Employee is required to meet with their Manager to explain the reason for their absence, and to outline whether they have now returned to full health. An Employee should bring any difficulty at work impacting on attendance to the attention of their Manager, in order that appropriate steps may be taken to resolve the issue. The meeting will also be used as a catch-up to update the Employee on developments at work during their absence.
- In order to comply with the childcare (Early Years services) regulations 2016, staff ratio must be adhered to at all times, therefore if an additional staff is required the following procedure must take place.

(1) Contact Staff on Relief panel

(2) Ensure all staff on panel are Garda vetted and reference checked

(3) If at all possible contact existing staff team who may be available to cover.

2.34 GARDA VETTING

It is the purpose of St Gabriel's Pre-School to ensure that appropriate vetting of all staff, students and volunteers who have access to children is carried out. This requires getting references from past employers and completing Garda vetting through the National Vetting Bureau (NVB). St Gabriel's Pre-School process their Garda vetting through Barnardos.

All employees, volunteers and students must be Garda vetted. In carrying out vetting, St. Gabriel's Pre-School at all times seeks to uphold the highest level of discretion and

aims to respect the privacy of both prospective and existing Employees. An individual cannot work/volunteer with children unless they have been Garda vetted

The Organisation recognises that Garda Vetting can be an important tool in the selection and recruitment of Employees and Volunteers. It also recognises that Garda Vetting must be regarded as just one element in the selection and recruitment process and that it is equally important to ensure that best practice in recruitment and selection, including follow-up of references, is adhered to at all times.

Should it be deemed that Garda Vetting is required, this information will also be included in the job/volunteer role advertisement and application pack. Successful candidates for an interview /employment/ volunteer position(s) will be informed that prior to taking up the position, a Garda Vetting form must be completed.

An individual must disclose to St. Gabriel's Pre-School any details of convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in Ireland or elsewhere.

Garda vetting forms should be completed in full otherwise the process will be delayed.

The Preschool Inspector requires that all employees are Garda vetted before they commence employment with St Gabriel's Pre-School.

In compliance with the Childcare (Early year's Services) Regulations 2016, we will:

1. Check employer references in respect of staff and checking reputable sources in respect of students and volunteers.
2. Seek Garda vetting from An Garda Síochána.
3. In respect of applicants who have lived abroad, ensuring that these persons provide the necessary police vetting from other police authorities.

Employees are required to complete a Garda Vetting Application Form in accordance with Guidelines for Completing Garda Vetting issued by the NVB

Employment with St Gabriel's Pre-School is subject to a satisfactory outcome of the Garda Vetting Process. Where an employee is successful for a position with St Gabriel's Pre-School, they will be required to complete a Garda Vetting Application Form **before** they commence employment.

Delay in Obtaining Garda Vetting

St Gabriel's Pre-School will follow and respect the Garda Vetting Procedures and will follow the advice and guidance of the NVB and Pre-school Inspector.

Garda Vetting is not transferable from one service to another.

Students

All students must be Garda Vetted St Gabriel's Pre-School. St Gabriel's Pre-School will obtain 2 validated references for all students. A student should never be left alone with any child in a pre-school service. They must be accompanied at all times by a staff member.

Transition Year Students

If St Gabriel's Pre-School takes on a transition year student or student under 18 years of age their parent/guardian will be required to complete and sign a form declaring that

there are no convictions against the transition year student. St Gabriel's Pre-School will obtain 2 validated references for all transition year students. A transition year Student should never be left alone with any child in a pre-school service. They must be accompanied at all times by a staff member. Garda Vetting will be required, however, for all transition students over 18 years.

Employees Who Have Lived Outside of Ireland

The standard Garda vetting form only covers addresses in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Individuals who resided overseas for a period of 6 months or more may be required to provide proof of non-convictions from their country of prior residence. In the event that the individual is unable to provide a certificate from the country in which they were resident, it must be shown that all efforts have been made to receive this. Such situations may include individuals who have travelled on J1 working holiday visas, or individuals who are from countries where police clearance certificates may be difficult to obtain.

For persons who have lived/worked outside of the state for periods of time, a Garda Vetting Form should be completed listing the addresses both in Ireland and other countries that the person has resided in. Additionally, the person is required to provide an original Police Vetting Certificate/s from the country / countries that they have lived / worked in. This applies to international applicants as well as Irish applicants who have resided / worked abroad. Employers should take reasonable steps to verify Police vetting from other countries and these attempts should be recorded on the personnel file.

The Garda Vetting form for completion will be supplied by Barnardos. Only completed Garda vetting Forms returned and finalised by the NVB should be stored.

The report that comes back from the NVB may show:

1. No previous convictions against the named applicant whose details were supplied.

OR

2. Details of convictions that appear on Garda records. These are based on the information supplied on the application for Garda vetting, however they cannot be positively confirmed by the Gardaí as fingerprints have not been supplied. These details must be verified with the applicant before any decision is made.

OR

3. Prosecutions successful or not, pending or completed.

There is also the option of 'possible matches' where almost all the applicant's details match but there is some difference, such as the address or date of birth. Again, these details must be verified with the applicant before any decision is made.

Dealing with Disclosures

When a disclosure is returned from the NVB, Barnardos will make contact with St Gabriel's Pre-School designated child protection person/Manager.

When information is returned indicating a prosecution or possible match, it is recommended that a Garda vetting review meeting is held with the applicant. This has two purposes:

1. To verify that the applicant is the person about whom the disclosure of convictions has been made. The information returned by the Gardaí may apply to the applicant and should be verified with the applicant before any decision is made.
2. To provide an opportunity for the employer and the applicant to discuss the disclosure from Garda vetting.

If the applicant disputes the information returned by the NVB, the onus is on the applicant to contact the Gardaí to resolve the matter.

The designated child protection/Manager will also convene a meeting with the Chairperson on the Board of Management together with a Consultant from an organisation with expertise in this field if required. The meeting will be convened to discuss the disclosure from the NVB in relation to the (prospective) employee and to decide what action is required. Some points to consider are:

- Has the employee already indicated to St Gabriel's Pre-School what may be disclosed by the NVB.
- Does the employee disclosure 'match' the NVB disclosure?
- Where the employee has not indicated to St Gabriel's Pre-School what the NVB has disclosed then management need to use the risk assessment below. This approach must consider the risk in terms of the individual, the offence and the purpose of the job.
- Management may speak to the employee in relation to this matter before making a final decision.

Management should record their decision and inform the (prospective) employee of St Gabriel's Pre-School of their decision.

Risk Assessment

Risk will be assessed in relation to the individual in terms of the risk due to the disclosed offence. In some cases the relationship between the offence and the position the individual has applied for will be clear enough to take a decision as to whether or not the individual is suitable for employment with St Gabriel's Pre-School. Points to consider are:

- Offences concerned with larceny, fraud and theft are crimes of deception and may be a behavioural indicator.
- Child Protection or related offences.
- Breaches in trust e.g. fraud.
- Offences against property e.g. arson, armed robbery.
- Drug related charges/convictions (particularly possession for sale or supply).
- Offences against the person e.g. assault, harassment, coercion.
- Offences against the state.

The risk will be assessed by the designated child protection person/Manager and the Chairperson on the Board of Management.

Assessment of the risk of the employee together with the offence

- In carrying out this assessment, the following factors in addition to other relevant case specific concerns should be considered and documented in support of the recommendation to either stay on the current work assignment or transfer to a more suitable one.
- The seriousness of the offence and its relevance to the safety of the children.
- The length of time since the offence was occurred.
- The age of the applicant at the time.
- Whether the offence was a 'one off' or part of a history of offending.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, making re-offending less likely.
- The degree of remorse or otherwise, expressed by the applicant and their motivation to change.
- The sentence imposed in relation to the offence.
- Whether the applicant has undertaken any kind of rehabilitation relating to the offence they committed e.g. anger management or drug treatment programme.
- Work history since the offence.
- Protecting the employee from situations that might cause difficulty e.g. allegations against them etc.

The risk assessment and the decision to employ or not to employ should be carried out by those nominated as outlined above.

Data Collected through Garda Vetting

St Gabriel's Pre-School will conform to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 in relation to the storage and retention of records.

Storage of Data

The storage and security of Garda Vetting Form is a very important consideration under the Data Protection Acts. Appropriate security measures will be taken by St Gabriel's Pre-School against unauthorised access to this data.

A minimum standard of security will include the following measures:

- Access to the information should be restricted to authorised staff on a "need-to-know" basis. Access to Garda Vetting Forms should be restricted to a maximum of two individuals within the service.
- Access will also be restricted to external authorised personnel – e.g the Pre-school Inspector.
- The forms will be stored in a lockable filing cabinet located away from public areas.
- Any information which needs to be disposed of will be done so carefully and thoroughly when out-of-date but only if a new vetting procedure has been completed.
- Premises will be secured when unoccupied.

Retention

St Gabriel's Pre-School will retain a record of the decision to appoint an employee and the reasons for the decision as part of the overall recruitment records. In the event of a decision not to appoint an employee on the basis of a Garda vetting disclosure, records should be retained confidentially indefinitely.

Repeat Garda Vetting

The Garda Vetting procedure should be followed every three years for continuing employees and in line with any legislation.

Note

It is important to recognise the limitations of Garda/Police vetting, which can only alert an employer to criminal convictions. Research indicates that very few child abusers receive criminal convictions. Garda vetting will be used as part of the overall safe recruitment practices of St Gabriel's Pre-School and is one component of the recruitment decision. **The Management reserves the right to use their own judgement about whether a person is suitable for a post at St Gabriel's Pre-School.**

Vetting is also time sensitive; it is only valid at the time it is done. St Gabriel's Pre-School reserves the right to initiate Garda rechecking depending on the circumstances. St Gabriel's Pre-School will keep a record of all forms dispatched to candidates, returned by candidate and sent through to Barnardos. All information in the vetting process will be held in a manner consistent with the organisations confidentiality policy.

2.35

3 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The purpose of this policy is to outline some of the main provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, with a particular emphasis on the responsibilities of both St Gabriel's Pre-School and Employees. It is a term of employment that Employees always act in the interest of workplace safety. Any act which is contrary to the requirements of health and safety legislation may be dealt with as a serious disciplinary offence. This policy applies to all Employees both in the workplace, and also any place which they attend in the course of employment.

It is the policy of St Gabriel's Pre-School to operate in a safe manner which protects the safety, health and welfare of all Employees in accordance with the relevant legislation. This policy states the general responsibilities on both the Organisation and its Employees in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Employer

Every employer shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all his/her Employees. In particular, St Gabriel's Pre-School will endeavour to:

- manage and conduct work activities in such a way as to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of the Organisation's Employees;
- manage and conduct work activities in such a way as to prevent any improper conduct or behaviour likely to present a health or safety risk to Employees;
- as regards the place of work, the employer will ensure:
- the design, provision and maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without

- risk to health,
 - the design, provision and maintenance of safe means of access to and from it,
 - the design, provision and maintenance of plant and machinery or any other articles that are safe and without risk to health.
- ensure the safety and prevention of risk to health at work of his/her Employees relating to the use of any article or substance or the exposure of noise, vibration or ionising or other radiations or any other physical agent;
- provide systems of work that are planned, organised, performed, maintained and revised as appropriate so as to be safe and without risk to health;
- provide and maintain facilities and arrangements for the welfare of Employees at work;
- provide the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of Employees;
- determine and implement the safety, health and welfare measures necessary for the protection of the safety, health and welfare of Employees when identifying hazards and carrying out a risk assessment or when preparing a safety statement and ensuring that the measures take account of changing circumstances and the general principles of prevention
- have regard to the general principles of prevention, where risks cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled or in such circumstances as may be prescribed, providing and maintaining such suitable protective clothing and equipment as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of Employees;
- prepare and revise, as appropriate, adequate plans and procedures to be followed and measures to be taken in case of an emergency or serious and imminent danger;
- report accidents and dangerous occurrences, as may be prescribed to the Health and Safety Authority, and
- obtain, where necessary the services of a competent person for the purpose of ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of Employees.

Responsibilities of the Employee

It is the responsibility of all Employees to co-operate with Management in the implementation of health and safety initiatives in St Gabriel's Pre-School. Employees must be aware that they have a responsibility for the safety of their visitors while on site. Employees also have a specific responsibility for their own safety. Therefore, Employees are expected to discharge their work in a safe manner, so as to avoid injury to themselves or other Employees and customers, and to avoid damage to company equipment and property. Employees are required to report all accidents, dangerous occurrences, unsafe conditions and unsafe acts to their Manager. While at work an Employee must:

- comply with the relevant statutory provisions and take reasonable care to protect his/her safety, health and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work;
- ensure that he/she is not under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that he/she is in such a state as to endanger his/her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person;
- co-operate with the Organisation in order to enable the Organisation to comply

- with the relevant statutory provisions as appropriate;
- not engage in improper conduct or behaviour that is likely to endanger his/her own safety, health and welfare at work or that of any other person;
- attend such training and assessment as may be reasonably required relating to safety, health and welfare at work, or relating to the work carried out by the Employee
- make correct use of any article or substance provided for use at work or for the protection of his/her safety, health and welfare at work, including protective clothing or equipment;
- report to Management:
 - any work being carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a manner which may endanger the safety, health and welfare at work of any person,
 - any defect in the place of work, the systems of work, any article or substance which might endanger the safety, health or welfare at work of any person, or
 - any contravention of the relevant statutory provisions which may endanger the safety, health and welfare at work of the Employee or that of any other person.
- not mis-represent him/herself to the Organisation with regard to the level of training they have received in respect of their position.

Procedure For Raising Concerns

An Employee who has any concerns with regard to this policy may raise the issue informally with their Manager or any other Manager. Where they do not receive a satisfactory response to their concerns, they may raise the issue through the grievance procedure.

3.1 THE SAFETY STATEMENT

The Safety Statement of St. Gabriel's Primary School will be adopted and implemented by all staff members. This is to ensure the safety, health and welfare of the children, staff and parents/guardians who are in the service.

3.2 FIRE DRILLS & PROCEDURES

Regular fire drills will take place following the fire evacuation notices displayed on the doors of the class rooms. A record of all fire drills will be kept and displayed.

St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that:

- A fire drill evacuation procedure is posted on the wall.
- Fire drills will be carried out regularly, records will be kept
- All staff members will be familiar with their responsibilities with regards to fire drills and the procedures in case of the fire alarm going off.
- Fire extinguishers and blankets will be stored appropriately, ready for use and in good working order, they will be serviced annually and a record maintained of the service dates.
- Smoke detectors will be placed at strategic points in the building and 'hard wired'. They will be checked regularly to ensure they are working.
- Heat emitting surfaces will be protected by a fixed guard and/or thermostatically controlled to ensure safe temperatures.
- A system for giving warnings in the event of fire must be provided.

- Escape Route and exit doors should be maintained free from obstruction so that they can be safely and effectively used at all times
- Daily attendance records are kept

Exit Route

Pre-school exit the pre-school entrance/exit door.

Room 3 exit through door 4

The Designated Fire Safety Person is Bronagh Daly

Fire Drill Procedures

If you discover a fire or one is reported to you:

- Sound the alarm and shout FIRE!
- Stop whatever you are doing, ask the children in a calm manner to form a line at the pre-school door.
- The childcare worker, without delay leads the children, taking the roll book & first aid kit to the designated exit.
- A second childcare worker checks the pre-school & walks at the end of the line
- Once outside stay everyone stays outside.
- The childcare staff take a roll call immediately.
- If possible, close doors and windows en-route.
- **Meet at the assembly point, which is in the school yard by the sheds.**
- Do not re-enter the building until management of the fire brigade – fire safety officer informs you it is safe to do so.
- A roll call will be carried out by management at the assembly point to ensure all persons are accounted for.

3.3 NO SMOKING

It is illegal to smoke inside or outside the premises.

3.4 MANUAL HANDLING

St Gabriel's Pre-School will assess and reduce the risks associated with manual handling. The main area of the body affected by handling accidents is the back, but virtually any part of the body can suffer injury due to poor manual handling.

It is important to remember that health, safety and welfare is the responsibility of everybody in St Gabriel's Pre-School not just the management.

Staff should:

- Complete Manual handling training.
- Report dangerous situations and any shortcomings in their employers' health and safety arrangements.
- Take reasonable care not to endanger themselves or anybody else.
- Know your own limitations and don't be afraid to ask for assistance if required. Use equipment (*if available*)

- If you are moving tables on your own, push tables where possible rather than lifting.

The key message when performing manual handling is think before you do it.

Performing a Safer Lift

- Think before handling/lifting Keep the load close to the waist
- Adopt a stable position, Ensure a good hold on the load
- Moderate flexion (slight bending) of the back, hips and knees at the start of the lift.
- Don't flex the back any further while lifting.
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially while the back is bent
- Keep the head up when handling
- Move smoothly
- Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed.
- Put down, then adjust

Remember the risk of injury is greatly reduced if the object being moved is picked up or put down at waist height.

3.5 SAFETY AND SECURITY

The management committee will at all times provide a safe and secure environment for staff and children, in line with all legislation. In this service we will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of each individual in the service. To achieve this we will establish and maintain safe working procedures amongst staff and children, and ensure that everyone is aware of these procedures.

- We will ensure all articles and substances are handled, stored and transported safely.
- We will ensure that staff have training in First Aid.
- We will comply with the Safety, Health & Welfare at work Act 1989. In addition to this all electrical sockets will be covered by safety plugs.
- The childcare workers will check all toys / equipment for damage/breakage regularly.
- All equipment will be cleaned on a rota basis or when necessary.
- There is an adequate ratio of staff to children.
- Every reasonable precaution is taken in terms of the upkeep of premises and equipment.
- The main entrance door is locked and can only be opened by a member of staff after they have identified who the visitor is. Visitors are required to sign in and out.
- Any person gaining admission to the building either to collect children or on any other business have limited access and are monitored.

- Staff have access to a telephone on the premises. Emergency numbers & parent's phone numbers are displayed beside the phone (parents must inform St Gabriel's Pre-School of change of personal details e.g.new house, job, phone)
- All heat emitting surfaces are protected by a fixed guard or are thermostatically controlled to ensure safe surface temperatures.
- The hot water provided for use by preschool children is thermostatically controlled to ensure a safe temperature, not exceeding 43°.
- Staff will know what children are present at all times and they will be adequately supervised in accordance with the recommended ratios.
- Safety checks are done regularly to ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected.
- If a child is being collected by anyone other than the parents or usual designated person, the staff must be informed.

Employees shall:

- Take reasonable care of their own Safety, Health and Welfare and that of any other person or children in their care that may be affected by their acts or omissions while at work.
- Familiarise themselves with and always conform to, the organizations Safety, Health and Welfare policy as detailed in the St Gabriel's Pre-School Safety Statement.
- Observe all safety rules and co-operate with their employers to comply with any of the relevant statutory regulations and directives.
- Use any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience or equipment in such a manner so as to provide the protection intended for securing their Safety, Health and Welfare while at work.
- Conform to all instructions given by the Manager and others responsible for Safety, Health and Welfare.
- Use only as intended the correct equipment for the jobs, with all appropriate safety devices and keep tools in good condition.
- Direct any suggestions or concerns on matters of Safety, Health and Welfare to the Manager.
- Report to the Manager without delay all accidents, damage, defects or issues of safety. This includes accidents or near misses, whether persons are injured or not.
- Ensure that specific statutory training i.e. manual handling and first aid, is completed and updated as required.

Employees shall not:

- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or other means or things provided in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing the Safety, Health and Welfare of persons arising out of work activities.
- Carry out any tasks, which they feel they are not competent to carry out, or which involves unreasonably high risks.
- Be under the influence of any intoxicants likely to affect their ability to work safely or to supervise children. Please report any medical issue likely to affect your safety or that of the children or your colleagues as soon as possible to management.

Staffing

- It is vitally important the service has the recommended ratio of adults to children on the premises.
- There at least two members of staff with up to date first aid training.
- At least two members of staff will be on the premises at all times.
- The arrival and departure of adults must be made clear and kept on record daily.
- Adults must not drink hot beverages in the room with the children.

Supervision of Children

- The arrival and departure of children must be made clear and kept on record daily.
- Appropriate procedures are to be taken to ensure children are always supervised indoors and outdoors.
- Care is taken to ensure children cannot leave the premises undetected.
- Children must be shown and explained the importance of being careful with toys and objects, e.g. How to carry pencils, scissors, and chairs. It is explained that we always sit while eating and never run in the building.

Equipment and Facilities

- In planning out the layout of the room, emphasis is given to minimising safety risks and allowing clear space whilst ensuring that activities are carefully monitored.
- All areas to be checked daily upon arrival into rooms, and routinely during the day.
- External exits to be kept clear and unobstructed at all times. In the classroom keep doorway clear and accessible at all times.
- Check all equipment and work areas to ensure it is safe to use prior to using it. Where a defect of safety concern is identified do not use the equipment until it has been cleared for use by the Management.

- There is a phone in the building at all times.
- All water in the children's wash basins are thermostatically controlled, if you suspect that the water is too hot for the children; please report to this to Management.
- Ensure all sockets not in use have safety finger guards in place.
- All equipment should be turned off every evening on locking up, windows and patio doors secured, and all waste material disposed of.
- Toys are to be picked up/tidied away when not in use. All toys with loose pieces or broken removed from use until they are fixed/made safe.
- Special attention must be paid to the outdoor environment.

Cleanliness and Hygiene

- Cleaning and disinfection policies are documented and monitored daily. Reducing cross contamination by using specific cloths (separate cloths for classroom, art/craft, accident and toilet cleaning) and adequate cloth changing must always be implemented.
- A clean as you go policy is in place, floor space in classrooms and walkways must be kept tidy and unobstructed. Storage is provided in each classroom, and must be used to reduce hazards. Food is consumed at tables only and areas are cleaned after meals to remove spillages. All spillages must be cleaned immediately and wet floor sign displayed.
- All work rooms in particular toys or child contact surfaces cleaned and disinfected regularly. All body fluids to be cleaned up and area disinfected, cloth used to be disposed of. Disposable gloves to be used. Regularly sanitize hands during the day.

Fire Safety

- Fire exits are not locked and access is kept clear at all times with fire extinguishers close to main exit / access. Fire extinguishers are checked annually.
- A standard fire drill is carried out regularly and records are kept.

Accidents and Incidents

- Any injury must be reported and details of the accident are to be recorded in the accident book
- Incidents of violence against staff or management, including verbal abuse, will be investigated and appropriate action will be completed by management with the member of staff.

- Minor accidents/injuries will be treated on the premises and parents / guardians will be notified of the injury and action taken.
- St Gabriel's Pre-School displays contact details of a local Doctor in case of accidents or sudden illness.
- First Aid box easily identifiable and located in an area known to all staff members. The contents of the First Aid Box are checked once a month.

Medicines

- Medicine can only be administered to children upon the written consent of their parents, or upon direction from management (after consultation with the child's parents). Please ensure that you have another member of staff present with you to verify the medicine administered. Both staff are to sign the
- Medicines should be stored appropriately and safely away from the children

Health and Illness

- All staff should have up-to-date rubella and tetanus vaccinations as a minimum. Additional checks/vaccinations such as TB, polio or Hepatitis A should be maintained as good practise.
- An exclusion policy applies for all persons suffering from an infectious disease in the service for both staff and children. Any person suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting, infectious cough/upper respiratory tract infection, communicable parasitic infection on hands/arms (scabies etc) shall be excluded from the service until symptoms subside and the person has been medically cleared to return.
- Any person returning to work following an absence which could have health and safety implications (infectious disease, back complaint) must provide Fitness to Work Cert from their doctor.
- No person may work on St Gabriel's Pre-School behalf while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, as this may affect their personal health and safety or that of any other person.
- St Gabriel's Pre-School prohibits smoking in all work areas, within the building and on its grounds.
- A worker specific risk assessment shall be completed, when Management is notified of the pregnancy of an employee. Suitable controls shall be introduced in to the workplace to ensure the work completed by the employee in question does not pose a risk of injury or ill health to mother/baby, so far as is reasonably practicable. In particular issues around, lifting/carrying children/furniture/equipment/materials, seating provisions.

Partnership with Parents

All parents are made aware of the service's procedures including arrival and departures, parking etc

3.6 FIRST AID

St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that it meets the requirements set out in the legislation regarding the number of qualified first aiders in the pre-school.

At least one adult, qualified in giving First Aid, will be present on site. T

- All minor incidents will be treated by a staff member, If there is any cause for concern about a child, the parents will be contacted.
- Accident/incident records will be kept, signed by both the first aider & the parent.
- All members of staff are familiar with simple First Aid procedures, such as mouth to mouth resuscitation, and for staff training to be given on this subject.
- First Aid boxes and a simple First Aid book are easily available to all adults, but beyond the reach of children.
- The first aid kit will be checked regularly and replaced as necessary.

First Aid Officer Duties

- The Named First Aid Officer is Leonie Bowes Barry.
- The First Aid Officer will supervise children who are under observation, as a result of accidents/sickness while on the premises
- Ensure records are kept of all accidents, signed by both the manager & the parent.
- The First Aid Officer will keep an up to date list of contact numbers for parents, doctors and hospitals in an easy accessible place
- The First Aid Officer will be responsible for re-stocking the First Aid kit at regular intervals, at least once a month
- Report faulty electrical equipment immediately
- Daily attendance records are kept
- All flammable materials are safely stored outside of children's areas

Carrying out First Aid in St Gabriel's Pre-School

- Antiseptic creams or wipes are never applied. To prevent an infection occurring, a band aid may be applied. Where this is the case please ensure that the band aid is the correct size. Please note that some children are allergic to band aids/plasters. This will be noted on their General Information Form.
- Disposable gloves must be worn when dealing with open wounds, vomit or blood. Always wash hands thoroughly after administering first aid
- Tissue/cotton wool and water is used for all injuries. Never, ever, use soap on wound

- Cold compresses are used for minor bumps, kicks, pinches, falls, scratches, where slight swelling and/or bruising may occur
- Cold compresses are used for major bumps, bites, pinches, falls where swelling and bruising will occur. An ice pack can be found in the freezer compartment of the fridge in the kitchen. Ice packs should be replaced as you use them and when necessary
- Children who receive a bump/bang to the head and sleep at the service or shortly after they go home may not do so until at least one hour has passed since the accident. Parents must be informed of this.
- First aid should be performed where possible away from other children. Ensure that the children you are leaving are left supervised. If this is not possible then administer first aid on the spot.
- All staff members, students, substitutes and auxiliary staff members exempt should have a valid first aid certificate and should update this when necessary.
- The first aid box is located in the preschool and the main office.
- A list of what should be in the box is printed on the inside of the lid. All items removed from the box must be replaced immediately after use.
- Incidents and accidents will occur. By endeavouring to keep them at a minimum we can reduce the amount that occurs. Have a watchful eye. Know what the children in your care are doing at all times. Watch out especially for new children in your group as they are the most vulnerable.

3.7 TOILET HYGIENE & INTIMATE & PERSONAL CARE

When applying for a pre-school place, parents will be made aware that their child must be toilet trained before starting in the pre-school. Everyone will be made aware of the importance of hand washing after using the toilet.

- At all times it is important to respect the rights and needs of the children in our care. When a child needs to use the toilet allow him/ her the privacy to do so. If the child asks you to accompany them to the toilet, do so. Young children need encouragement and help with self-care, wiping bottoms, flushing toilet, washing hands etc.
- Staff should be sensitive to accidents. A full set of labelled clothing should be provided by parents so that if a child has an 'accident' of this nature they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change. Spare clothes will also be available in the pre-school & the main school.
- Staff should never use another child's clothes.
- Details must be recorded on an incident sheet, parents should be informed.

- Staff must use the disposable gloves and aprons provided, if cleaning up any spillages.

INTIMATE and PERSONAL CARE

St Gabriel's Pre-School believes that the intimate care of children cannot be separated from other aspects of their learning and development. We do not discriminate against children who have not reached a stage where they can manage their own personal hygiene and as such welcome all children to participate in the service and provide appropriate support for each on an individual basis. We understand children may require help with washing, dressing and toileting.

Procedure

- Staff will work with parents and children to establish a preferred procedure for supporting the children in our care with their personal and intimate care.
- Where possible the child's key person is responsible for undertaking the care of an individual child. When this is not possible a staff member who is known to the child will take on that responsibility.
- Children are always asked by the member of staff caring for them, for permission to assist them, and children who want to perform their own care are encouraged to do so with adult support when appropriate.
- Children will be cared for with dignity and respect for their privacy.

3.8 PREMISES INDOORS & PREMISES OUTDOORS

The indoor premises will be fitted out to a very high standard in accordance with the current regulations.

The children will have access to a safe and enclosed open space in the grounds.

3.9 MISSING CHILD

All children attending St Gabriel's Pre-School are of equal importance and are cared for equally. Staff are deployed and the building is used in such a way as to minimise the chance of children removing themselves from the main group without being noticed, whilst allowing them a free choice of activities. In this way staff can be made immediately aware of a child needing help or support, and react accordingly.

Procedure

- Children are welcomed into the setting by a designated member of staff.
- A member of staff marks their presence in the daily register.
- A member of staff remains on duty by the door throughout the arrival and departure period of St Gabriel's Pre-School and until all parents and carers have left the premises.

- The main door is kept secure at all times when a member of staff is not on duty at the entrance.
- Children's times of arrival and departure are noted on the register, and a note is made if a child is to leave early or with another adult.
- Staff are deployed throughout the setting during the session, ensuring that no child is left alone for any period of time without an adult being aware of their location.
- The outdoor area is supervised, it is securely fenced and the gate secure at all times.
- The rooms in which the children play are never left unsupervised/out of vision of staff members.
- A member of staff remains on duty within the main room at all times, unless all the children and staff are in the outdoor area together
- If all staff and children are outside and a child needs to come inside, a member of staff will accompany them inside.
- Visitors are viewed through a window before the door is unlatched to allow them access to the building.

In the event of a member of staff not being able to locate a child on the premises:

- The premises will be searched thoroughly and immediately.
- The register will be called to determine which child(ren) are missing.
- The grounds surrounding St Gabriel's Pre-School will be searched.
- The Manager will contact the school principal & call the local Garda.
- The Manager will inform the parents.
- A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be made if appropriate.

In the Event of a Child going missing on an outing

Parents usually attend outings and are responsible for their own child. However the following procedures are to be followed.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person/parent and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The Manager contacts the local Garda station and reports the child as missing, then follow their instructions.

- The Manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed if they are not already with the group.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting if applicable
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the local Garda Station if the child is not found.
- A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be made if appropriate.

3.10 FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

The health and safety of all shall be considered with great regard to furniture and fittings. All equipment in use will comply with the health Boards safety standards

3.11 ELECTRICITY

Children will not be allowed to use any electrical equipment unsupervised. All plug sockets will have socket covers to avoid the danger of electrocution.

3.12 INFECTION CONTROL, EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN/STAFF WHEN SICK

St Gabriel's Pre-School has been entrusted by parents to care for their children. We aim to provide as healthy an environment as possible for children & Staff. We will endeavour to minimise your child's exposure to infection by excluding sick children/adults. We will encourage parent's uptake of vaccinations. We will inform parents and the HSE where necessary of any infections in our service

In the event of **sudden illness**:

- We will contact our parents immediately about our concerns regarding their child's health and well-being. Parents will be informed of our concerns and procedures we are taking. If the manager feels that a child needs medical attention, the parents will be notified and with their permission, we will contact their doctor. Parents will be responsible for the doctor's fees
- If a parent cannot be reached the next name on the emergency list will be contacted.
- The child's temperature will be monitored and recorded.
- Parents will be required to take their child home immediately in the case of vomiting or diarrhoea.
- We advise that sick children must be kept at home.
- We ask that parents inform us if their child is unable to attend due to illness.
- Children attending the service suffering from any contagious infections must have a doctor's clearance certificate before returning to preschool.
- In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease, all parents will be verbally informed and information will be displayed on the notice board.

- We advise all persons who enter the service to inform the manager if they have come in contact with an infectious or contagious disease.
- The HSE recommends that all children in preschool receive the appropriate vaccinations. This acts as a safeguard for your child as well as protecting other children attending.

Exclusion

In order to ensure the health and safety of all, children or staff with any of the following conditions will be excluded from the facility until the condition subsides; or until a doctor's note is received stating that there is no danger to others

- An oral temperature over 37.5 degrees which cannot be reduced
- A deep, hacking cough, Severe congestion
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing
- An unexplained rash or illness that causes concern
- Vomiting (48 hours from last episode) /Diarrhoea (48 hours from last episode)
- Lice or nits - see Head Lice Policy and Procedure
- An infectious /contagious condition
- A child who is on an antibiotic for less than 24/48 hours
- A child that complains of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms

In the event of a child having sustained a serious injury which results in their movement being restricted, (e.g. broken bones with plaster casts, slings, stitches etc) they will be unable to attend preschool until the injury has healed. However, where there is a parent who is available to attend with their child to support them and ensure their safety, it may be possible to agree arrangements for them to attend with their child in consultation with the manager.

Infectious Disease Control

- Children/adults with infectious diseases should not attend the service.
- Employees suffering from a contagious illness should not work with children, i.e. gastro-enteritis, etc. and must inform the Management immediately.
- All children must provide up to date record of immunisations
- Should there be an outbreak of any infectious disease or incident, a dated notice clearly stating the situation must be posted on the Parents Notice Board. Parents should also be informed. This notice should be updated when relevant.
- Head lice are a contagious condition and if a case is noticed it should be brought to the attention of Parents immediately. A child is not permitted to attend the service until the condition has been successfully treated.
- Observation of children following immunisation is essential, parents should inform staff of immunisation. It is good practice to encourage two-way communication on all health issues.

- Staff in the pre-school service should be immunised against infectious diseases.

Compliance with infection control requirements are considered an essential contractual pre-requisite for all employees.

Disease control is most likely to be successful when the following three principles are followed

1. Hand washing should be used at every opportunity.
2. Immunisation: **ALL** children **AND** staff should be appropriately immunised.
3. Exclusion - Any un-well **staff member** or **child** should be excluded.

Pregnant Staff

It is important that staff who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should ensure that they are appropriately immunised and compliant with infection control precautions.

Exclusions and Notification of Exposure to Infectious Conditions

As outlined in your contract of employment, you are expected to report for work each business day unless you are incapacitated by illness, absent with the prior permission of Management or otherwise unavoidably absent. In our business it is essential that we have an adequate number of workers to care for the children. It is in your interest, your colleagues and the child's that you are of full health and well being.

- ❖ If you are suffering from a contagious illness you should not work with children, i.e. gastro-enteritis, etc. and must inform the Manager immediately.
- ❖ Exclusion guidelines as recommended by the Preschool Environmental Health Officer apply in the case of all suspected infectious conditions. These guidelines are contained in our policies and procedures and displayed in the service and extend to both children and staff.
- ❖ Staff and Parents will be informed should staff, children or visitors to the service report the presence of any contagious condition to the Manager
- ❖ An exclusion policy applies for all persons suffering from an infectious disease in the service for both staff and children. Any person suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting, infectious cough/upper respiratory tract infection, communicable parasitic infection on hands/arms (scabies etc) shall be excluded from the service until symptoms subside and the person has been medically cleared to return.
- ❖ Employees who are well but who have an ill family member at home with and infectious condition or if they have been in contact with any infectious conditions must inform the Manager. This information will remain confidential.

- ❖ Any person returning to work following an absence which could have health and safety implications (infectious disease, back complaint) must provide Fitness to Work Cert from their doctor.
- ❖ Unwell children will be excluded from the service until the appropriate exclusion period for that illness is finished. (See Illness Policy)
- ❖ Children and Staff should remain at home if they are suffering from general diarrhoea or vomiting until 48 hours after being symptom free.

Management Responsibilities

- The Manager will keep records of staff and children's immunisations.
- Manager will record all details of illness reported to them by staff or reported by parents of a child attending the service. These details will include the name, dates and duration of illness.
- Manager will report an outbreak of any infectious disease to Tusla Preschool Environmental Health Officer and the Public Health Department.
- A worker specific risk assessment shall be completed, when Management is notified of the pregnancy of an employee. Suitable controls shall be introduced in to the workplace to ensure the work completed by the employee in question does not pose a risk of injury or ill health to mother/baby, so far as is reasonably practicable. In particular issues around, lifting/carrying children/furniture/equipment/materials, seating provisions and notification of any infectious conditions that have been reported. (Form E5)
- The Manager will notify the staff and parents if a member of staff has been in contact with an infectious condition. The member of staff involved will remain strictly confidential.
- A doctor's certificate may be required for certain conditions to ensure they are no longer contagious before children or staff member return to the service.

Controlling Infection

The purpose of employing infection control procedures is to reduce the number of germs to a level where there is no longer a threat to public health.

This is done by on-going infection control training for staff i.e. – importance of hand washing, food hygiene, cleaning routines etc. thus ensuring hygiene is applied correctly and the risk of infection is minimised.

Any child or adult with symptoms of an infectious illness will be asked not to attend St Gabriel's Pre-School until they are no longer infectious. The management of St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure all areas of the premises are thoroughly disinfected, including play areas, toilets, toys and all equipment.

All staff are aware of the procedures for dealing with appropriate daily and weekly cleaning routines and bodily fluid spillages. All cleaning is checked by management.

Infectious illness can cause significant ill health among young children and can be transmitted by direct or indirect contact including:

- Contact with infected people or animals.
- By infecting oneself with the body's own germs.
- By hand to mouth transmission.
- By the air / by insects, pests, animals.
- Indirect transmission e.g. toys, door handles, toilets, floors, tabletops etc.
- By direct – person to person.

3.13 HEADLICE AND NITS

Head lice can be a common problem in pre-school children. Head lice crawl and require head to head contact for transmission. It is our policy to be proactive and manage the treatment. Parents have a responsibility to adhere to all our recommendations, working together to address this common health concern.

- Parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice.
- Parents must check their child's head regularly, even if they don't suspect their child has head lice.
- All cases must be reported to the Manager. Parents must state when appropriate treatment was commenced.
- Parents will be informed and advised on the correct procedures to take.
- Notification will be displayed in the parents notice& information given if required.
- Confidentiality will be adhered to in every case reported.
- Children will not be accepted into the service with untreated head lice.
- We suggest children with long hair should have it tied back.
- There are a variety of effective preparations, shampoos and lotions available. It is vital that parents follow instructions accurately.

It is important to remember that anyone can get head lice, however infestation is more likely among small children due to nature of how they play. Head lice do not reflect standards of hygiene either in the home or school environment

3.14 RECORDING/REPORTING OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

An outbreak of infectious disease will be reported to Tusla & appropriate records kept.

3.17 FOOD HYGIENE

St Gabriel's Pre-School will comply with all legislation in the provision of food and food hygiene. We will ensure that there are:

- Adequate and suitable facilities for the storage, of food.
- Adequate and suitable eating utensils, hand washing, wash-up and sterilising facilities are provided.

- All waste and other refuse must be stored hygienically, and disposed of frequently and hygienically and in such a manner as not to cause a nuisance.
- St Gabriel's Pre-School will follow the food hygiene standards required under the Preschool Regulations throughout the service as 'best practice'.
- Those responsible for preparation of food should fully comply with hygiene storage & waste disposal regulations. At least one staff member should have completed food handling training.
- Use disposable gloves when serving the children food including snacks.
- Tables used for food and drink should be cleaned before and after use and floors swept where necessary.
- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before and after meals.
- All surfaces coming into contact with food should be in good repair and easy to clean. Food areas will be free from contamination, dust, flies etc.
- Adults drinking hot drinks will not be involved in play activities or take hot drinks into the children's rooms.
- All kitchen equipment is cleaned once a week.
- Cracked or chipped cups will not be used.
- Food is not placed directly onto table surfaces
- Only food that is clean and undamaged is purchased
- All labels are checked and 'best' before and 'use by' dates are followed
- Any food or drink that requires heating should be served immediately and not left standing.
- Dates will be checked on all perishable food. These foods and drinks will be kept refrigerated.
- Food handlers should be aware of the need for personal hygiene, and of the action to be taken if they have an infectious illness.

Kitchen

- No children in the kitchen.
- No items belonging to the children to be kept in the kitchen.
- Matches and sharp instruments must be kept out of sight.
- First Aid box kept in the kitchen/ice pack in the freezer
- Surfaces kept clean at all times.

Fridge

- Fridge will be cleaned once a week using washing up liquid and hot water and hot soapy water. This is recorded on kitchen cleaning sheet.
- Temperature is taken every day of operation. (*less than 5°C*) This temperature is recorded on Temperature Control Chart.
- If the fridge temperature is found to be over 5°C, any dairy produce or meats will be disposed of.
- All use before dates are checked every day and disposed of expired.

3.18 SAFE WORK AND PLAY ENVIRONMENT

The management committee will ensure that a safe, secure environment is maintained at all times.

3.19 ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

At St Gabriel's Pre-School it is our policy to promote the health, well being and personal safety of all our children and staff. St Gabriel's Pre-School will comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations 2016 Through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety. Although we adhere to all safety precautions and follow HSE guidelines, accidents can occur. To minimise risk:

- Safety is reviewed on a regular basis.
- Children will be adequately supervised in accordance with the recommended child/adult ratios dictated by the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2016.
- Each room is designed for easy and unobtrusive supervision by the adults at all times.
- Our staff know which children are present at any one time.
- We ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected.
- The main door is locked.
- Only suitable and age-appropriate materials and equipment are available to children.
- Windows and doors have safety appropriate glass with restricted opening safety devices.
- All electrical sockets are fitted with safety covers.
- Furniture and equipment is arranged to minimize safety risks.
- Parents will be advised to provide a hat that covers the head, neck, ears and to apply sunscreen to their child.

In the event of an accident

- The First Aid box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and location is known to all staff. Any substances, which may cause an allergy, will not be included.
- Medical supplies are checked regularly.
- A designated First Aider (certified) is on the premises at all times.
- Staff must wear protective clothing (disposable apron and gloves) to clean any bodily fluids or spillages.
- If a child is involved in an incident or accident, they will be taken into a quiet area, if possible.
- All accidents/incidents even minor ones, are recorded in an accident record book, minor accidents will be treated and parents informed of the injury. Records are accessible to all relevant staff in case of an emergency. Parents will be asked to sign off on the accident report and will receive a copy.

- In the case of a serious accident, we will call a local doctor and the child's parents contacted immediately or we will call an ambulance.
- If the child has to go to the hospital immediately the childcare worker will accompany the child, if the ambulance personnel permit. The child's record will be taken to the hospital.
- The childcare worker will not sign for any treatment to be carried out on the child in the hospital. The childcare worker will wait with the child until the parent/carer arrives.
- All serious accidents will be reported to the Insurance Company
- Parents are responsible for all doctors or hospital fees where applicable.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

An incident report book for all accidents occurring on the premises will be kept. The childcare team leader will be responsible for overseeing that all incidents are accurately recorded. Parents will be informed if their child was involved in an accident/incident and after reading the report will sign their name to acknowledge that they were informed by the staff about the nature of the accident/incident.

3.20 OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily curriculum at St Gabriel's Pre-School and after-school. We aim to ensure that children play outdoors as weather permits. Our intention, through our outdoor programme is to enhance gross motor skills, co-ordination, balance and body awareness. It also gives children opportunities to socialise freely and use imagination and initiative.

Staff will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors. The garden time is play time for the children. The adult is there to supervise and lead garden games or play, and ensure that the children are in no danger to themselves or their peers. close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum.

Garden time is an extension of indoor activities therefore sitting should be kept to an absolute minimum

- The area should be checked for safety before every use.
- Staff should use the outdoor safety checklist every term to record safety issues & pass safety concerns to management without delay.
- Each key worker is responsible for getting their group of children to & from the garden safely, Where there is exceptionally good weather all children may be outdoors at the same time. In such a situation staff will be cognisant of this fact and give due consideration to the supervision and safety of the children.
- Children access the garden through the school yard
- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g. unfastened shoelaces and buckles, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys and climbing equipment.

- Staff should ensure that their presence and position in the outdoor play area allows that all areas of the outdoor area are under constant supervision and that all children are in the sight of at least one member of staff, at all times, and never leave the play area for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility. It is most important for staff to move around the area constantly so that all areas are adequately supervised. Each person should position him/herself in separate areas so that no area is unsupervised.
- Students helping outdoors must never be left in charge of any area.
- Hot drinks should not be taken into the outdoor areas.
- If a child is injured he/she should be taken indoors for treatment quickly as possible if necessary; if possible the child should be treated with the portable first aid kit outdoors. Both child and staff member should remain within sight of another member of staff while treatment takes place. Details of the accident must be written up as soon as possible in the first aid book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment. Students/volunteers may not administer first aid.
- Staff **must engage** with the children during the outdoor play time. The curriculum should be used outdoors as well as in the children's room.
- Children should not be allowed interfere with the gate in the outside area.
- On very hot days children will have reduced exposure to sunlight in the middle of the day.
- The children should be back in the pre-school at least **15 minutes** before home time to avoid clashing with the parents/guardians. At the end of the session the areas should be scanned carefully in case children should be left outside unsupervised.
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.

Clothing

It is important that children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity. Parents/ guardians are asked to ensure their children have the appropriate attire for the weather.

Sun Safety

St Gabriel's Pre-School request that parents:

- Apply sun cream to their child/children before they attend pre-school. As in the first instance it is the responsibility of the parent to apply sun cream to their child/children.

- If necessary put sun cream in the child's bag and request the staff member to apply the sun cream, every effort will be made by the staff member to do this.
- Parents provide a sunhat for children.

Adult/Child Ratios

The adult/child ratio for outdoor play will be in compliance with the Preschool Regulations, Staff will be vigilant about supervising children outdoors.

3.21 OUTINGS

It is the policy of our preschool to ensure the safety and well being of the children and adults involved in our service when planning and undertaking outings.

Procedures

- The location of the outing should be familiar to staff & a risk assessment carried out prior to the visit with the children.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the planning, preparation and undertaking of outings. Prior information about proposed outings is given to all parents
- All parents must sign a consent form prior to the outing
- The childcare worker must have a list of each child present & assigning to them a specific staff member. That member of staff must be solely responsible for the child/children in their care.
- Each child must have a sticker with the phone number of the mobile phone, St Gabriel's Pre-School phone number and the name of the service, not the child's name.
- There is always at least one adult to every two children.
- The insurance company is contacted prior to the outing to confirm that the event is covered by the service's insurance policy.
- A safety briefing will be given to all adults involved in the outing.
- Staff members must be responsible for checking numbers of children, doing a head count and recording names of children, before leaving the premises, and several times while out on the outing, before returning and on return to the service.
- Mobile phone, fully charged with credit & contact numbers for each child must be taken.
- Staff must take the first aid kit.
- A watch with the correct time. Before leaving the staff should say what time they will be returning and if the time runs late, they should ring the manager to inform them.
- Sun cream and sun hats or rainwear, depending on the weather.
- Always bring a good supply of tissues or baby wipes.
- Buggies, if required.

Transport on Outings

In the event that transport is required for outings the following must apply:

- The private transport must be properly insured. A copy of the insurance policy should be requested and held on file.
- They must provide seat belts and if required booster seats for children, Information can be sought from the Road Safety Authority.

Managing medicines on trips and outings

If children are going on outings, staff accompanying the children must include the key person for the child with a risk assessment, or another member of staff who is fully informed about the child's needs and/or medication.

- Medication for a child is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name and the name of the medication. Inside the box is a copy of the consent form and a card to record when it has been given, with the details as given above.
- On returning to the setting the card is stapled to the medicine record book and the parent signs it.
- If a child on medication has to be taken to hospital, the child's medication is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name and the name of the medication. Inside the box is a copy of the consent form signed by the parent.

3.22 ANAPHYLAXIS

Anaphylaxis is a sudden and severe allergic reaction, which can be fatal, requiring immediate medical emergency measures be taken.

St Gabriel's Pre-School recognises that it has a duty of care to children who are at risk from life-threatening allergic reactions while under St Gabriel's Pre-School supervision. The responsibility is shared among parents and health care providers.

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is to minimise the risk to children with severe allergies to potentially life-threatening allergens without depriving the severely allergic child of normal peer interactions or placing unreasonable restrictions on the activities of other children in the service.

This policy is designed to ensure that children at risk are identified, strategies are in place to minimize the potential for accidental exposure, and staff and key volunteers are trained to respond in an emergency situation

Policy

While St Gabriel's Pre-School cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, the management will take reasonable steps to provide an **allergy-safe** and **allergy-aware** environment for a child with life-threatening allergies.

St Gabriel's Pre-School will implement the following steps:

A process for identifying an anaphylactic child;

Keeping a record with information relating to the specific allergies for each identified anaphylactic child to form part of the child's Permanent Child Record;
A process for establishing an emergency procedure plan, to be reviewed annually, for each identified anaphylactic child to form part of the child's child record;

Procedures for storage and administering medications, including procedures for obtaining preauthorization for employees to administer medication to an anaphylactic child; and

All incidents will be recorded and the process reviewed

Anaphylaxis Procedures

Description of Anaphylaxis

Signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction can occur within minutes of exposure to an offending substance. Reactions usually occur within two hours of exposure, but in rare cases can develop hours later. Specific warning signs as well as the severity and intensity of symptoms can vary from person to person and sometimes from reaction to reaction in the same persons.

An anaphylactic reaction can involve **any** of the following symptoms, which may appear alone or in any combination, regardless of the triggering allergen:

- **Skin:** hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash
- **Respiratory (breathing):** wheezing, shortness of breath, throat tightness, cough, hoarse voice, chest pain/tightness, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing
- **Gastrointestinal (stomach):** nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhoea
- **Cardiovascular (heart):** pale/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizzy/light-headed, shock
- **Other:** anxiety, feeling of "impending doom", headache, uterine cramps in females

Because of the unpredictability of reactions, early symptoms should never be ignored, especially if the person has suffered an anaphylactic reaction in the past.

It is important to note that anaphylaxis can occur without hives.

If an allergic child expresses any concern that a reaction might be starting, the child should always be taken seriously. When a reaction begins, it is important to respond immediately, following instructions in the child's *Child Emergency Procedure Plan*. The cause of the reaction can be investigated later.

The following symptoms may lead to death if untreated:

- Breathing difficulties caused by swelling of the airways; and/or
- A drop in blood pressure indicated by dizziness, light-headedness or feeling faint/weak.

Identifying Individuals at Risk

At the time of registration, parents are asked to report on their child's medical conditions, including whether their child has a medical diagnosis of anaphylaxis. Information on a child's life threatening conditions will be recorded and updated on the child's Permanent Child Record annually.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to:

- Inform the Manager when their child is diagnosed as being at risk for anaphylaxis.
- In a timely manner, complete medical forms and the Child Emergency Procedure Plan which includes a photograph, description of the child's allergy, emergency procedures, contact information, and consent to administer medication. The Child Emergency Procedure Plan should be posted in key areas such as in the child's playroom, the office, the feedback notebook etc, Parental permission is required to post or distribute the plan.
- Provide the service with updated medical information at the beginning of each year, and whenever there is a significant change related to their child.

Record Keeping – Monitoring and Reporting

For each identified child, the Manager will keep a Child Emergency Procedure Plan on file. These plans will contain the following information:

- Child-Level Information
 - Name
 - Contact information
 - Diagnosis
 - Symptoms
 - Emergency Response Plan
- Service-Level Information
 - Emergency procedures/treatment
- GP section including the child's diagnosis, medication and GP signature.

Emergency Procedure Plans

a) Child Level Emergency Procedure Plan

The Manager must ensure that the parents and child (where appropriate), are provided with an opportunity to meet with designated staff, prior to the beginning of each year or as soon as possible to develop/update an individual Child Emergency Procedure Plan. The Child Emergency Procedure Plan must be signed by the child's parents and the child's GP. A copy of the plan will be placed in readily accessible, designated areas such as the playroom and office.

The Child Emergency Procedure Plan will include at minimum:

- The diagnosis;
- The current treatment regime;

- Who within the service is to be informed about the plan – e.g. childcare worker s, volunteers, playmates;
- Current emergency contact information for the child's parents/guardian;
- A requirement for those exposed to the plan to maintain the confidentiality of the child's personal health information;
- Information regarding the child, is parent's responsibility to advise the service about any change/s in the child's condition; and
- It is the service's responsibility for updating the child's records.

Emergency Plans

Management will consult with parent's staff and the insurance company to decide on an appropriate emergency plan on a case by case basis to ensure that an appropriate course of action is taken for the child. The following two plans A and B will be used in consultation with parents and then an individual plan will be written up. Parents will be required to sign a declaration that they are happy for the staff to follow the decided emergency plan. In the event of an emergency designated staff will follow the plans as decided by parents and management.

Sample Emergency Procedure Plan A

St Gabriel's Pre-School will use the following emergency procedure:

- FIRST Call emergency medical care 999, 112 or 911
- Follow the instructions from the emergency services and only administer the child's auto-injector or inhaler under their instruction. Note time of administration.
- Contact the child's parent/guardian
- Under the instruction of the emergency services only a second auto-injector or inhaler may be administered within 10 to 15 minutes or sooner, after the first dose is given IF symptoms have not improved (i.e. the reaction is continuing, getting worse, or has recurred).
- If an auto-injector has been administered, the child must be transported to a hospital (the effects of the auto-injector may not last, and the child may have another anaphylactic reaction).
- One person stays with the child at all times.
- One person goes for help or calls for help.
- The Manager, or designated staff, must ensure that emergency plan measures are in place for scenarios where the child is off-site (e.g. bringing additional single dose auto-injectors on outings).

Sample Emergency Procedure Plan B

St Gabriel's Pre-School will use the following emergency procedure:

- Administer the child's auto-injector (single dose) at the first sign of a reaction. The use of epinephrine for a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction will not harm a normally healthy child, if epinephrine was not required. Note time of administration.

- **Call emergency medical care 999, 112**
- Contact the child's parent/guardian
- A second auto-injector may be administered within 10 to 15 minutes or sooner, after the first dose is given IF symptoms have not improved (i.e. the reaction is continuing, getting worse, or has recurred).
- If an auto-injector has been administered, the child must be transported to a hospital (the effects of the auto-injector may not last, and the child may have another anaphylactic reaction).
- One person stays with the child at all times.
- One person goes for help or calls for help.
- The Manager, or designated staff, must ensure that emergency plan measures are in place for scenarios where the child is off-site (e.g. bringing additional single dose auto-injectors on outings).

Provision and Storage of Medication

The location(s) of child auto-injectors must be known to all staff members

Parents will be informed that it is the parents' responsibility:

- To provide the appropriate medication (e.g. single dose epinephrine auto-injectors) for their anaphylactic child;
- To inform the staff where the anaphylactic child's medication will be kept (i.e. with the child, in the child's playroom, and/or other locations);
- To inform the staff when they deem the child competent to carry their own medication/s), and it is their duty to ensure their child understands they must carry their medication on their person at all times;
- To provide a second auto-injector to be stored in a central, accessible, safe but unlocked location;
- To ensure anaphylaxis medications have not expired; and
- To ensure that they replace expired medications.

Allergy Awareness, Prevention and Avoidance Strategies

a) Awareness

The Manager should ensure:

- That all service staff and persons reasonably expected to have supervisory responsibility of children have up to date first aid training, and have an awareness in the recognition of a severe allergic reaction and the use of single dose auto-injectors and standard emergency procedure plans.
- Posters which describe signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and how to administer a single dose auto-injector should be placed in relevant areas. These areas may include playrooms, office, staff room, lunch room etc.

b) Avoidance/Prevention

Individuals at risk of anaphylaxis must learn to avoid specific triggers. While the key responsibility lies with the child's family the service must participate in creating an "allergy-aware" environment. Special care is taken to avoid exposure to allergy-causing substances. Parents are asked to consult with the childcare worker before sending in food to playrooms where there are food-allergic. The risk of accidental exposure to a food allergen can be significantly diminished by means of such measures.

Non-food allergens (e.g. medications, latex) will be identified and restricted from playrooms and common areas where a child with a related allergy may encounter that substance.

Training Strategy

Should we have a child/children with anaphylaxis, a training session on anaphylaxis and anaphylactic shock will be held for all St Gabriel's Pre-School staff.

Efforts shall be made to include the parents, and children (where appropriate), in the training. Experts (e.g. public health nurses, trained occupational health and safety staff) will be consulted in the development of training policies and the implementation of training. Training will be provided by individuals trained to teach anaphylaxis management.

3.23 PEST CONTROL

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we work hard to keep a clean and hygienic environment for children staff and parents. St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure children and staff are not exposed to pests (insects, cockroaches, rats, mice, etc.) pest residue, and the chemicals used to control them.

Statement of Intent

The Principal of St Gabriel's School is the person designated to act as a liaison between the service and a pest control company if required.

Procedure

- Regular inspections will be performed by the Manager, caretaker or a pest management professional
- Staff should report to the Manager immediately if they have any concerns regarding pests of any kind. Staff should be alert to the possibility of infestation on discovery of any of the following:
 - ✓ Direct sightings of vermin/pests
 - ✓ Droppings near food source
 - ✓ Evidence of nesting
 - ✓ Evidence of gnawing
- Food should be kept covered or stored in airtight pest proof containers.
- Spillages should be promptly cleaned up.

- Proper sanitation will be maintained and correct disposal of rubbish and food waste will be maintained to prevent conditions for pests.
- Water leaks will be repaired and standing water will be eliminated whenever possible.
- Repairs will be performed as needed to prevent pest access to buildings or to hiding spaces in walls and equipment.
- Pest management decisions will be based on the results of regular inspections.
- If a pesticide is needed, the least hazardous pesticide is selected that will effectively control the pest problem.
- Pesticides will not be applied when children are present at St Gabriel's Pre-School. Toys and other items mouthed or handled by the children will be removed from the area before pesticides are applied. Children will not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.
- In the event of an emergency where pests pose an immediate health threat to children and staff (e.g. wasps) and pesticides are applied, ensure that children will not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.
- Access to bait boxes and other forms of pest control will never be accessible to children at St Gabriel's Pre-School.
- A record of pest control measures will be kept

3.24 CLEANLINESS, HYGIENE & HANDWASHING

St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that it complies with all the relevant legislation. To ensure the safety, health and welfare of the children, staff and parents who are in the service.

We are committed to excellence in matters of cleanliness and hygiene. We implement good practice and work effectively to ensure St Gabriel's Pre-School is maintained to a very high standard. All employees are required to follow the cleanliness and hygiene procedures

Policy and Procedure

- St Gabriel's Pre-School will be maintained in a clean, hygienic state throughout the day and a cleaning record is kept.
- Our staff are responsible for the materials and equipment used and ensures they are clean, hygienic and safe at all times.
- Children will be encouraged to care for their environment.
- Cleaning routines and procedures are in place and are closely monitored and recorded. Hand washing is the most important defence against the spread of infection our children and staff will be aware of the importance and the need

to wash our hands several times a day. Children are encouraged to use the red thermostatically controlled tap to wash their hands. Hand washing instructions are in place, liquid soap, paper towels are only used.

- Children will be encouraged to develop their own personal hygiene routine, self-care and independence will be taught.
- Disposal tissues will be available in the children's rooms.
- In the event where there is a spillage (e.g.) blood, vomit, urine (etc) it will be cleaned up very promptly.
- The use of gloves will be worn at all times to minimize the risk of infection.
- We will display hazard signs, cover spillage, use a disinfectant solution and clean it up appropriately.
- All cleaning products are stored safely on a high shelf, out of children's reach.

Children's Rooms

- Checklists are posted on the wall of the room and must be checked daily. All staff will also receive their own personal weekly rota, to be signed off by the Manager.
- Staff are responsible for keeping their rooms clean and tidy.
- During the day the room should be ventilated regularly.

Toilets

Toilets are checked regularly and cleaned appropriately as necessary.

Bins and Recycling

The room should have two bins; one for green bin recycling and one for everything else. Children will be encouraged to use the appropriate bins. Staff should ensure that bins are never allowed to overflow. If it is full empty it. The bins should be emptied and rinsed out at the end of every day. If a bin has a lid, the lid must be closed at all times.

Staff Hygiene

It is imperative to wash hands after handling bins, changing nappies, cleaning up vomit or urine, cleaning children's noses, before handling food, after handling food etc. This will help in the battle against infections.

Hand Sanitizers

As most common germs are transmitted through hand contact we have placed hand sanitizers inside the front door for all visitors to use to help reduce the risk of spreading infection

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection. Warm running water, anti-bacterial soap and paper towels must be used for both adults & children. Hand washing signs will be displayed

All employees, volunteers, and children St Gabriel's Pre-School must follow the procedure for hand washing at the following times:

1. Upon arrival for the day or when moving from one childcare group to another
2. Before and after:
 - Eating
 - Handling food
 - Feeding a child
 - Giving medication
 - Playing in water that is used by more than one person
3. After:
 - Using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
 - Handling bodily fluid (mucus, blood, vomit), from sneezing, wiping and blowing noses, from mouths, or from sores
 - Handling uncooked food, especially raw meat and poultry
 - Handling pets and other animals
 - Playing in sandboxes
 - Playing outside
 - Cleaning or handling the rubbish
 - Lunch and tea breaks

N.B. - Washing hands after eating is especially important for children who eat with their hands, to decrease the amount of saliva (which may contain organisms) on their hands

Hand washing is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection. Many studies have shown that unwashed or improperly washed hands are the primary carriers of infections. It must be noted that wearing gloves is NOT protection against bacteria or the H1N1 Virus (Swine Flu).

3.25 SPILLAGES and HAZARDS

In the interests of health and safety the following procedures must be used when cleaning up spillages:

- Disposable gloves are provided by St Gabriel's Pre-School must be used by staff to clean up any body spillages or faeces. When changing nappies or any clothing, which has urine or faeces on it, this procedure should also be observed. Any vomit or blood should be dealt with immediately by wearing disposable gloves and applying Milton directly on to the spillage, before cleaning up
- Warning notices should be displayed where appropriate

Hazards

If you discover anything, which may be a potential hazard to you, the children, other staff or members of the public who may be using St Gabriel's Pre-School you must take immediate remedial action. Report the hazard to the Manager who will record the hazard and take the appropriate action to rectify the hazard

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

The purpose of Universal Precautions or Infection Control Guidelines is to protect workers and School users from contact with any infectious organisms.

The basic principle is to treat all body substances (i.e. urine, faeces, vomit, mucus and blood) as potentially infected and if workers are in contact with same to ensure that they are informed and protected.

Guidelines

- Latex gloves must be available at all times
- If handling any soiled dressings, latex gloves must be worn and all waste materials placed in disposable bags provided for infectious waste
- If cleaning up blood spills or any bodily fluid substances, latex gloves must be worn
- Before cleaning up any spillage make sure that there is no broken glass, syringe needles, or blades present that could cut or pierce you
- The spillage should be mopped up and the area cleaned thoroughly with a solution of one part bleach to ten parts water. Any household bleach is adequate
- If a child or staff member vomits on site, cover the vomit thoroughly with paper towels. A member of staff wearing household rubber gloves should clean the area into a plastic bag and then wash the area thoroughly with hot water and disinfectant.

Needle Stick Injury Guidelines

Should a needle stick injury accidentally occur the following procedures should be followed:

- Squeeze the area to encourage bleeding and to expel any contaminated blood and wash area thoroughly with soap and water
- Inform the Manager and get medical attentions as soon as possible
- Record the incident in the accident report book

3.26 SUN SAFETY

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we want staff and children to enjoy the sun safely. (We will work with staff and parents to achieve sun safety

St Gabriel's Pre-School requests that parents:

- Apply sun cream to their child/children before they attend school. As in the first instance it is the responsibility of the parent to apply sun cream to their child/children.

- If necessary put named sun cream in the child's bag and request the staff member to apply the sun cream, every effort will be made by the staff member to do this.
- Provide a sunhat for children.

St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that:

- On very hot days children will have reduced exposure to sunlight.
- Where possible, children can seek shade when outside in the sun.
- Ensure that children will wear a sunhat if provided by the parent.
- Water will be available at all times in the classroom.

3.27 'SWINE FLU' POLICY

This policy and procedure has been developed in response to the World Health Organisation confirmation of the international spread of 'swine' flu.

This policy document is applicable to all employees, students, children and the parents in relation to St Gabriel's Pre-School

St Gabriel's Pre-School is committed to ensuring the well being of employees and the children in our care. The policy provide guidelines and the procedures that will be taken in the event of an outbreak of swine flu (H1N1) that may be serious enough to effect the running and business of St Gabriel's Pre-School .

St Gabriel's Pre-School are aware that children are very susceptible to getting this new virus and the service may serve as a central point for the spread of the virus. We will endeavour to ensure that procedures are in place so that we can work towards minimising the spread of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009. St Gabriel's Pre-School will ensure that by implementing good health practices and having in place protocols to ensure that we can deal with such an outbreak should it occur. St Gabriel's Pre-School will develop contingency plans to manage flu and ensure that staff, children and parents are familiar with those plans.

All employees are expected to take personal responsibility for following the policies and procedures of St Gabriel's Pre-School and in the event of a flu pandemic to act in accordance with any instructions given to them which is designed to protect the health and safety of themselves and the children in their care. St Gabriel's Pre-School will keep parents briefed and will also request that they follow any instructions issued by the service in order to ensure the health and safety of all children and employees.

Swine Flu and the Symptoms

The symptoms of swine flu are broadly the same as those of ordinary flu, but may be more severe and cause more serious complications. The typical symptoms are:

- sudden fever, and
- sudden cough

Other symptoms may include:

- runny nose

- sneezing
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea or stomach upset
- headache
- tiredness
- chills
- aching muscles
- limb or joint pain, and
- sore throat

Employees must constantly be aware and they must pay particular attention to the observation of all children for symptoms as listed above. If a child does fall ill, then the employee should immediately follow the illness policy and procedure and parents should be notified immediately to take the child home.

It is most likely that nearly all persons with H1N1 flu will have at least two of these symptoms. There are a number of categories of people at higher risk of serious complications from seasonal flu these include children younger than 5 years old and pregnant women

Managing the spread of illness is possible with proper hand washing and effective nappy changing procedures, by cleaning toys properly and through education.

Vigilance by all employees in relation to hygiene is critical in order to prevent children and staff becoming sick. St Gabriel's Pre-School will continue to operate rigorous hygiene practices. Employees, parents and visitors will be required to strictly adhere to protocols in relation to hygiene and good practice which will be displayed throughout the building and may be found at the end of this policy and procedure.

Safe Nose Blowing

Employees and children should blow or wipe their noses with disposable, one-use tissues and then discard them in a plastic-lined, covered, hands-free bin. After blowing the nose, hands should be washed. Every room in the service will have a supply of tissues.

Additional Cleaning Practices in the Event of Outbreak of Swine Flu

The routine frequency of cleaning and sanitation in St Gabriel's Pre-School will be increased whenever there are outbreaks of illness or when recommended by the health department to control certain infectious diseases. All surfaces, furnishings, and equipment that are not in good repair or that have been contaminated by body fluids should be taken out of service until they are repaired, cleaned, and, if contaminated, sanitised effectively.

All cleaning schedules will state item/area to be cleaned, frequency of cleaning, method/procedure, and person responsible, in line with the pre-school regulations.

Since children will touch any surface they can reach (including floors), all surfaces in a child care facility may be contaminated and can spread infectious disease agents. Therefore, all surfaces must be properly sanitised.

Mops should be assumed to be contaminated since they are used to remove contamination from other surfaces.

The bleach solution used for sanitising the child care environment is also appropriate for sanitising mops and rags. Detachable mop heads and reusable rags may be cleaned in a washing machine and dried in a mechanical dryer or hung to dry.

Communicating with Parents

Concerned and informed parents are the first line of defense against the spread of Swine Flu. St Gabriel's Pre-School acknowledges that parents/guardians have the power to prevent our service from infection, simply by keeping their child home when they do not feel well or exhibit symptoms. St Gabriel's Pre-School will keep parents informed on a regular basis on information pertaining to swine flu. We will request parents to ensure that all details provided to the service are up-to-date. Emergency contact details must also be up-to date.

Procedure in the event of Swine Flu

Early recognition of influenza like symptoms and subsequent actions

- All staff should be able to recognise symptoms of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza.
- The symptoms of pandemic influenza are like those of seasonal flu. There is usually sudden onset of fever (greater than 38°C/100°F) and cough or sore throat. Other symptoms are as outlined above.

Actions for caring for a child who becomes ill with symptoms suggestive of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza while in the service

- Parents/guardians should be contacted to bring the child with influenza like illness (ILI) home as soon as possible
- The service will encourage parents to seek early medical assessment for all children less than 5 years of age and for children with flu-like symptoms at higher risk of complications from flu. Staff with flu-like symptoms at higher risk of complications from flu should do the same
- The service will have prior permission from parents to enable urgent medical assessment if required.
- We will ensure there is appropriate space (a separate sick room where possible) which can be used for the care of children who feel ill, before their parents can collect them. Ideally this space should be away from other children to help prevent spread of the infection. We will ensure that the space is well stocked with appropriate medical supplies and is prepared for children with the symptoms of flu. An employee will be nominated to look after the child in an isolated area, if possible, apart from the remainder of the children. When providing care for the child, the staff member will observe good hand hygiene practices

When the child has gone home, the isolation area will be thoroughly cleaned
Employee at risk of complications if infected will not care for symptomatic children

- Employee should clean their hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand rub before and after any contact with symptomatic children or other staff and their environment.
- Employee and children should be encouraged to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth.

In the event that cases of influenza due to Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 occurs in St Gabriel's Pre-School the following actions will be implemented:

The child/staff member with H1N1 2009 influenza will be advised to stay at home for at least seven days from the onset of symptoms. The Department of Public Health will be contacted and advised of the diagnosis. The Department may consider closure of the service, or individual room, if there is concern about the potential for spread of the virus, particularly if there is more than one person confirmed with Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza. If closure is advised, alternative arrangements will be needed for care of children.

Actions in the event of an unusual number of people presenting with influenza like illness or unusual severity of illness (eg child requiring admission to ICU)

The Department of Public Health will be contacted by phone
HSE East Tel 01-6352145 or 01-63522178

Closure

In the event that cases of influenza due to pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus occur in the service and that the circumstances are such that Public Health advises closure, it will be essential to have a communications plan which will include:

- Up to date contact details of the children's parents/carers – St Gabriel's Pre-School should ensure that the identified guardian has provided current contact and an emergency contact number
- An estimate of the number of children who may need to remain in the service e.g. parents working and unable to collect until specified time – these children may need to be isolated and cared for until collected

Staff Required to Stay at Home in the Event of Family Illness

Employees who are well but who have an ill family member at home with H1N1 flu should come to work as usual. There is no need for any staff member or child (including those at risk of complications and those who are pregnant) to stay at home from the service if they are well. An employee should monitor their health every day and follow the service's sick leave policy and procedure in the event they become ill. Employees must ensure that they inform the proprietor in the

event they are diagnosed with H1N1 flu. Employees must take more than usual precautions in terms of contact with co-workers and personal hygiene. Employees who have an underlying medical condition or who are pregnant should call their doctor for advice, because they may need to receive influenza antiviral drugs to prevent illness.

Exclusion policy

The service will operate an exclusion policy for seven (7) days

We will remind parents/guardians and carers that children displaying flu-like symptoms while at home (weekends and holidays) should stay at home and not return to the service for seven days from onset of symptoms.

Keep Up-to-Date

St Gabriel's Pre-School will review and update this policy as information is updated through the World Health Organisation.

Helpline

The HSE has launched a new information service for the public on the swine flu virus- influenza A(H1N1).

The Flu Information Line, a 24-hour Freephone information service, provides recorded information on the A(H1N1) flu, its symptoms, what to do if you are worried, and travel advice from the Department of Health.

The information line number is 1800 94 1100

3.28 EMERGENCY CLOSURE

St Gabriel's Pre-School will endeavour to be open from 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday 38 weeks of the year (excluding public holidays) without disruption. Where disruption is unavoidable, all involved in the service will be kept informed and St Gabriel's Pre-School will reopen at the earliest possible opportunity.

In the unlikely event that St Gabriel's Pre-School has to close at times other than scheduled in the normal opening hours and dates, the policy will be applied to ensure that all involved in the service have a clear understanding of the procedures which will take place

Procedure

An emergency closure will be implemented in the following circumstances:

- When the building is unusable through accidental or malicious damage
- When the building is unusable due to required maintenance work. Where possible St Gabriel's Pre-School will endeavour to negotiate scheduled work to be carried out during times of closure.
- When an outbreak of illness within St Gabriel's Pre-School community requires closure in line with the HSE recommendations
- When illness levels within the staff body mean it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children as per the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 2016
- When an emergency occurs during the opening hours which requires the service to close early.
- In the event of any of the above incidents occurring which requires St Gabriel's Pre-School to close on a given day, The Manager will make

contact with the families of St Gabriel's Pre-School affected for that day in advance where practical. Where this is not practical, a member of the management will remain at the building until such time as it can be determined that all the affected families have been made aware of the situation.

- Parents will be informed about how they can find out when St Gabriel's Pre-School will reopen and other information according to the circumstances of the closure. This may include asking them to nominate a preferred contact number/email address, or holding a special meeting to keep parents informed.

Emergency closure after a session has started

- In the event of an emergency closure after the session has started, parents and carers will be informed by telephone that they are required to collect their child as soon as possible.
- If the closure is due to sickness, the children and all staff who are unaffected will remain on the premises until all children can be collected.
- If the closure is due to an emergency which requires the building to be evacuated, the children will be safely evacuated according to the current Fire Drill procedures. Contact information for all the children will be taken out of the building alongside the daily register.
- Once the building is evacuated, the emergency services will be called.
- The children will then be taken to a place of safety until such time as they can all be collected by parents/designated person. Parents will be contacted by the Manager. All staff will remain with the children during this time.

3.29 ENVIRONMENTAL CARE and RECYCLING

St Gabriel's Pre-School will conduct its activities and operations to reflect best environmental practice in order to control and reduce our direct impacts on the environment.

Statement of Intent

At St Gabriel's Pre-School we aim to:

- Reduce the amount of rubbish we send to landfill;
- Increase the amount of rubbish we recycle
- Reduce our energy usage

Procedure

- We will ensure that every main room in the service is provided with a highly visible and convenient recycling bin. This will be emptied daily into the main recycling bins
- We will ensure catering staff have ready access to recycling bins and are trained to dispose of food packaging appropriately
- We will purchase recycled office paper and stationery, closing the loop on the paper recycled by the service.
- Lights and taps will be turned off when not in use.

- We will use low energy light bulbs where possible.
- We will encourage the children to be environmentally friendly by providing activities that promote recycling

4 MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND FINANCE

4.1 THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

This group is a sub-group of the Board of Management of St.Gabriel's Primary School. It is responsible to the B.O.M. This group is representative of infant teachers, pre-school consultant, play-school practitioner, community representative, financial advisor, parents from the community, SNAs and the Principal of the school (providing a direct link with the B.O.M.) This group is responsible for the preschool from a governance perspective. Their role is one of direction and financial control. The committee is not involved in the everyday operations. This is delegated to the manager who carries out this role. The pre-school manager will be responsible for the day to day running of the project and for implementing the policies, procedures and curriculum. **The Manager will liaise with the management committee at a monthly meeting. Staff do not liaise directly with the committee**

4.2 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The project is bound by the Freedom of Information Act. It is the intention of the management committee to comply with the requisites of the 1999 Freedom of Information Act.

4.3 CODE OF WORK PRACTICE

Employees will work within the terms of their job descriptions as laid down by the management committee always showing professionalism.

4.4 FINANCIAL POLICY

The requirements of Pobal will be fulfilled in line with the 3 year income and expenditure projection. The management committee, in particular the treasurer, and our financial advisor will monitor all aspects of the financial areas of this project.

4.5 BACKGROUND / HISTORY OF THE SERVICE

The group that is now called the management committee was formed in October 2008, in response to requests from parents to have a pre-school based in the Primary school and in response to the waiting lists locally for pre-school places. And awareness of the lack of pre-schools in the Ballyfermot area. The group looked at various reports that have been compiled on the area. The Ballyfermot Partnership's updated area profile (march 2002), states that the number of pre-school children is on the increase and that Ballyfermot contains a higher proportion of young people

than are found in the national population. 45.7% of people cease their full-time education at primary level and the unemployment rate at 17.4% is double the national rate. There are 1,464 pre-school children in this area. Service levels need to be increased by 55% to meet local demands. 61% of children are on waiting lists for playgroup places.

Our group decided to try to address this inequality by proposing to establish a pre-school and after-school service in St. Gabriel's Primary School. It is felt that this proposed service will enable parents to avail of further education, training or local employment. We also hope that this project will provide opportunities for parents to train in childcare, thereby increasing the number of qualified childcare personnel in the Ballyfermot area. Furthermore Language development has frequently been identified as a problem for children starting school in our area. Attendance at pre-school is an opportunity to address this inequity for our children and to give them an equal chance to access the curriculum and succeed in the education system.

4.6 COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Through open communication and firm commitment, we are keen to develop a mutual level of respect that will consequently lead to positive relationships with children, staff and parents that will grow from strength to strength in the coming years.

The policy St Gabriels Pre-school is to encourage open and proactive communication within the organisation. In order to achieve this, we provide an open door policy whereby we would encourage each member of staff to communicate any issues or concerns that they may have. We welcome comments from parents and will address any issues that parents may wish to raise and we listen to children's opinions and interests when planning our activities and curriculum.

Communicating and Interacting with Children

At St Gabriels Pre-school we believe that effective adult-child interaction is essential to a successful early childhood service. Appropriate language must be used at all times when dealing with children. Adult conversations should never take place in front of children. What happened at the weekend is employee room talk not classroom talk. When talking with a child it is best to do so at child's eye level. It displays respect and in turn gains the respect of the child. Children should never be shouted at or screamed at in St Gabriels Pre-school.

Staff should encourage positive interactions between children. They should actively engage in interactions with children individually and in groups and support in the development of relationships between both children and staff and children together.

Staff at St Gabriels Pre-school look for natural openings in children's play and then join the child or children at their physical level.

Staff at St Gabriels Pre-school will ensure that:

- We offer a warm, welcoming and relaxed atmosphere
- Children are comfortable and appear relaxed
- Interactions between staff and children are positive
- There are opportunities for children to play in pairs, groups or individually.
- Siblings and children of different age groups mix during the day
- They use encouragement instead of praise- Rather than statements that evaluate or judge, staff make objective, specific comments that encourage children to expand their descriptive language and think about what they are doing.
- Whenever possible, they encourage children to solve problems for themselves. While adults could often solve the problem more easily by taking over, the goal is for children to develop their own problem-solving abilities through trial and error.
- They read and understand the Childcare policies and procedures we have developed

Communicating with Colleagues

Staff should inform the Manager if they are leaving the service premises during breaks or lunch time. This is vital for fire regulation procedures. Staff are required to sign in and out when entering or leaving the building.

All employees should be up to date on all the children attending the service especially when there is a change in the child's home background that may induce disruptive or abnormal behaviour, e.g. a new sibling, parents separation, etc.

Any information received from a parent regarding a child should be passed on to the Manager as soon as possible.

Communicating with the Manager

The Manager is there to support advise staff and help where necessary. The line of communication regarding all matters is to your manager. Any incidents that staff are concerned about should be brought to the attention of the Manager no matter how minor or small the concern may seem to be. Staff should not go directly to the Board of Management (management committee) If a staff member wishes to communicate with the Board (committee) they should bring their query or concern via the Manager

Professional Conduct

You are required to carry out your duties in a professional manner at all times. You are expected to devote your entire working time to your duties. You may be required to represent the service at various networks, conferences etc as part of your work.

All children, parents and staff must be treated with dignity and respect. You must maintain the highest standard of personal conduct and be positive, enthusiastic and cheerful. You must never raise your voice in an inappropriate manner to a child in your care or to another member of staff. Bad language, smoking and

inappropriate social conversations are not permitted on the premises.

Personal mobile phones must not be used including texting, photographing or recording of any sort and should be switched off during working times. The telephones in St Gabriels Pre-school are for business use only and should not be used for personal calls.

Staff may not use social networking sites to befriend parents whose children attend St Gabriels Pre-school or to exchange any information about the service or children/parents attending the service or colleagues working at St Gabriels Pre-school.

Any curriculum plans, working practices, policies and procedures or other documents that you may develop or work on during your employment with St Gabriels Pre-school will remain the property of St Gabriels Pre-school.

You may not remove from the organisation's premises at any time, without proper advance authorisation, any document or other property which belongs to St Gabriels Pre-school or contains or refers to any confidential information relating to the organisation, its customers, third parties or any organisation within St Gabriels Pre-school.

You will return to St Gabriels Pre-school, prior to termination of your employment, any documents or other organisation property that subsequently comes into your possession or procurement in the future.

Building Positive Relationships with Families

A strong connection between families and child care providers is essential for building a positive environment for young children. Miscommunication, or limited communication between adults, can lead to situations that adversely affect all of the parties involved. Staff **may not** discuss with parents any concerns about their child without first discussing the matter with the Manager. Any developmental or behavioural concerns should be looked at in accordance with the Child Development policy before making any judgements.

Children benefit most from healthy, reciprocal relationships between staff and families. Like most relationships, these require time to nurture mutual respect, cooperation, and comfortable communication

Relationships with parents must be professional, workers should avoid becoming overly involved with any one parent or family. Staff should be aware of boundaries between the working relationship and friendship with parents. Staff should not engage them in unnecessary conversations of a personal nature. Conversations should be restricted to greetings. Parents requesting information from students or junior members of staff should be directed to the senior staff member in the room. If parents have an issue/complaint they should be referred immediately to the Manager.

Staff may not use social networking sites to befriend parents whose children attend St Gabriels Pre-school or to exchange any information about the service

or children/parents attending the service or colleagues working at St Gabriels Pre-school.

4.7 INSURANCE

Appropriate insurance cover is arranged and will be provided in line with the present school policy.