



Clann Aire

Outdoor Policy

Policy Statement:

Clondrohid Community Crèche Pre-School & after School services recognise the importance of outdoor play and experience for all children. Outside play allows children to express themselves freely and unlike the indoor classroom, there aren't any space constraints meaning the children can jump, shout and explore to their hearts content.

Principle:

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Tusla (2018) Quality and Regulatory Framework.

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Outdoor play incorporates all four themes of Aistear, as children will naturally **Explore** and **Think** when playing. Outdoor play can positively benefit a child's **Well Being** as physical exercise can make a child as fit and healthy as they can be. **Communication** is improved as children interact with peers and they will begin to see themselves as capable learners as they assess and take risks, improving their sense **of Identity and Belonging**.

The children in our care are given the opportunity to develop holistically through the different areas and various materials to help them develop all their areas of development.

- ✓ **Covered Areas:** All our ELC and ECCE rooms have a covered area or access to a covered area off their room.
- ✓ **Bicycle and Tricycle Area:** Tarmac area with various bicycles and tricycles that are age appropriate.
- ✓ **Tarmac Area:** Wheelbarrows, buckets and spades, Stones/Pebbles, buggies, balls, push along cars etc.
- ✓ **Mud Kitchen:** Bark Mulch, Water, Real Life Objects (Pots, pans, kitchen utensils), Sink, Shelves, Stones/Pebbles, Grass, Stepping Stones etc. We supply outdoor waterproof suits to the children when they play in this area so they can experience water play, puddles, muck, messy play in a carefree manner. These suits are washed after use
- ✓ **Playground:** Climbing Frame, (always under supervision) Slide, Spring Animals, Train, Spinning Top, Soft Surface.
- ✓ **Playground (After-School):** Monkey Bars and Climbing Frame, (always under supervision). The covered area is shared if the weather is not suitable to allow the children out under the elements. A cleaning schedule is in place when groups are finished in their designated areas before any other pod have access to that area.

Risk Assessments are carried out daily before we enter our designated area, we always risk assess if we introduce a new outside activity.

Due to our adult /child ratios it would not be best practice to have a Practitioner on their own with a child within a room while the other children enjoy outside play. Therefore we ask all parents that if their child is unable to go outside during the day then maybe you can accommodate us by allowing your child to play in the covered area, because if one child cannot go outside then all the children are unable to, due to our adult child/ Ratios and we feel that this would be unfair on the other children within our care. We would strongly feel that every child should go outside at least once a day even if it is for a short period of time.

Please make sure that your child has adequate clothing for the weather conditions either.

Wintertime; Warm coat, hat, scarf, gloves

Summertime; Sun hat and light long sleeved top, sunscreen.

Our Practitioners will observe, take part & support the children's outdoor play. learning experiences are being constantly documented mostly through photographs and shared with their parents through class dojo or child paths. All these photographs form each child's learning journey while they attend our services.

Our outdoor areas can be accessed from each room, utilised and enjoyed by the children of all ages and abilities. We provide safe and secure outdoor care with opportunities for appropriate challenge to facilitate the children's age & ability to learn about risk.

Play pods have become the new normal for us now so, the outside areas are time tabled and rotated so that all the children get opportunities in all of the outdoor areas over the weeks, children will only interact within their own play pod.

A cleaning schedule is in place when groups are finished in their designated areas before any other pod have access to that area.

This policy links with our:

- Outings Policy
- Risk Management
- Health and Safety

This policy was adopted by Clondrohid Community Crèche Pre-School & after School Services.

Signed by: Hazrat Murray on behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Date: 02/09/2024

Review Date: September 2024