



THE MOUNT MERRION AFTERSCHOOL CENTRE (MMAC)

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Mount Merrion Afterschool Centre
Policies & Procedures
A Handbook for Parents

Table of contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
1 ENROLMENT POLICY	4
1.1 JOINING	4
1.2 BOOKING FEE.....	4
1.3 LEAVING	4
2. FEES	4
3. OPENING HOURS AND COLLECTIONS	5
3.1 PERSONS COLLECTING	5
3.2 CENTRE HOLIDAYS.....	5
3.3 COLLECTION ON TIME	5
3.4 COLLECTIONS FROM SCHOOL.....	5
3.5 LEAVING UNACCOMPANIED	6
3.6 DROPPING AND COLLECTING.....	6
3.7 ROLE OF AUTHORISED STAFF MEMBER(S).....	6
3.8 TRANSPORT	6
4 HEALTH AND SAFETY	7
4.1 ACCESS	7
4.2 FIRE DRILL.....	7
4.3 ACCIDENT PREVENTION	7
4.4 INSURANCE.....	7
4.5 CHILD WELFARE	7
5 STAFF	8
5.1 RECRUITMENT	8
5.2 TRAINING	8
IT IS OUR POLICY THAT STAFF WILL HAVE ACCESS TO ONGOING TRAINING COURSES TO REFRESH AND FURTHER DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS RELATED TO THEIR JOB. EXTERNAL TRAINING AND ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS OR SEMINARS IS ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED. FEEDBACK FROM SUCH COURSES IS ENCOURAGED AND SHARED AMONG THE TEAM.	8
5.3 STAFF ABSENCE	8
6 FOOD	8
7 MEDICAL	9
7.1 INFECTION CONTROL AND EXCLUSIONS.....	9
7.2 MEDICINE.....	13
8 BEHAVIOURAL	15
9 COMMUNICATION	15
9.1 CONTACT DETAILS	15
9.2 OPEN DOOR.....	16
9.3 NOTICEBOARD.....	16
9.4 NEWSLETTERS	16

9.5	COMPLAINTS	16
10	RECORD KEEPING.....	17
11	CLOTHING	17
12	HOMEWORK.....	17
13	EXCURSIONS	17
14	CONFIDENTIALITY	17
APPENDIX 1	SAFETY STATEMENT	19

Introduction

Our Centre

The Mount Merrion Afterschool Centre (MMAC) opened in September 2006. Our endeavour is to maintain a safe and happy environment for the children to spend their afternoons in after being collected from school in their own locality. We work in partnership with parents and children to ensure we are supporting them with a high quality service. These policies and procedures are available, and will be communicated to all parents, guardians and school age children.

Our Children

Our children have individual needs. During their time with us the children will be encouraged to “grow”, to be confident and independent learners. Their interaction with the other children helps them to develop their abilities. We provide the materials as the basis for this. They will take part in activities such as:

- A variety of sports & games, both in the sports hall and in the enclosed garden
- Arts and crafts, including painting, clay modeling,
- Computers
- Cooking
- Playing with toys, like mini-kitchen,lego,dolls,jigsaws, construction sets
- Reading
- Music and dancing
- Dressing up
- Multicultural projects, for example we are partners with Bunena Primary School in Uganda

Their homework is supervised also on their return from school. On completion of their homework, the emphasis is on allowing the children to relax and enjoy themselves with both structured and unstructured activities. Each month we have a number of themes which form the basis for the month’s activities. Examples of such themes which have been undertaken are healthy eating Vs unhealthy eating, pirates and mermaids, Halloween & safety, hibernation, Greek mythology, charity, our friends in Uganda.....

Our facilities

We are based in the Mount Merrion Community Centre on the lower ground floor. The facilities include the afterschool room, the sports hall and the enclosed garden area at the back of the community centre. There are also bathroom facilities suitable for young children next to the afterschool room.

1 Enrolment Policy

1.1 Joining

The centre operates a diversity policy and places are open to all children who are either attending Montessori school or primary school in the local area, subject to a place being available. All prospective parents and children are invited to meet the staff and have a full introduction to the centre. If they then wish to join the centre, they must complete and submit the application form together with the booking fee. Parents will then receive confirmation if a place is available in the centre. Allocation of places is on a first come, first served basis with siblings being given priority.

In January of each year, places are allocated for the following school year starting in September. Parents will be therefore asked to confirm if they plan to continue their child's placement in the centre for the following September. In order to avoid disappointing prospective parents who are on the waiting list, parents are therefore respectfully asked to confirm by January 31st. If plans change subsequently, the manager would appreciate being informed immediately.

1.2 Booking fee

The booking fee is refundable when the child leaves the centre, contingent on 2 months' notice being given to the centre manager in writing, subject to 1.3 below.

1.3 Leaving

Two month's notice in writing must be given by the 1st of the month two months prior to when your child is leaving.

The full month's fees are then due for those months. If notice is given partway during the month, it is deemed to be given from the 1st of the following month and the full month's fees are due for that following two months. For example, if notice of leaving is given on March 1st fees are due in full for March & April. If notice is given on March 15th, fees are due in full for March, April and May also. This policy regarding notice also applies where parents request a reduction in hours.

As we are closed during July and August, notice must be given by April 30th if your child is not returning in the following September.

If one full month's notice is not given in writing or if notice is not given by April 30th that your child is not returning in the following September, the booking fee will not be refunded.

2. Fees

Fees are due in advance on the 1st of every month from September to the following June (10 months). Fees are calculated taking into account all mid-term breaks, days off and costs on a ten month basis. Therefore there will be no discount if children are absent between September and June for any reason.

Parents are asked to pay on time. It is an undesirable use of staff time to chase up overdue payments; time which could be better spent working on planning activities for the children. There

is no reduction in fees or refund for absences or holidays. If a parent falls behind in payment of fees, the outstanding fee must be paid before the end of the month or the child's place in the centre cannot be guaranteed.

Fees are to be paid by standing order/money transfer or, if this is not possible, by cheque or cash. Cheques can be made out to the Mount Merrion Afterschool Centre.

Fees are reviewed and set at the start of each school year in September. Sometimes a review may be necessary midyear and if so, this will take place in January.

Sometimes a parent may need child care beyond what they have contracted. Space permitting, additional days may be arranged by contacting the centre manager. Fees are due for such days in advance or on the day in question.

3. Opening Hours and Collections

3.1 Persons collecting

As a priority you must inform us if your child is absent from school or is going on a playdate or, for whatever reason, you do not want us to collect your child on a day we normally do so.

Children may only be collected by the persons nominated on their application form. Parents must notify staff if a different person is authorized to collect a child and this person must be introduced to staff. Such persons must be 18 years of age or older. Parents are responsible for the care of their children on collection and must also supervise the behaviour of any other children they may bring into the centre. Please also be conscious that we operate within the community centre and no disruption should take place in the centre building or immediate grounds as a matter of respect to other people using the centre.

3.2 Centre Holidays

The centre is open from September 1st to June 30th during school term time. We are also closed for bank/public holidays. The centre calendar is circulated in September. During termtime, the centre is open from 12.45pm to 6pm daily. We follow the calendar of Scoil San Treasa.

3.3 Collection on time

Children must be collected by 6pm sharp. If a parent is unavoidably delayed, they are asked to immediately call the centre manager to confirm what time they will arrive. It is upsetting for children to be collected late and is also unfair to staff. Once children are collected parents are responsible for them.

3.4 Collections from School

Authorised staff collecting children from school only leave MMAC for collections when they have confirmed the names of all children to be collected on that day. The details of each collection are recorded. This includes the individual name of the child/young person(s), number of children being collected, name of Authorised Staff Member (and driver if applicable), time returning and/or any incidents. It is at the discretion of MMAC to facilitate collections from out-of-school activities. These will be agreed with parents on a case by case basis bearing in mind the needs of all children attending the service, availability of personnel to facilitate collections etc.

Children are supervised by the Authorised Staff Member from the time they are collected from the school.

3.5 Leaving Unaccompanied

Where children are permitted to leave the school aged childcare service unaccompanied it is an agreement with MMAC and parent. A risk assessment is undertaken by MMAC to ensure, in so far as practical, the child's health, safety and welfare. MMAC, at any stage, may re-examine and overrule this decision where it is in the best interest of the child. This will be clearly communicated with parents and the school aged child within an agreed timeframe.

3.6 Dropping and collecting

Upon enrolment MMAC requests that parents/guardians outline who they authorise to drop and collect their child to MMAC on their application form. All persons authorised to collect school age children must be known to staff. We may request identification from authorised collectors if they have not dropped or collected from the service previously. We will not release a child to anyone who is not authorised without prior consent from the parent. If an unauthorised person arrives to collect a child from MMAC, we will contact the parent straight away and we will keep the child in our care until the parent gives us consent to release the child and we have seen the identification of the person collecting.

When a parent is late, they MUST telephone MMAC to inform us, otherwise a late fee will be charged. Two staff will remain on the premises with the child until the parent/guardian arrives to collect the child.

Please refer to our separate Collections and Drop Off Policy for more details. **This policy has been updated for our new collections procedures during the Covid pandemic and you will find these details there.**

3.7 Role of Authorised Staff Member(s)

The role of the Authorised Staff Member(s) must be clearly understood and respected by the School and Parent. The Authorised Staff Member(s) are the named persons that undertake drop off and collection for MMAC. The managing behaviour policy will be adhered to by the Authorised Staff Member(s) at all times. No practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a school aged child whilst attending the service. The Authorised Staff Member(s) carries a charged and working mobile phone with network access, parent and guardian contact details and emergency contact details on each collection and drop off.

3.8 Transport

The Adult: Child ratio used when transporting in a vehicle will be minimum 1:4. The minimum ratio will be adhered to at all times. All children must wear a seatbelt and sit in a booster seat in the car. MMAC has appropriate supervision in place on the transport. This is based on regulatory requirement and needs of the children using the transport. Comprehensive insurance will be confirmed on all vehicles before they are used to transport any child on behalf of MMAC.

4 Health and Safety

4.1 Access

Access to the centre is allowed to the children and parents/approved personal contact persons as stipulated by parents, all current staff members and community centre staff when necessary. Access is denied to any parent we have been notified of on whom a current barring order exists or any parent who has limited or supervised access to their child.

4.2 Fire Drill

Staff and children are aware of the evacuation procedures (on display beside the door to the room) in the event of a fire. A fire drill is carried out each month to meet safety regulations. During the drill, the children are brought to the fire assembly point and the details of the drill are recorded by the staff. Our assembly points are in the garden and in the area beside the side entrance as per the Fire Assembly signage. The fire equipment is maintained on a regular basis by the Community Centre management in compliance with Health and Safety Regulations. There is an alarm bell in the afterschool room and 2 fire extinguishers. We have a nominated Fire Officer.

For more details please refer to our separate Fire Safety Policy.

4.3 Accident Prevention

The first aid box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and in a location known to all staff. Medical supplies in the first aid box are checked regularly to ensure that any out of date or missing items are replaced. This first aid box is to be taken on outings. At least one staff member who holds an up-to-date First Aid Certificate from an appropriate recognized body is on the premises at all times. The attendance book is completed each day with a record of each child present that day. Minor accidents are treated by staff and parents are informed of the event and the action taken. All accidents are recorded in the accident book. The centre is registered with a local medical centre in case of an accident or sudden illness. In the case of a serious accident or sudden illness, the staff will contact the medical centre and the child's parent(s) and or guardian(s). If the child has to go to hospital before the parent arrives, an adult known to the child will accompany him/her to hospital and stay until the parent arrives. The staff is all familiar with the Safety Statement. Child-teacher ratios are strictly observed.

Running is not permitted in the Afterschool room, but opportunity for free play is given in the sports hall and the garden. The external centre doors are kept closed at all times. The classroom door is also kept closed at all times; the exception being when a child is using the children's toilets at which time a member of staff is present at the door.

4.4 Insurance

The certificate of insurance is available for inspection on request. Appropriate cover is also in place for car insurance for school collections and excursions.

4.5 Child welfare

The Child Protection Guidelines of the Dept of Education will be adhered to. Please refer to our Child Protection Policy.

5 STAFF

5.1 Recruitment

Our staff is the most valuable resource upon which the quality of our school depends. All our staff is suitably qualified and experienced and must also really enjoy working with and is interested in children. Some of our staff are also parents themselves. The welfare, happiness and safety of the child comes first at all times and this commitment is reflected in the care your child will receive in the Afterschool. Therefore the process of employing staff is very important to us. The management of MMAC is committed to ensuring that recruitment procedures are fair, open and transparent and comply with the relevant employment legislation. Personal information is dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Staff employment procedures:-

- Advertise the position
- Interview by management
- Full job description given
- Minimum of two references checked thoroughly
- Position offered
- Garda vetting application completed
- Contract of employment given and signed

5.2 Training

It is our policy that staff will have access to ongoing training courses to refresh and further develop their skills related to their job. External training and attendance at conferences, workshops or seminars is encouraged and supported. Feedback from such courses is encouraged and shared among the team.

5.3 Staff Absence

In the event of staff illness, holiday leave or other absence, the appropriate arrangements will be made to ensure that adequate and competent staff are present at all times. The manager is available to ensure staff ratios are always covered in case of staff absence.

6 Food

We operate a healthy eating policy at the centre. Children are provided with a hot meal in the afternoon. These are provided by a specialist supplier and are designed for children tastes and are well balanced and nutritious. The sample menus are on the noticeboard outside the room and operate on a 3 week rota. In addition, the children may be offered a light snack if the staff think it is needed. Preschool children will be offered a snack on arrival from school and prior to going home of later in the afternoon. These again consist of healthy foods, typically fruit or cheese and crackers for example. Treats are kept to a minimum. Water is the only drink we offer.

Birthdays, End of term Parties, Special Occasions – we have a birthday party for each child to mark the big day. All the children will be offered a piece of birthday cake and a few small treats (eg ice-cream, popcorn, marshmallows). Juice may be offered on party days, sometimes.

Parents input and suggestions are welcomed. Any special dietary requirements will be catered to to the best of our ability.

7 Medical

This policy has been updated in line with current guidance the HSPC Infection Prevention and Control guidance for services providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the DCYA's Return to Work Safely Protocol and Tusla's Children Services Regulations Guidance Document for Early Years Services: COVID-19.

7.1 Infection Control and Exclusions

Our infection policy aims to prevent needless infection in any of the children in our care and so we aim to break the chain of infection as early as possible. This, combined with good hygiene standards and staff vigilance, is the key to good infection control. Parental vigilance and co-operation is essential for this to be achieved. Staff promote our hand washing policy which staff promote and model for children, on arrival from school, after using the toilet, before eating/preparing food, after wiping noses, waste disposal and mopping up spills.

Cleaning programme:

1. A cleaning programme for the environment is in place and is documented
2. Detergents and disinfectants are used correctly and are used according to the manufacturers' instructions.
3. Food utensils and tables are cleaned daily.
4. Chairs and hard toys in use are disinfected weekly and soft toys/cushion covers are washed fortnightly as a minimum.
5. Daily, weekly and monthly cleaning schedules are in place and records kept.
6. At least once a day, even in winter, the room is aired and the windows opened.
7. Regular handwashing routines are in place and disposable handtowels are used by all children and adults for drying their hands.

Procedure for exclusion from MMAC due to illness:

In consideration of the health and safety of ALL the children attending the centre, a child who has any of the following conditions will be excluded from the centre:

Vomiting (more than one time in last 48 hours)

Diarrhea (more than two times in last 48 hours)

High temperature (100.5F /38C or above)

Food poisoning/gastro-enteritis

Earache

Deep, hacking cough

Severe congestion

Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing

An unexplained rash

Complaints of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms (doctor to be contacted immediately by parent)

Contagious disease or infection

Head infestation (if a child comes to the centre with lice or nits in their scalp the parents will be called to come and take the child home as soon as possible in order to prevent it spreading to the other children)

- Any child is displaying symptoms such as a cough, fever or breathing difficulties should not attend the service (COVID-19)

WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL/ CHILDCARE?

Illness	Return Criteria
Chicken Pox	When scabs are dry
Conjunctivitis	No need to stay out*
Diarrhoea or Vomiting	48 hours after the last episode
Flu	5 days after start of illness
Glandular Fever	No need to stay out*
Hand, foot & mouth	No need to stay out*
Head Lice	No need to stay out*
Impetigo	When scabs are dry or 24 hours after starting antibiotics
Measles	4 days after rash appears
Mumps	5 days after swelling appears
Scabies	After first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after starting antibiotics
Slapped Cheek	No need to stay out*
Threadworms	No need to stay out*
Whooping Cough	5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days after start of illness

This information is based on the Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools guidance document.

*No need to stay out if child is well but school or childcare provider should be informed.

The above policy will apply where parents advise staff that their child has one of the above. Where a child develops symptoms while attending the service the procedures below will apply. Children must be taking antibiotics for 3 full days before returning to the centre.

Procedures where a child becomes ill while attending the service:

Staff may make a decision based on their assessment of a child’s health, in conjunction with the centre manager, to request parents to take their child home. If this is the case, parents are expected to respect this request and to take the child home within an hour of the request being made. The request is made in the best interests of the child and the other children attending. We will do our best to keep a sick child separate from well children. If all attempts at contacting a parent/guardian/carer or authorised person are unsuccessful, the next action may have to be to transfer the child to hospital by ambulance. Any child ill with fever, headache and vomiting will be sent home as soon as their parents/guardians can be contacted. Parents will be advised to contact their doctor immediately.

In cases of emergency, where staff deem it necessary, a child may be brought to the centre’s doctor. The centre is registered with Deerpark Medical Centre for this purpose.

A list of notifiable diseases is available from the HSE. In the case of notified diseases or if the illness spreads the manager will notify the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate by filling out the Notification of Incidents Form and the HSE Public Health Department.

COVID-19 Infection Control Guidelines in MMAC

- To prevent the spread of COVID-19 in MMAC, MMAC implements a “play pod” system.
- Play pods are organised in the afterschool rooms in MMAC, A record of play pods and their makeup is recorded and will be shared with the HSE and Public Health teams in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19.
- Pods, as much as practical, do not mix, share toys, play materials or equipment. Pods will eat separately. Outdoor time is separate for each play pod – the area for each pod will be marked out.
- We follow the 2m physical distancing recommendation by the National Public Health Emergency Team for adults.

- MMAC has 2 hand washing stations, and 2 number of hand sanitiser stations – all staff are encouraged to use and to follow our handwashing policy above.
- The National Public Health Emergency Team recommends the use of cloth face coverings in certain indoor settings, however it is not mandatory in MMAC. We have masks available as needed.
- MMAC’s cleaning schedule is maintained daily and is available for you to view if you so wish.

Dealing with Suspected COVID-19 Cases in MMAC

If a child or staff member in MMAC feels unwell and develops symptoms:

- If a child develops any symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever, or shortness of breath while in MMAC, a staff member will take the child to our isolation area.
 - Parent/guardians will be called and asked to collect their child as soon as possible.
 - A staff member will remain with the child at all times until parent/guardian arrives. Due to the nature of COVID-19 physical distance will be need to be retained as much as possible, and the staff member will need to wear a facemask and gloves.
- If a staff member develops symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever or shortness of breath while in the care facility ask them to go home without delay and contact their GP by telephone.
- They will be located 2 m away from others as much as possible.
 - They will be asked to avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin. .
 - They will be asked to wear a mask.
- If there is an emergency, staff will call an ambulance, and explain that the child or staff member is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Any rooms where children or staff need to be isolated is cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected once they leave.

What we do when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in MMAC

- We advise all individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 to contact their GP for further advice.
- MMAC will liaise with local Public Health staff of the HSE to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- MMAC will notify Tusla Early Years Inspectorate of any confirmed case of COVID-19 in the service.
- An assessment of each childcare setting where this may occur will be undertaken by HSE public health staff.
- Advice on the management of children and staff who came into contact with the case will based on this assessment.
- The HSE Public Health staff will also be in contact individually with anyone who has been in contact with the case to provide them with appropriate advice.
- Cleaning of MMAC will commence following HPSC advice and guidance.
- Symptomatic persons are advised to self-isolate and arrange to get tested for COVID-19.

- We will advise confirmed COVID-19 cases to continue to self-isolate at home for a minimum of 14 days and not return to MMAC until they are advised that it is safe to do so. Written confirmation from the person's GP that it is safe for them to return to MMAC will be required – this applies to both staff and children attending.
- Close contacts of a confirmed case will be advised to go home and restrict their movements for 14 days. MMAC will ask them to not come to MMAC for 14 days.

Child immunisations:

At MMAC we encourage and support parents/guardians to maintain their children's immunisation schedules. Legislation and regulatory requirements -

1. Regulation 10 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, requires a Policy on Infection Control that specifies the procedures to be followed in the service to protect staff members (paid and unpaid) and children attending the service from the transmission of infections.

2. Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child requires that the Infection Control Policy is implemented; staff know their roles and responsibilities and have received training on the policy.

3. Regulation 31: Notification of Incidents requires that where there is a diagnosis of a notifiable illness¹ as defined in the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981(SI No 390 of 1981) of any child attending the service or any staff members this must be notified to the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.

Other relevant requirements include:

4. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, Number 10 of 2005, sets out the general duties of all employers to manage the safety, health and welfare of their employees in any place of employment. [Guidelines on the Act and its requirements are available on the Health and Safety Authority's website: www.hsa.ie]

5. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 572 of 2013) set down the minimum requirements for the protection of workers from the health risks associated with biological agents in the workplace. [biological agents include bacteria and viruses] The duties include carrying out a risk assessment and putting in place the appropriate measures to protect employees' health and safety.

Parents/guardians are asked for a copy of their child's immunisation passport or record card. Parents/guardians are encouraged to ensure that their child is fully up to date with their immunisations and are required to inform the service if their child has not received any of the standard vaccinations.

Parents/guardians of children who are not immunised are made aware of the dangers of infectious diseases. Parents are encouraged to keep up to date with current vaccination requirements and to ensure that the service is kept informed and the child's record updated when required.

Parents/guardians are not required to have their children immunised to gain admission to the service but where a child's immunisation record is not up-to-date parents/guardians are encouraged to have their child vaccinated. If a child is not immunised, parents/guardians must be advised that their children will be excluded from the service during outbreaks of some vaccine preventable diseases such as Measles, Whooping Cough etc., even if their child is well. This is to protect their non-immunised child.

Infectious Diseases:

Outbreak of an infectious disease

In the event of an outbreak of infectious disease immediate contact will be made by the Manager of the Afterschool with the Department of Public Health to the Medical Officer of Health.

Although the child's doctor is legally responsible for reporting serious illness, a parent may also phone your local Department of Public Health if you become aware that a child or member of staff has a serious or unusual illness, (for example meningitis), or if a number of children or staff have the same symptoms suggesting an outbreak. Procedures where a child becomes ill while attending the service will also be followed in the first instance.

Exclusion periods for infectious illnesses :

Ill children and staff should only return when they have recovered.

This policy will be distributed to parents, school age children and staff at the start of each school year.

7.2 Medicine

MMAC is committed to supporting each child's health and well-being. MMAC will work in consultation with parents/guardians to ensure the safe storage and administration of medication if:

- a child is taking prescribed medication, with the prior written permission of their parent(s) or guardian(s)
- a child is taking non-prescribed medication, with the prior written permission of their parent(s) or guardian (s)
- a child becomes unwell while attending the setting and, only with the prior written permission of their parent(s) or guardian(s), is given pain relief or temperature reducing medication and the service will implement where necessary the services measures for managing cases where symptoms of Covid-19 are exhibited.

Staff training - Only staff that have the required competency (knowledge, skills and training) will administer prescription medication to children or support children with the administration of their own medication. Staff will be trained by an appropriate professional in the administration of medication e.g. at first aid training and by management.

If a parent gives the staff medicine to be administered to the child while they are attending the centre, the details and signature of the parent must be recorded in the centre's **Medicine book** beforehand. All medication must be in its original container, have an expiry date and the original directions from the doctor/pharmacist. Prescribed medication must clearly state child's name, dosage, date and expiry date. If your child is taking medication outside the centre, the parent is required to notify the staff as the child's behaviour may be affected by the medication or the underlying illness. We also ask that you make staff aware of any speech or hearing difficulties as this too can affect the child's behaviour.

Therefore, in case of illness, Calpol/Nurofen may be administered if staff deems it necessary - when their body temperature exceeds 38°C, (101°F) -per the dose schedule and instructions provided by the manufacturer. In such cases, staff will attempt to contact parents beforehand. The child's temperature will be recorded and monitored. Approval for such action by parents is given when the child joins the centre (all parents are provided with a medication form to consent to the administration of Anti - Pyretic Temperature Reducing Medication) – unless specific instructions otherwise are given to staff by the parents in writing. **Owing to the COVID-19 Pandemic, children with fevers should not attend MMAC, and if a child develops a fever whilst in our care we will follow the procedure for suspected COVID-19 cases as outlined in our Infection Control Policy and will only administer anti-febrile medications upon medical advice to do so.**

Medicines are stored in the medicine box (or in the fridge if required). Prescription medication is administered only if required. All medicines administered will be recorded in the centre's **Medicine Book**. All medicines are stored in the Medicine Box which is out of reach of the children and stored appropriately. MMAC maintains a supply of analgesic and anti-febrile medication (such as Calpol or Nurofen for Children) in liquid suspension form, in child-proof containers and with the appropriate measuring devices. The date the medication is opened is clearly labelled on the container. Medications with illegible labels or medications which are over 6 months old are discarded. The first aid box is also checked regularly and out of date items are discarded.

If a school aged child is carrying their own medication e.g. inhaler, this must be outlined on the child's record form. If a school aged child is carrying their own medication, the parent is responsible for ensuring that the medication is stored correctly and is in date. If a school aged child is capable of administering their own medication e.g. inhaler, this must be documented in writing by the child's parent/guardian. Clear instructions regarding the administration of the medication must be provided by the parent. A risk assessment will be completed if necessary.

If a school aged child is administering their own medication, they must be supervised by a staff member and the medication administration must be recorded by the staff member in the centre's **Medicine Book**. School aged children must notify staff if they are administering the medication e.g. inhaler.

An individual care plan is in place for each school aged child in the service who has an allergy/asthma/medical condition requiring emergency medication. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that emergency medication is supplied to the service/is always available to the child and replenished when necessary. If a school aged child requires emergency medication anaphylaxis/asthma emergency, the emergency services and the child's parents/guardians are notified as soon as possible.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff administering medicine must:

- ensure parents complete and sign an administration of medicine form check medicine clearly so it shows the child's name, prescribed dose, date and expiry date
- ensure medicines are in the original container and are stored appropriately.
- adhere to health and safety procedures for example, wash hands before and after administering medicine
- have a staff member present to witness the medicine being administered and counter-sign medicine record the time and dosage of medicine
- never give a child medication that has been prescribed to someone else.

It is expected that all children have had the relevant immunisations at the appropriate age. If this is not the case, please inform the staff.

Sunscreen will be applied when necessary. If parent wishes to supply their own sunscreen, it should be labelled with the child's name.

Emergency

If the staff deem an incident or the health of a child to be an emergency, the following procedures will be put into place:

Emergency Procedure:

- Your child and his/her surrounding environment will be made safe.
- If necessary the relevant authorities will be contacted. The doctor for the creche is Deerpark Medical Centre on Deerpark Road (01-2834110).

- The child's Parents/Guardians will be contacted.
- If this is not possible the relevant authorities and Manager of the Crèche will decide the procedure necessary for the safety and welfare of your child.
- Appropriate intervention will be administered. Appropriate intervention may mean taking your child to hospital for medical assistance.

8 Behavioural

The emphasis in the centre is on the positive promotion of self-discipline. Staff will strive to manage behaviour consistently so that children will have the security of knowing what to expect and can build up good patterns of self-discipline. Staff will be good role models by following rules and showing respect for each other and the children. The use of physical punishment is wholly inappropriate. Undesirable or inappropriate behaviour can be dealt with in a positive, caring and consistent way.

The following methods may be used for managing challenging behaviour and conflict in an age appropriate way –

- Teaching awareness of others
- Explanations for changing unwanted behaviours will be made clear
- Let the child understand that it is the behaviour and not the child that is the problem
- Deal calmly and quietly with the child
- Comfort and support where another child has been hurt in an incident
- Listening
- Offer alternatives and work on solutions and compromises together with the child

Sometimes where it is necessary to foster a better sense of behaviour awareness, “quiet time” may be used for a few minutes. This gives the child some time to think about what they have just done. Parents are welcome to approach the staff or manager in confidence to discuss their child's behaviour if they have a concern in this area.

Please advise us of any upheaval in your child's life (new baby, family bereavement etc) as such events may impact on the child's behaviour.

Parents will be informed of any incidents of challenging behaviour and it is our aim to work together with parents to guide the child towards more appropriate actions. If we feel that a child's behaviour is consistently unmanageable and is constantly disruptive, we will request a meeting with parents to discuss further measures. If, in the unfortunate situations that despite joint efforts with parents, a child persists in displaying inappropriate behaviour, we will give parents one month's notice to make alternative arrangements for the child's care.

Please also refer to our Managing Children's Behaviour Policy which explains our policy in more detail.

9 Communication

9.1 Contact Details

You have provided your contact details (telephone numbers and email addresses) when your child joined. These are used in cases of emergency or when staff deem it necessary to contact you. They are also used to keep you informed of what is happening at the centre via text and/or email. At all times they are kept confidential and will only be used for business related to the centre. Again, please remember to inform us of any change in the details.

9.2 Open Door

The centre operates an open door policy and parents are actively encouraged to call in during the day. This is subject to our policy in 4.1 regarding Access. Equally staff are happy to answer parents queries as long as they have time or alternatively, by request, to make an appointment to have a private discussion about their child.

9.3 Noticeboard

Our noticeboards are in the hallway outside the room and inside the afterschool and are always up to date with information about the goings on in the centre and with the children's art and craft work. Parents can spend an enjoyable few minutes browsing when they have time to spare.

9.4 Newsletters

We issue a newsletter on a regular basis which is designed to keep parents up to date with all our latest news, updates on policies, important reminders and coming events.

9.5 Complaints

If a parent has a concern, please approach a member of staff informally as soon as possible. Staff will endeavour to resolve the issue to the best of their ability. In the event that a parent is not satisfied with the response to a complaint, they are asked to escalate it to the centre manager. The centre manager will respond within 14 days.

There are certain times when a complaint cannot be handled informally. In these circumstances we direct parents/guardians/other individuals to make a formal complaint in writing. If you wish to make a formal complaint we request that you follow the below steps:

You can make a formal complaint by email to mountmerrionafterschoolcentre@gmail.com.

Please include the following information when making a formal complaint to the Manager:

- Name, address, a daytime telephone number and an email address if applicable
- Full details of the complaint including relevant dates and times
- Names of those involved (including staff)
- Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (apology, explanation etc.)
- Copies of any relevant documentation

The manager will endeavour to address the complaint and to respond within 30days.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

We will let the children know that they can also make a complaint if there is anything about afterschool that they are unhappy about. They can use our child friendly Complaints Form if they wish which are available on request from staff.

The overriding ethos of the centre is one of partnership between the centre manager, staff, children and parents. It is sincerely hoped that all parties will constructively work together to ensure the smooth running of the centre as a safe and happy place for the children. So if an issue arises, it is important that it is dealt with promptly by the parties involved. Every attempt will be made to resolve the issue as amicably as possible and to the parent and child's satisfaction.

Please refer to our separate Complaints Policy for more detailed information on our Complaints procedures.

10 Record Keeping

The personal details you have provided on the application form are kept on the premises with secure staff access only and such personal details will only be used for the purpose for which they were provided. Parents are requested to immediately notify us of any changes in these details. It is vital that we have up to date contact details for parents and well as up to date personal details for each child and are informed of any changes (eg medical history, dietary requirements).

11 Clothing

Please ensure that children's belongings are clearly labelled with their names. This includes lunch boxes, beakers, uniforms, coats. If you wish your child to get changed when they arrive from school, you can either give them the clothes to bring with them from school or you can leave a bag with the staff in the centre (clearly labelled with their name). We take reasonable care to preserve the child's clothing. For example, paint aprons are used for all messy art work. However we accept no responsibility for stains or damage to clothing. This applies also to toys or other personal belongings which a child brings in.

12 Homework

Homework is undertaken when the children arrive from school. Staff supervise the child while doing his/her homework and facilitate work such as reading, tables and spelling. Staff will notify parents if homework is unfinished or if there are any issues relating to the homework that they should be aware of. If parents have any specific requests regarding how the homework is undertaken, please talk to the staff and we will endeavour to fulfill it.

13 Excursions

Appropriate adult/child ratios compliant with our insurance policy are strictly observed to ensure adequate supervision during excursions. Prior to the excursion, the details of the destination, how to get there and the programme for the visit will be carefully planned and any potential risks or hazards considered. Parents have been requested on the application form to indicate consent to

- a) supervised visits to Deerpark
 - during Covid, the play pods will be maintained separately on visits to Deerpark. There will be no other outings during this time.
- b) supervised visits to places other than Deerpark which will be communicated to parents in advance

14 Confidentiality

The personal details you provide are used only for the purposes of the centre. Parents may request access to the records kept in the centre in relation to their own child. Confidential information is shared only with staff members who need the information to effectively perform their jobs. It is our policy not to discuss details of any child or family outside the school. In the event of a suspicion of child abuse, the centre manager will talk to the Gardai or Health Board with the

knowledge of the parent. Information held in relation to Child Protection concerns will be kept separately and securely and will be shared only on a need to know to basis.

Photographs taken of the children are for school use only eg art activities, our noticeboard.

Appendix 1 Safety statement

As per Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulations 1989 and 1993

I, Elaine, Leary, declare that I have responsibility for safety and health and have a commitment to securing a workplace that is as safe and healthy as possible, being an Afterschool centre operating within the wider Community Centre

Signed:

Elaine Leary

Elaine Leary

The manager and staff endeavour to:

- Ensure that all staff are fully trained and equipped to carry out the work required of them
- Ensure that all equipment is maintained in a safe working condition through regular inspection and maintenance
- Identify through regular audits, potential health and safety hazards which can be encountered during the course of our work, and strive to eliminate these hazards
- To provide adequate health and safety training whenever this is deemed necessary
- This safety statement is kept on the premises and is available for inspection
- Ensure that the centre meets its obligations under Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 and other relevant health and safety legislation and contractual obligations.