

TCHP PARENTS' HANDBOOK 2026

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Appendix 2

TCHP Parents' Charter: No Smartphones for Children until Secondary School

INTRODUCTION

THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE PRIMARY MISSION STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The ethos of The Children's House Primary (TCHP) is to enable each child to develop his or her full potential within the Montessori prepared environment.

This environment covers all aspects of their development: intellectual, social, emotional, moral, spiritual, cultural, creative, and physical.

In this task it recognises that the primary responsibility for the education of children lies with their parents/guardians.

We aim to provide a caring and personal atmosphere where children can develop a love of learning, inner discipline, and form well-rounded personalities.

We also believe in nurturing, educating and sharing with the parent body so that the children's emotional, social and academic experiences are maximised.

We believe in the importance of maintaining community and inclusion.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE PRIMARY ETHOS & CODE OF DISCIPLINE

We in The Children's House Primary:

- Cater to children from 2.8 – 12+ years of age
- Promote learning through the Montessori method of teaching in an environment that is safe, structured and stimulating.
- Help children to develop a positive attitude to education and a love of learning.
- Help to promote the development of inner discipline.
- Provide a harmonious atmosphere where children and adults learn to relate to each other in a spirit of friendship and tolerance.
- Provide an ambience where acceptance and respect for children, teachers, and parents /guardians is the norm.
- Accept and value the individuality and uniqueness of each child and family.
- Help children to develop positive self-esteem.
- Provide specially prepared Montessori environments where children can realise their full potential.
- Establish boundaries within which children can learn and interact with ease c.f. Bullying Policy, School Policy, Behaviour Code for Children and Class Rules.

- Expect an acceptable standard of behaviour from children, parents and guardians towards staff and each other.
- Take action, if and when necessary, to deal with any disciplinary or behaviour problems in consultation with child/ren, parents, guardians, teachers, staff and when necessary, the Chairman and Board of the School.
- Ensure that children have a relatively disruption-free environment where learning and personal development may take place.
- Accept children of many nationalities and creeds while maintaining the Catholic ethos of the school.
- Provide a safe and secure outdoor and indoor environment.
- The Children's House Primary has an intake policy that is committed to educating pupils of all abilities.
- The Learning Support policy refers specifically to pupils experiencing low achievement, learning difficulties, behavioural or emotional difficulties. The policy outlines how learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated by implementing appropriate whole-school academic and social development programmes.
- The school regrets however, that due to limited resources, in some circumstances, it cannot provide optimum support for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Case by case situations will be considered and within the limits of our resources, inclusivity is school policy. The final decision on attendance rests with the Board of TCHP.

CHILDCARE POLICIES

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Admissions procedures

- Each child must be at least 2 years and 8 months and toilet trained when starting at the school.
- Pre-admission, parents/guardians are encouraged to make an appointment with the school for a visit to allow the child to become familiar with the school, teachers and other children.
- Parents/guardians seeking to secure a place for their child must complete an enrolment form.
- A completed enrolment form must be lodged with the school prior to the child attending the school.
- When completing the form it is important to give all the relevant information particular to your child – including current school and any diagnostic reports (educational or medical) which relate to development and/or additional needs.
- Children with medical conditions are required to provide medical reports if requested.
- The completed registration forms are dealt with by the school in the most confidential way possible.
- Children coming from other schools need to have written reports.

- We will ask permission to contact previous schools to gather information.
- When children come from a non-Montessori setting, they have a one term trial period in their new class to ensure this school suits their needs.

The criteria for deciding on acceptance or refusal of applications, where the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, is set down below in an open, transparent and fair manner:

- The applicant has a brother/sister currently in the school.
- The applicant's parent/guardian/sibling is a past pupil.
- All other applicants on a first come – first served basis.

Payment of Fees (see Attendance Policy)

- Fees are payable in advance of each term.
- One term's notice is required when a child is leaving the school. In the event of an unexpected withdrawal a term's fees is required in lieu.
- A deposit of €500 is payable prior to the end of the Summer Term to guarantee a place for a current pupil for the following academic year, this will be deducted from the second term's fees.
- For children on the ECCE scheme a deposit of €250 is required to guarantee a place in the next school year this will be deducted from the first term's fees if the child takes up a place at TCHP.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY (see extended Encouraging Positive Behaviour Policy)

It is the policy of TCHP to follow the regulations set out under the Childcare (Pre-school Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No 2) (Amendment Regulations 2006) on behaviour management without exception.

"A person carrying on a School service shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a School child attending the service".

"A person carrying on a School service shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of any child".

"A person carrying on a School service shall ensure that written policies and procedures are in place to deal with and manage a child's challenging behaviour and to assist the child to manage his or her behaviour as appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child".

The Management and Staff of TCHP believe that children should be encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential in a suitably planned environment, where they know what is expected of them, and where clear limits are set, appropriate to their age and stage of development and any special needs they may have.

Procedures

- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will always be acknowledged so as to promote the growth of self-esteem and self-discipline.
- The school will strive to manage behaviour consistently in order that children have the security of knowing what to expect and can build up good patterns of self-discipline.
- Teachers and staff members working in the school must be good role models by following codes of behaviour and showing respect for each other and the children.
- Rules that apply to children and adults in the school will be discussed and agreed. These rules will be made known to all adults, staff, parents/guardians and children.
- It is recognised that the key to behaviour management is good observation skills in the adults and establishment of clear and consistent boundaries.
- Physical punishment and humiliation are unacceptable forms of behavioural management and will never be used by the teachers/staff in TCHP.
- It is our policy to work in close collaboration with parents/guardians. We recognise and value the role of parents/guardians in managing children's behaviour.
- TCHP reserves the right to ask a parent/guardian to remove their child from the school if the child's behaviour is consistently affecting the other children in the class (See Encouraging Positive Behaviour Policy).

Our code of behaviour is based on an ethos of:

- Listening to children

- Valuing and respecting children as individuals
- Involving children in decision making, as appropriate
- Encouraging and praising children when needed.
- Encouraging appropriate behaviour and discouraging inappropriate behaviour.

Code of behaviour

- While physical contact is a valid way of comforting and reassuring a child. It is not encouraged and it should only be in response to the need of the child, not the adult.
- Teachers/staff/adults should never physically punish or verbally abuse a child.
- Teachers/staff/adults should never tell jokes of an inappropriate nature in front of a child.
- Teachers/staff/adults should not develop favouritism or become over involved with any one child.
- All teachers/staff/adults must respect the personal space, safety and privacy of each child.
- Physical/verbal disrespect shown to adults by children or by one adult to another are not considered acceptable forms of behaviour.

BULLYING POLICY

- See separate policy The Children's House Primary Anti-Bullying Policy

COLLECTING CHILDREN POLICY

- It is the policy of TCHP that only the person(s) named on the registration form may collect the child.
- The parent/guardian must notify the teachers if an alternative named person is to collect the child. Please email school in advance (before 12pm if possible) if there is a change in collection arrangements. No child will be released to anyone unknown to the staff without prior arrangements.
- Children must be always dropped off and collected on time. We ask that drop offs and collections are prompt for the child's benefit. Lateness can cause a lot of stress and disruption to the child and their classmates.
- Parents/guardians should contact the school immediately if they know they will be late collecting their child.
- If parents/guardians have not notified the school and are late arriving to collect the child the school will try to contact the parent/guardian. In the event of being unable to contact the parent/guardian, the teacher will contact the other named persons to collect the child.
- 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 the TUSLA social work child protection team.
- Children are not to use the gate / door keypads or to be made familiar with the codes.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

TCHP is open to any suggestions, recommendations, comments or complaints made by parents/guardians in relation to the school.

Any complaints made about the school will be dealt with in an open and impartial manner. The following procedures will be followed:

Complaints procedure

- Complaints should be made firstly to the Senior Directress in each class. If it is felt the concern is unresolved a complaint is made to the Principal. If there is still a concern a complaint is made to a member of The Board of Directors.
- Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as amicably as possible and mediation will be offered.
- If agreement cannot be reached the parent/guardian may make a formal complaint in writing to the person designated to receive complaints.
- The complaint is recorded.
- If the complaint is made against a member of staff, the staff member must be informed that a formal complaint has been made and be given full details.
- If a complaint against a staff member involves a child protection concern a second separate reporting procedure will be followed in line with our child protection procedures.
- The parent/guardian is sent an acknowledgement that the complaint has been received and told how it will be dealt with, by whom, and within what time limit. The person investigating the formal complaint will keep dated records summarising what has been said and done by those involved.
- If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the outcome he or she may make a written request to go to the third stage of the procedure, which involves an independent mediator or panel.
- This panel will not include any person directly involved in the complaint or related to the complainant or staff member.
- The panel, having considered all the relevant material and talked with all those concerned, will reach a decision and if necessary, make recommendations.
- The complainant and other people involved will be informed of the outcome.
- A record of the steps taken will be kept at The Children's House Primary for 2 years.

This school has a Child Friendly Complaints Procedure Policy that allows children to make a complaint themselves.

CURRICULUM POLICY (see extended Learning Support Policy and school website for further details)

TCHP is committed to developing a curriculum that creates a child centred environment, which empowers all children to actively pursue their own learning. This process will be facilitated by adults who will provide appropriate, timely, balanced intervention as well as support, continuity and progression to encourage positive attitudes towards learning.

TCHP recognises that the establishment of daily routines is essential for all children in our care. We strive to provide a programme of activities, which encourage the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, creative and language development of the children who attend the school.

At TCHP we ensure the children are well prepared for 'Life after Montessori' by making certain that they leave the school having covered all aspects of the Irish Primary School Curriculum.

Guidelines – Our Curriculum:

- Based on the Montessori method using materials designed for holistic development that invite the children to engage in learning activities of their own individual choice.
- Is based on clearly defined aims and objectives.
- Is open to ideas on how to promote and meet the growing needs of children.
- Recognises that children are learning all the time, and that children learn best when they are actively involved and interested.
- Includes a variety of activities that provide for the physical and holistic development of the children.
- Includes stimulating sensory experiences (touch, taste, sight, sound, and smell) appropriate to the child's level of development.
- Encourages children to think for themselves, helping them to make their own decisions and find their own answers to questions.
- Provides an atmosphere that offers the children suitable challenges and stimulates problem solving.
- Encourages feelings of safety, trust and emotional security to the children in our care.
- Helps children to develop self-esteem by giving them the opportunity to be actively involved in their own learning.
- Encourages at all times, sociability, friendship and co-operation with others, through the provision of co-operative play and the opportunity for children to mix with siblings, same-age peers, younger and older children.
- Aims to match all tasks with each child's level of ability and attention span.
- A range of activities is chosen to reflect various differences in cultures, gender and ability.
- We regularly check our books, posters and other materials to ensure that they challenge stereotyping and that they positively and accurately reflect cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Staff have regular meetings to plan and review activities within each area of our facility and to consider the needs of individual children.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

It is our policy to respect the rights and individuality of all children and adults involved in our school and to promote positive attitudes to differences of culture, race, gender, language and financial circumstances; to children with differing needs and to minority groups.

Equal Opportunities Procedures

- Recruitment and employment of staff will comply with all relevant equality legislation (see recruitment guidelines).
- The school is open to all families in the community.
- A range of activities is chosen to reflect various differences in cultures, gender and ability.
- We regularly check our books, posters and other materials to ensure that they challenge stereotyping and that they positively and accurately reflect cultural and racial diversity and differences in ability.
- We will challenge any statements or behaviour by anyone in the school, which are racist, or sexist or which reinforce stereotypes or which are in any other way derogatory to an individual.
- We ask families to share their own cultures, religions and traditions with our staff so that all values are respected and celebrated in the school.

Our school will comply with all the relevant legislation including Equal Status Act (2000), Employment equality Act (2004), The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992).

INCLUSION, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

See extended policy.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT POLICY

It is the policy TCHP to promote the active participation of parents/guardians as the first educators of their children. We wish to work with parents/guardians to maximise your child's developmental and educational growth.

Procedures to encourage parental/guardian involvement:

- There are two parent/guardian education evenings during the year – we highly recommend and expect that parents attend these.
- Regular exchange of information with parents/guardians regarding their child's development.
- Staff members are available to discuss any concerns a parent/guardian may have regarding their child and the school. Parents/guardians are welcome to make an appointment through the school office to meet teachers.
- If parents are separated, we may contact both parents to discuss the development of their child.

- We ask parents to inform teachers in the morning of any significant happenings such as a poor night's sleep, tiredness, medication being taken such as antibiotics, Calpol, etc
- The primary means of communication with parents is email. Parents can expect to be emailed several times a month by the school, if they have not received an email for a while they should check their spam/junk folders and notify the school. Communication with parents is also carried out through handouts, letters and notice boards. Parents are asked to check notice boards regularly.
- TCHP welcomes comments and feedback from parents.
- Each class has two 'Class Parents' who liaise with the parents/guardians in their respective classes about school events.

RELIGION POLICY

The ethos of The Children's House Primary (TCHP) is Catholic but all denominations are welcome and do attend.

The children follow the Dublin Diocesan Grow in Love programme and have individual lessons in preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation if chosen.

All children participate in moral and spiritual formation and varying belief systems are acknowledged, explored and discussed.

To support the Religion Programme the following take place:

3-6 Class

- A daily prayer.
- Discussions about morality.
- When relevant celebrations of saints such as St.Patrick's Day, St. Brigid's Day, etc
- Celebration of Christmas through a Nativity Play and arts and crafts.
- Celebration of Easter with arts and crafts.

6-9 and 9-12 Class

- A prayer before lunch may take place.
- A weekly religion class.
- Discussions about morality
- Celebrations of saints such as St.Patrick and St.Brigid.
- Celebration of Christmas through a Nativity play, or other Christmas related themes and arts and crafts.
- Celebration of Easter with arts and crafts
- Preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation if chosen.
- Exploration and discussions regarding religions and belief systems.
- If parents do not wish their children to participate in the religious classes they may discuss it with their class teacher/principal and an alternative arrangement may be agreed upon/put in place.

SETTLING IN POLICY

It is the policy of this school that every effort is made to ensure that the settling in period is as easy and pleasant as possible for the children and their parents/guardians.

Settling in procedures

- Each parent/guardian is encouraged to drop in to the school with their child before the child's start date, so that the child can become familiar with the other children, staff and the day to day running of the school.
- On the first day the parents/guardians are encouraged to say a prompt farewell to their child.
- It is recommended that parents do not stay for too long on any morning, research shows children feel more secure in their new environment if parents/guardians leave the premises.
- No child will be pressurised to take part in any activity during the settling in period.
- To help staff build a relationship with the child, staff will discuss the child's interests with parents, as well as their likes, dislikes.
- Parents will be given an account of the child's settling-in progress at collection time.
- Parents are welcome to telephone the school at any time during the morning if needed but rest assured that staff will phone if there are any concerns or if there is any prolonged distress.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

ATTENDANCE POLICY

ARRIVAL:	8.30am	Early Morning Supervision
	9.00am.	If children need to arrive between 8.45 – 9am for personal reasons please contact your Directress.
DEPARTURE:	12.30pm	Junior Class
	3pm	Extended Day
	3pm	Senior Class
	1.30pm	Extra lunchtime Supervision
	3.50pm	Extra curricular activities – Yoga, Drama etc
	5pm	After school

1. We have been asked by our insurers to bring to the notice of parents that children should be delivered to the school and collected in line with the hours specified above. Parents' co-operation with regard to delivery of children and punctual collection after school is therefore essential.
2. Parents are requested to see their children into the school and ensure that the front door and gate are closed at all times. There are automatic springs on the door and gate, but it is still necessary to check. Children are not to use the gate code for security reasons.
3. Unless there is an emergency, parents are asked not to make telephone calls to the Directresses during school hours. Telephone calls may be made through to the Secretary from 8.30 – 1.30-pm each day.
4. Parents may make an appointment to meet with the Directresses before or after school hours.
5. It is a Montessori principle that parents should visit the school as observers. This may be arranged only by prior appointment with the Directresses in order to avoid visits overlapping. Parents meetings are held once a year.
6. Please notify the school :
 - a. If your child is going home with someone other than the regular school run.
 - b. If your child is sick or has an infectious/contagious disease.
 - c. If you are running late for collection.
7. Children move to Senior Class at the discretion of Directresses. Various factors are taken into consideration: number of vacancies, emotional, social, physical and academic readiness.
8. Senior Class lunch and playtime: 12.30pm – 1.30pm
9. Early Morning and Lunchtime supervision – there is an option of early morning (8.30 – 9am) and lunchtime supervision (12.30 – 1pm or 12.30 – 1.30pm). This must be booked and paid for in advance.
10. Children are asked to bring in school runners or slippers to change into for indoor wear. Their shoes, coats and bags must be clearly labelled. Due to limited space we ask that bags are slightly bigger than A4 size and not large back packs. Drawstring or cotton bags are recommended for all ages up to 9.
11. It is necessary that all pupils' coats are clearly marked with their name for playtime.
12. Please do not park in front of our neighbour's gate as it is in constant use and this has caused difficulties in the past.
13. Fees are payable in advance of each term.
14. One term's notice is required when a child is leaving the school. In the event of an unexpected withdrawal a term's fees is required in lieu.
15. A deposit of €500 is required in the final term of each year to secure a place for the following academic year. The deposit will be deducted from the second term's fees in the following academic year. For children on the ECCE scheme a deposit of €250 is required to guarantee a place in the next school year this will be deducted from the first term's fees if the child takes up a place at TCHP.
16. The school reserves the right of admission and may, depending of the circumstances, require withdrawal of a child from the school.
17. Medication will be administered in accordance with the school medication policy.
18. Your child attends the school on condition of your acceptance of the above conditions.

Parents/guardians are asked to sign at the beginning of their time in TCHP that they have read and agree with the above Attendance Policy.

Communication Policy for Incoming Parents

Aims

Establishing trust is an ongoing process using clear communication, showing empathy, we aim to build a nurturing, inclusive community where every family feels welcomed and valued.

We aim to seek feedback to ensure non-English speaking families feel heard and supported.

We strive to create an environment that fosters open communication.

Our goal at TCHP is to create a welcoming, inclusive environment that helps all families feel connected and supported. Clear communication, cultural sensitivity and a consistent ongoing engagement are important in building strong relationships with every family in our care.

We engage in open communication encouraging parents to communicate with teachers and staff to ensure their child's needs are understood and addressed.

We create an inclusive environment fostering an inclusive school culture that respects and values the linguistic and cultural diversity of all students.

We encourage parents to participate in their child's education by taking part in classroom visits, observation and Parent Education.

These strategies help parents feel welcomed and supported in their child's educational journey.

Procedure

When families join our school, we inform them about all the community-based events we provide such as An International Feast Night to celebrate the many cultures in our school, coffee mornings and parent-led out of school activities.

We encourage parental participation in all our celebrations - Christmas, Hallowe'en and Sports Day.

We invite parents to share their cultural events with us if they wish so we can share these with the children and other families.

We have two Parent education evenings a year and parents are asked to attend these, so as to learn about the Montessori approach, child development, Internet Safety, etc and so as to help them become part of TCHP's community.

When families arrive from other countries we seek feedback to ensure non-English and English speaking families feel heard and supported.

After the initial settling in period of two weeks we arrange a meeting to ensure that the new parents understand that there is open communication.

At that meeting:

- We check the family is happy with the transition.
- Receive feedback regarding how happy the child is feeling.
- Give feedback regarding how they are settling in.
- Check that the parents agree with the class/year the child is in and state it in writing (as per the Application Form).
- Understand the homework expectation (Senior Class).
- Do the parents have any adaptation questions, etc.
- We let them know at the meeting that we will check in with them again at the end of term.

We also explain all the other forms of communication we have within the school. These are:

- Parent Teacher Meetings: These are organised on an annual basis. Additional meetings and incidental meetings can be facilitated throughout the year.
- Parent/guardian requested meeting: The procedures to follow, if parents/guardians need to meet with the class teacher or Principal, are laid out in the Parents' Handbook.
- Teacher requested meetings: The parent/guardian will be contacted by email or at drop off/pick up.
- School Report: A written report is issued for each child in June from Senior Infants upwards.
- School communication email: We send out weekly newsletters and an end-of-term newsletter.
- School Brochure: This is available to all parents, prospective parents and interested parents.
- School Website and Instagram: This informs parents and prospective parents of ethos of the school. It is used to communicate upcoming events in school. Instagram gives updates on school events and activities.
- Open Days: arrangements for enrolment, class open days, displays etc. will be communicated through notes home, website, local media, text, email and/or other relevant means.
- Noticeboard at the school entrance: this is to be used as a means of communicating with parents e.g. displaying notes, competitions and upcoming events.
- Each class has a class WhatsApp group, which is run by the Class Parents.
- Phone call or email : Parents may ring the office if they wish to contact the school (8:30 – 1:30) or send an email.

Guest speakers

The Principal and the staff are responsible for selecting and inviting guest speakers to address the parents of the school. Suggestions by parents are always welcome.

FEE PAYMENT POLICY

- Fees are invoiced twice a year in late August and early February. Payment should be made as close to the date of invoice as possible or by standing order over an 8 month period commencing in September of any year.
- The first payment (full or partial) must be made by the October half term in the first fee period and by Easter in the second fee period.
- Fees must be paid even when the child is absent due to illness and holidays. TCHP parents can opt to take out fee insurance cover through the TCHP office.
- Fees are reviewed annually.
- Parents/guardians wishing to terminate their place in TCHP should give one term's notice in writing or pay one term's fees in lieu of notice.
- TCHP reserves the right to request parent/guardians to withdraw their child from the school if fees are unpaid.
- Parents/guardians are also required to sign the Attendance Policy when their children commence attendance at TCHP.

Children in TCHP who are eligible may take part of the ECCE and the NCS Schemes. The ECCE scheme is 'Two free Pre-School Years in Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE Scheme) under the Department for Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).'

Children who are eligible for the ECCE scheme are entitled to the following:

- 38 Week Scheme.
- Free pre-school provision of 3 hours per day (9-12 noon), 5 days a week over a 38 week period (term time).
- Parents/guardians have the option to pay a top-up 'excess time charge' for the remaining hours of the day.
- Parents/guardians are required to sign a contract in relation to the ECCE scheme when they enrol their child.

RECORD KEEPING POLICY

Records as required by the Child Care Act (1991) (Early Years Services) Regulations (2016) will be maintained and made available to parents/guardians and any relevant persons, to ensure the health, safety and development of all children attending the school.

Procedures

- All records in line with the Child Care Act (1991) (Early Years Services) Regulations (2016) are kept up to date and accurate at all times.
- All confidential records are stored securely when not in use.

- Parent/guardians will be asked to co-sign the medical administration form and accident report form, when necessary. No medication is administered to children without parental/guardian permission.
- All records written are impartial and factual.
- Records in relation to Child Protection concerns are stored in a separate locked filing cabinet and are shared only on a need-to-know basis in line with our Confidentiality Policy.
- Details of staff members are kept and treated confidentially.
- Details of the operation of the school are outlined in the Parents' Handbook.
- Details of accidents are recorded and kept securely and confidentially.
- A copy of the fire procedure is contained in the policy booklet.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

ABSENCE COVER

TCHP ensures that there is always staff to cover the number of children present. We have relief staff to cover absences. We can also request that part-time teachers work extra hours.

ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT POLICY (SEE EXTENDED SAFETY STATEMENT)

(In compliance with section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005)

It is the policy of TCHP to promote the health, well-being and personal safety of all children and adults involved in our school, through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety procedures.

Accident and Incident Prevention

- A Safety Statement has been prepared and is reviewed on a regular basis. All new staff and volunteers must be familiar with the Safety Statement
- Care is taken to ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected.
- Children are not allowed to operate the keypads and should not be made familiar with the code.
- Staff must know which children are present at any one time.
- Furniture and equipment are laid out to minimise safety risks.
- Only suitable and age appropriate objects are available to children.

Accident and Incident Procedures

- The First Aid Box is always fully equipped, easily identifiable and in a location which is known to all adults.
- At least one member of staff who holds an up to date First Aid Certificate is on the premises at all times.
- Records are accessible to all relevant staff in case of an emergency.

- Minor accidents will be treated in the school and parents/guardians will be advised of the injury and the action taken, when the child is collected.
- All accidents even minor ones, are recorded on the Accident and Incident Forms. Parents are asked to sign these if there is an incident involving their child.
- In the case of serious accident or sudden illness at staff member will phone the ambulance and the child's parent/guardian.
- If the child has to go to hospital before the parent/guardian arrives, an adult known to the child must accompany him/her to hospital in the ambulance and stay until the parent/guardian arrives (see consent on Permanent Student Record).
- The child's record card must be brought for reference.
- All accidents must be reported to the insurance company.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES POLICY

- Parents/guardians must give written consent for any medication (including Calpol, etc) to be administered at school. Parents should request an Administration of Medicines Consent Form and make sure they are familiar with our Administration of Medicines Policy which will be made available to them.
- If children have taken Calpol or similar before coming to school, please inform the teacher.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (see extended policy)

It is the policy of TCHP to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with teachers and staff in our school. We do this by:

- Ensuring that our teachers avail of training on Child Protection provided by the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Child Care Committee.
- Giving parents/guardians, children and teachers information about what we do and what they can expect from us.
- Making sure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised in accordance with our Recruitment Policies and Procedures.
- Applying for Garda Vetting for all staff, volunteers, students and any adults that may come in contact with children in our school.
- Letting parents/guardians know how to voice their concerns or complain if needed.
- Having reporting procedures and a named designated person in place to deal with Child Protection Concerns.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are informed of the Reporting Procedures.
- Having procedures on actions to take if an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Having an updated Child Safeguarding Statement.

Child Protection Reporting Procedure

- The Designated Person to deal with Child Protection concerns in this school is Micaela Kuh.
- Should this person be absent, for whatever reason the deputy Designated Person is Rhona Reddie.

- Should a child make a disclosure to a staff member or volunteer we have clear guidelines as to how that staff member or volunteer would respond.
- Any member of staff or volunteer who has a Child Protection concern will discuss their concerns with the Designated Person.
- The Designated Person is responsible for the recording of any such concerns.
- The Designated Person may consult with the HSE/TUSLA regarding a possible referral as well as making a referral.
- In the case of emergency or an out-of-hours situation the Garda should be contacted and those numbers are easily available to all staff and volunteers.
- It is our policy to inform parents/guardians about any Child Protection concerns, unless doing so would put the child at further risk.
- The appropriate verbal/written communication regarding Child Protection concerns will be made to the HSE/TUSLA without delay.

Staff Allegations Policy & Procedures

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will implement two separate procedures:

- Our reporting procedure in respect of the child.
- A separate procedure with a separate designated person in respect of the staff member/volunteer.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

- It is our policy to keep confidential all personal information about the children, families, staff and volunteers involved in our school.
- Personal information about families in relation to Child Protection concerns will be shared on a need to know basis in line with our Child Protection Policy.

Confidentiality procedures

- Parents/guardians will have access to records kept in the school, but only in relation to their own child.
- All new staff and volunteers will be informed of our confidentiality policy and procedures as part of their induction programme.
- Information held in the school in relation to Child Protection Concerns will be stored in a separate locked drawer and will be shared only on a need to know basis in line with our Child Protection Policy and with Data Protection Legislation.
- Staff will not discuss individual children, other than for purposes of curriculum planning/group management, with people other than the parents/guardians of that child, the teachers that deal with that child and the Principal.
- Information given by parents/guardians to staff of the service will not be passed on to other adults without permission, unless there is a Child Protection concern then the Designated Person will be informed.

- Any anxieties/evidence relating to a child's personal safety will be kept in a confidential file and will not be shared except with the staff of the school and The TCHP Board if needed by the school.
- Students on courses observing in the service will be advised of our confidentiality policy and will be required to respect it.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personal decisions.
- All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the school which is to the safety and well-being of the child.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS POLICY

It is the policy of our school, that the material available is suitable, safe and age appropriate, while providing new challenges and experiences for the developmental needs of each child.

Procedures

- All materials must be kept clean and hygienic at all times.
- Staff members are responsible for the materials in their classrooms, by ensuring that all materials are clean, safe and well maintained at all times.
- Materials are checked regularly for broken parts.
- All materials purchased are based on the children's developmental needs and interests.
- All staff must have a thorough understanding of the developmental benefits children gain from the materials.
- All materials must be age appropriate and suitable to the different stages of a child's development.
- The layout of each classroom must ensure that the material is accessible to the children, to promote choice and a sense of independence.
- Parents/guardians are asked to return any materials that children inadvertently bring home.

FIRE SAFETY POLICY (see extended Fire Safety Policy)

- The school has all the relevant fire safety equipment recommended in the Department of the Environment's Fire Safety in Schools booklet including fire extinguishers and smoke alarms.
- The fire safety equipment is checked as per regulations.
- Fire drill instructions are posted in each room.
- The assembly point is clearly marked.
- A fire drill is carried out with the staff and children every month.
- A record is kept of all fire drills carried out.

HEAD LICE POLICY

Children can pick up head lice just by coming into close contact with someone who is infected. It is important to know how to recognise the problem early and to know how to cope with it.

Procedures

- Staff will inform other parents/guardians verbally or in writing in the event of an outbreak of Head Lice. Staff should be tactful and maintain confidentiality.
- Staff should inform parents/guardians to check their child's hair carefully and regularly, and to use the treatment recommended by the public health nurse, chemist, doctor or local health clinic.
- The importance of not sharing other people's combs, hats etc. is stressed to parents /guardians and children.
- Parents/guardians are asked to follow a unified eradication system if the need presents itself.
- If a staff member notices that child has headlice the following steps are taken:
 - The child is separated from the group.
 - The parents are informed.
 - The child is collected as soon as possible and treated at home.

HEALTH POLICY (see extended Healthy Eating Policy)

It is the policy of TCHP to promote a healthy lifestyle through prevention of illness and establishing healthy eating patterns. It is our policy to comply with current regulations including the Child Care Act (1991) (Early Years Services) Regulations (2016) and Food Hygiene Regulations.

Healthy Eating

- A balanced diet is provided by parents/guardians with fresh, nutritious food.
- Special dietary needs of children are respected, for example, we are a nut-free and sesame-free school.
- An adult is always in the environment at mealtimes to encourage good eating habits, stimulate conversation and enhance the quality of the interaction.
- It is important at this young age to introduce and educate our children about good nutrition and the health benefits of eating well. (Síolta* Standard 9: Health and Welfare) (National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 13: Food and Drink).

Illness Policy for Children

- Children or adults who are sick or who may be a source of infection should not attend school.
- Parents/guardians should consult HSE guidelines as to when their child should return to school after an illness. See Appendix 1: Infectious Disease Exclusion Recommendations for the Childcare Setting (Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings - HSE Preschool and Childcare Facility Subcommittee):
- https://e.sensorpro.net/run/Url.aspx?m1=CDOCLzRyqQ5sDAk5Mu2MJHhs8Ss7hheesYh5hB182Jc2jSWWsFhEU7ay-ERbe0YNEANbbr48v40_zes7_etdwwkwk%7CztcAVtANUaC2awLvX5ghj7S-le42OyDySWFxKdPFZffW5PNZO6sSo2.YMXX83sDShXP7OSfXth8_zes7_eztk&d2=&l1=1026464
- Please note children should have 48 symptom free hours if they have had a vomiting or diarrhoea episode.
- Parents/guardians must give written consent for any medication (including Calpol, etc) to be administered at school. Parents should request an Administration of Medicines Consent Form and make sure they are familiar with our Administration of Medicines Policy which will be made available to them.

Illness Policy for Staff

- Staff with a communicable illness should not attend school.
- Arrangements are in place to provide relief cover while staff are on sick leave.

Immunisation Policy

- When you enrol your child in our school, please complete the immunisation section, in the registration form supplied. Parents have the right to choose to immunise their child or not.
- Not all children attending TCHP may be immunised. In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease, parents will be informed by email and HSE advice will be followed.

HYGIENE AND INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

TCHP is committed to promoting a healthy environment and a high standard of personal hygiene for adults and children. It is our policy to comply with current regulations including the Child Care Act (1991) (Early Years Services) Regulations (2016) and Food Hygiene Regulations.

Hygiene and Infection Control Procedures

- All new staff and volunteers are informed of the hygiene procedures as part of their induction programme.
- Hand washing must be carried out when entering school, after using the toilet, after outdoor play, before and after handling food.
- Cuts and sores must be covered with suitable dressings.

Dealing with spills:

- Disposable gloves must always be used when cleaning up spills of body fluids.
- Disposable towels must always be used when cleaning up spills of body fluids.
- A supply of clean clothing is readily available for accidents. Parents provide a change of clothes for Junior Class children.
- The area of the accident is treated with suitable disinfectant.

Cleaning procedures:

- All toilets, surrounding walls and sinks are cleaned and disinfected every day.
- Floors, tables and equipment, where necessary, are cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Sand is always covered when not in use.
- Hard surface materials - should be washed at least monthly or sooner if visibly soiled. Materials with moving parts or openings can harbour dirt and germs in the crevices and must be washed and scrubbed using soap and warm water/detergent wipes, before thorough rinsing and drying.
- Bins and Recycling- The classrooms have three bins, one for green bin recycling, one for compost and one for everything else. Children will be encouraged to use the appropriate bins. Staff should ensure that bins are never allowed to overflow. 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.
- All left over food should be brought home.
- Cleaning materials/dangerous substances will be kept out of reach of children in a locked cupboard.

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.

INTERNET, CAMERA & PHOTO POLICY

Photographs will be taken regularly at TCHP. Photos are used for planning, recording, observation, teaching and learning resources. Photos may also be used on the school website, Facebook page, Instagram, or local, national or international platforms on occasions.

- Parental/guardian permission is sought for on the registration form at the beginning of every year.

- The school's camera/mobile phone may be used to take photos. If photos of children are taken on staff member's mobiles these are deleted.
- Photos are used to capture the child working or with their friends engaging in some school activity.

A professional photographer will come to TCHP towards the end of the school year. Parents /guardians give their consent for their child to be part of the class photo on the general consent form at the beginning of the year.

The Internet is sometimes used by pupils for research purposes. The computer is located in the classroom. All computers used by children are protected with NetNanny (an internet filtering software).

MOBILE PHONE/SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

- At TCHP we place a strong emphasis on adult to child communication and vice versa.
- With this in mind we ask parents to not text or be on their phones when they are collecting their children unless it is an emergency situation.
- Phone use in the school grounds should be kept to a minimum so the emphasis can be on the children.
- Staff are not allowed to befriend parents/guardians/family members of the children attending the school on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram or any other social media forum. Professional boundaries must be maintained between staff and parents at all times.

MOBILE PHONE POLICY CHILDREN

- Mobile phones, personal smart devices including smartwatches or similar devices are not allowed to be used in school.
- If any student has a mobile phone they must keep it switched off in their bag.
- The parents of TCHP in consultation with school have developed a Parents' Charter recommending 'No Smartphones for Children until Secondary School' – see Appendix 2.

OUTDOOR POLICY (see extended Outdoor Policy)

- Children are supervised when out in the garden. Staff will ensure that the garden is secure and it will be maintained regularly. Staff take out the roll book at playtime. Regular staffing ratios will be adhered to while out in the garden. The children will be outdoors every day, unless there are extreme weather conditions. Please keep this in mind when helping your child choose clothing.
- There are to be no unsupervised pets on the premises for child safety.

OUTINGS POLICY

It is the policy of our school to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and adults involved in our school when planning and undertaking outings.

Procedures

- Prior information about proposed outings is given in writing to all parents/guardians.
- All parents/guardians must sign a consent form prior to the outing.
- Ratios of adults to children will be in line with school Regulations and the insurance company. It may sometimes be necessary to call upon parents to make up the ratio.
- As part of the 'Going out' Programme 6-9 and 9-12 Class children may organise small outings. They will need an adult to accompany them and they will make the relevant arrangements with the support of the teaching staff. Parents are sometimes requested to act as drivers.

The following are taken on outings:

- First Aid kit.
- All required medication.
- Emergency phone numbers.

SECURITY POLICY (see extended Outdoor Policy)

The safety, security and wellbeing of the children, staff and parents/guardians at TCHP is of paramount importance. We make our school a safe and healthy environment for everyone by having policies and procedures in place and by following them.

- The appropriate insurance is in place for TCHP.
 - Staff have Child Protection, manual handling and first aid training.
 - The garden is securely walled and fenced and checked regularly for potential hazards.
-
- A Critical Incident Policy is being developed (March 2026)

SMOKING/ VAPING POLICY

TCHP has a very strict no-smoking/vaping policy. Staff, parents/guardians or visitors are not permitted to smoke/vape on the school premises.

STAFF RATIO POLICY

The adult/child ratios are governed by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. The ratios are adhered to at all times with at least two adults being present on the premises at all times.

SUN PROTECTION POLICY (see extended policy)

TCHP requests that parents/guardians apply all day protection sun cream to their child before coming to school in hot weather.

- Parents/guardians must send in sun cream suitable for their child with the child's name clearly labelled.
- Teachers will show children how to apply sun cream when appropriate and where the parent has provided sun cream.
- Teachers will ensure that the child wears a sun hat when provided by the parent/guardian.

TOILETING POLICY

Children must be toilet trained before they begin school in TCHP. It is the policy of our school and in the interest of the children's health and safety, that a high standard of hygiene is promoted at all times, when children are learning to use the toilet.

Procedures

- To create an awareness and understanding of good hygiene practice, staff members do Practical Life presentations with the children about the importance of self-care for example: flushing the toilet, washing hands etc.
- Liquid soap and disposable paper towels are used for washing and drying hands.
- The staff should treat accidents sensitively.
- Staff will encourage children to use the toilet independently.
- The child's privacy is always respected.

Signed

Fredericka Sheppard, Chairman of the Board

June 2026

**Síolta*

Aistear and Síolta Framework

Each framework has a clear and specific purpose. Síolta focuses on all facets of quality within ECCE settings including learning and development. Aistear helps adults provide appropriately challenging, positive and enjoyable learning experiences for children from birth to 6 years. (NCCA 2009).

APPENDIX 1

Infectious Disease Exclusion Recommendations for the Childcare Setting (Management of Infectious Disease in Childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings - HSE Preschool and Childcare Facility Subcommittee).

Prevent the spread of infections by ensuring: routine immunization, high standards of personal hygiene and practice, particularly handwashing, and maintaining a clean environment.

Visit www.hpsc.ie if you would like any further advice or information, including the latest guidance.

COMMON RASHES AND SKIN INFECTIONS	RECOMMENDED PERIOD TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM CRÈCHE	COMMENTS
Chickenpox	Until scabs are dry, usually 5-7 days from onset of rash	SEE: Vulnerable Children and Female Staff - Pregnancy
German measles (rubella)	Seven days from onset of rash	Preventable by immunization (MMR x 2) SEE: Female Staff - Pregnancy
Hand, foot and mouth	None, once child is well	Contact your local DPH if a large number of children are affected. Exclusion may be considered in some Circumstances
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted and healed, or 24 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment speeds healing and reduces the infectious period
Measles	Four days from onset of rash	Preventable by vaccination (MMR x 2) SEE: Vulnerable Children and Female Staff - Pregnancy
Ringworm	Exclusion not usually required	Treatment is required
Scabies	Children can return after first treatment	Household and close contacts require treatment
Scarlet fever	Child can return 24 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment recommended for the affected child
Slapped cheek/fifth disease. Parvovirus B19	None	SEE: Female Staff - Pregnancy
Shingles	Exclude only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered	Can cause chickenpox in those who are not immune i.e. have not had chickenpox. It is spread by very close

		contact and touch. SEE: Vulnerable Children and Female Staff - Pregnancy
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DIARRHOEA AND VOMITING ILLNESS	RECOMMENDED PERIOD TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM CRÈCHE	COMMENTS
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting	48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting	
E. coli O157 VTEC	Further exclusion required - cases excluded until 2 negative stool specimens taken at least 48h apart	This guidance may also apply to some contacts who may require microbiological clearance Public Health will provide advice
Typhoid [and paratyphoid] (enteric fever)	Further exclusion may be required for some children until they are no longer excreting	This guidance may also apply to some contacts who may require microbiological clearance Public Health will provide advice
Shigella (dysentery)	Further exclusion may be required for certain types of Shigella infections	Please consult your local DPH for further advice
Cryptosporidiosis	Exclude for 48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea	Exclusion from swimming pools is advisable for two weeks after the diarrhoea has settled

RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS	RECOMMENDED PERIOD TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM CRÈCHE	COMMENTS
Flu (influenza)	Until recovered	SEE: Vulnerable children
Tuberculosis	Always consult your local DPH	Requires prolonged close contact for spread
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Five days from commencing antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment	Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks

OTHER INFECTIONS	RECOMMENDED PERIOD TO BE KEPT AWAY FROM CRÈCHE	COMMENTS
Conjunctivitis	None	If an outbreak/cluster occurs, consult your local DPH
Glandular fever	None	

Head lice	None	Treatment is recommended only in cases where live lice have been seen
Hepatitis A	Exclude until seven days after onset of jaundice (or seven days after symptom onset if no jaundice)	In an outbreak of Hepatitis A, your local DPH will advise on control measures
Hepatitis B, C, HIV/AIDS	None	Hepatitis B and C and HIV are bloodborne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact. For cleaning of body fluid spills SEE: Chapter 3 in main document
Meningococcal meningitis/septicaemia	Until recovered	Meningococcal C is preventable by vaccination. There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. Your local DPH will advise on any action needed
Meningitis due to other bacteria	Until recovered	Hib and pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination. There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. Your local DPH will advise on any action needed

Appendix 2

TCHP Parents' Charter: No Smartphones for Children until Secondary School

Purpose:

In line with the Montessori philosophy of fostering independence, creativity, and focus, we encourage parents to **refrain from purchasing smartphones and restrict access to social media** for their children aged under 13. Our goal is to minimise distractions, protect childhood experiences and support healthy development both in and out of the classroom.

Policy Guidelines:

1. No smartphones and restrict access to social media for Students:

We strongly recommend that children in this age group do not own **smartphones and restrict access to social media**. The use of mobile phones at this developmental stage can interfere with their ability to:

- Engage fully in social interactions.
- Develop focus and concentration.
- Participate in hands-on, real-world activities.

2. Alternatives for Communication:

If parents need to communicate with their child during school hours, they can do so by:

- **Contacting the school office:** We will ensure that your message is delivered promptly to your child.
 - **Arranging pick-up and drop-off details** in advance, to avoid the need for mobile phone communication.
-

3. Encouraging Face-to-Face Interaction:

One of the core principles of Montessori education is promoting **real-world social skills** and interpersonal communication. Without mobile phones, children are better able to:

- Build meaningful friendships through face-to-face interactions.
 - Engage in group activities, collaborative work, and outdoor play without distractions.
-

4. Focus on Mental Health and Well-Being:

Research has shown that excessive screen time and access to mobile phones can negatively impact children's mental health. By postponing phone ownership and access to social media until an older age, parents help:

- Reduce exposure to inappropriate content.
 - Limit social media influence, which can cause anxiety or distraction.
 - Protect children from cyberbullying and online risks.
-

5. Exceptions for Special Circumstances:

We recognise that there may be exceptional cases where a child might need access to a phone (e.g., for medical reasons or specific family needs). If this applies, parents must:

- Contact the school to discuss the circumstances.
 - Agree on a plan to ensure the phone is only used in case of emergency or outside school hours.
-

6. Preparing for Future Responsible Phone Use:

Rather than giving a smart phone at an early age, parents can focus on teaching their child **responsible technology use** through:

- Family discussions about **screen time limits** and **internet safety**.

- Encouraging balanced use of devices like family computers or tablets, always under supervision.
-

Conclusion:

At our Montessori school, we are committed to fostering an environment where children can focus on learning, creativity, and social interaction without the distractions or pressures of mobile phones. We believe that postponing the purchase of smartphones and delaying access to social media for children aged under 13 helps protect their childhood and supports their healthy development.

We appreciate your support and cooperation in helping us maintain a focused, engaged, and safe environment for all students.