

FINAL WORKING GROUP DRAFT

22nd January 2018

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE SERVICES

STANDARDS, COMPONENTS and ELEMENTS

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SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE

NATIONAL STANDARDS, COMPONENTS and ELEMENTS

Introduction

Guide to the National Quality Standards for School Age Childcare

The development of National Quality Standards for School Age Childcare services has been instigated by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Education and Skills, through the ***Action Plan on School Age Childcare***, launched in March 2017.

These standards are informed by evidence-based best practice in a range of countries, including Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA. In addition, many organisation in Ireland, including County Childcare Committees, National Voluntary Childcare Organisations, and Mary Immaculate College have produced guideline documents and recommendations to support and improve the quality of school age childcare services.

Evidence-based practice, informed by research, together with national expertise has informed the establishment of the standards outlined in this document.

The seven standards outlined in this document, have been developed, reviewed and approved by sectoral experts on school age childcare, and represent a benchmark of quality. They will form the foundation for a quality assurance system, for school age childcare services in Ireland.

The seven areas of quality identified underpin all aspects of service delivery. While the similarity of the content of some of the standards is unavoidable, they have been limited to seven areas to avoid any unnecessary overlap and excessive cross referencing between the standards. These aspects of quality are reflected in the National Quality Standards, components and elements. However threaded throughout all of the standards is a strong focus on **The Rights of the Child, Child Protection, Equality and Environmentalism**.

Definition of School Age Childcare

For the purpose of these standards, school age childcare is defined as:
Any centre-based service for school going children aged 4-15 years, which operates during one or more of the following periods:

- Before school
- After school
- During the school holidays

These services may be delivered in a variety of settings:

- Standalone services for school going children;
- Part of service provision offered by sessional or part time pre-school providers (e.g., pre-school morning session, school age after-noon provision)
- Part of service provision offered by full daycare/crèche
- Aligned to a school (primary or secondary) and run by the school, a voluntary management committee or an individual operator.

Settings can include a wide variety of facilities - community halls, crèches/daycare premises, pre-school premises, purpose built stand-alone facilities, school premises, places of worship, libraries, etc. All services may be managed in a number of different ways, e.g. by voluntary management committees, private individuals and schools. School age childcare services may or may not be in receipt of state or other funding.

School age childcare services use a range of terms to describe the type of service being offered: breakfast clubs, after school clubs, out of school programmes, summer camps, etc. Occasionally, they are referred to as 'homework clubs'.

Homework specific clubs are usually led by qualified teachers, they can be stand-alone, be part of school provision, or they can operate from a school age childcare service. In these clubs, homework completion and supporting children's formal learning is the main focus. These are distinguishable from 'homework support' provided as part of a school age childcare service and is not seen to be the core activity of the service.

School Age Childcare - Children's Voices Rest and Play

Article 12 (1) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) recognises that **'States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child'**.

The child has a right to be heard and opinions and views respected. The role of adults in supporting children to do this must not be underestimated. Provision for consultation on where they live, play and work will support them in this.

The child's right to play is enshrined within Article 31 recognises **'the right of the child to rest and leisure (and) to engage in play and recreational activities'**. Likewise, this commitment to, and recognition of the importance of play for young children is reflected in the practice frameworks: **Síolta, the National**

Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, and Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

While both practice frameworks were developed for children from birth and six years, the underpinning principles are just as relevant to the needs of older children. The school age childcare standards are therefore informed by the core elements of Síolta and Aistear.

Play has the potential to improve all aspects of children's well-being: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive (Burdette & Whitaker, 2005)

An effective school age childcare service recognises the **importance of play**. It offers children a balance of free time and loosely structured, fun activities that help children and young people to be creative and develop imagination and abstract thinking, develop or enhance leadership and social skills, self-esteem, interests and hobbies, conflict resolution skills and academic achievements.

Why National Quality Standards?

The development of national quality standards for School Age Childcare services, a priority from the Action Plan on School Age Childcare, is a goal shared by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Education and Skills and members of the School Age Childcare Standards Working Group. In addition, these stakeholders share the goal of seeing these national quality standards embedded within all School Age Childcare services throughout Ireland.

The achievement of quality standards by providers and staff is a hallmark of professional development, providing reassurance to parents, worthwhile opportunities for children, justification for and, access to Government investment. Critically, it will enable the School Age Childcare profession to develop a shared understanding of quality as well as a common language and standardisation of practice.

The Overarching Purposes of the National Quality Standards are:

- a) To define the expectations of children/young people and their parents in the provision of all centre-based school age childcare services
- b) To provide a consistent standard to guide the development and enhance the quality of school age childcare services
- c) To inform a future State inspection service

- d) To inform infrastructure funding development of the sector (including the specific funding allocated by the DCYA to infrastructure development, including development of schools)
- e) To provide the basis for a robust system of quality assurance to determine SAC services' eligibility for any State funding
- f) To inform the development of non-State funded services

Key Principles to Underpin the National Quality Standards for School Age Childcare Services

1. Equality, diversity and non-discrimination are championed by staff and children

Real equality requires a commitment to positive experiences for all children irrespective of their or their parent's or guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. To achieve this, different groups may need additional supports.

Part of the adult's role is to prepare children for an ever-changing world. Understanding and acceptance come from genuine relationships with people of diverse backgrounds that allow for exchange of ideas and stories and the celebration of various cultures and traditions.

Non-discrimination includes a right to equality of concern and respect in a supportive environment free of prejudice. The ethos and practice of a school age childcare service must value diversity and promote equality and non-discrimination.

2. Children have rights to expression of voices and participation, and play and rest

Children have a right to be heard on issues directly affecting their own welfare, with due regard to their ages and maturity. Equally, children also have a right not to voice an opinion. Children have a right to play and rest which must be respected.

Ensuring that children and young people's rights are met requires that they are enabled to exercise choice, have a voice in decisions that affect them and are considered active participants in their own development and learning.

Children and young people should have a central role and purpose within the service, have choice in how time is spent in the setting and be encouraged to be active participants in programme development. Children and young people must be given opportunities for personal development within the context of appropriate boundaries.

3. Services will adopt a holistic approach to child development, recognise the diversity of needs of children and build on children's strengths and capabilities

A holistic approach recognises the social, emotional and physical needs, as well as the intellectual needs, of children and young people and their parents and families.

Different levels of need require different strategies to meet them, including children with additional needs and complex needs.

All children have strengths and abilities. Children grow and develop from their strengths and abilities. When children and those around them, including staff in school age childcare services, appreciate and understand the child's strengths and abilities, then the child is better able to learn and develop.

4. Parents are full and valued partners in school age childcare services and their active participation of diversity of parents is encouraged and supported

All parents need to be viewed as full and valued partners in the service. Parents are encouraged to develop a strong sense of ownership and connection with the setting.

Parents should be welcomed in the childcare service and their support and assistance sought. Parents need to be involved in decisions that affect their children and supported in this role by the service. Support for parents from a diversity of backgrounds to be involved in the service is essential. Communication and dialogue with parents must be regular, open, two-way and meaningful.

5. School age childcare services will offer a home-from-home environment that are child and young people-friendly

Out of school time must be a time when children and young people discover themselves. This works best when the space itself is not a barrier. It must be a safe, exciting place where children and young people are encouraged to help create these special transforming environments. The emphasis should be on creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere; a 'home-from-home' setting, which is a physically inviting space. This space should be well maintained and should adapt in response to the needs and interests of the groups of children and young people using it. It must include a variety spaces, both indoors and outdoors to cater for the needs of all age groups using it.

6. School age childcare services will support the representation and participation of school age children from a diversity of backgrounds

It is important to recognise a diversity of backgrounds of children and young people including those experiencing poverty and social exclusion, those at risk of early school leaving, those experiencing bullying, mental health difficulties and/or special educational needs, migrant and ethnic minority children, children with disabilities and/or physical ill-health, asylum seeking and refugee children, children in care and LGBTI+ children.

There must be a distinct focus on the processes and structures that ensure these groups' inclusion and participation in school age childcare services.

7. Adults in school age childcare services play a crucial, facilitative role

The role of the adult in a school age childcare service should be to facilitate the initiative and ideas of children and young people, rather than to direct them. Facilitative adults encourage interaction among children and between children and adults, recognising that social interaction leads to discovery and application of great ideas.

Intentionality is the key to interactions between adults and children and young people. Intention is a determination to act in a specified way, or to do something by design. All the things that adults do for children and young people should be intentional and thoughtful, to guide and support children and young people as they grow.

Adults working in school age childcare services should be supported by those services to develop the skills and capacities to allow them to play a facilitative role and lead by example.

Working with the Standards

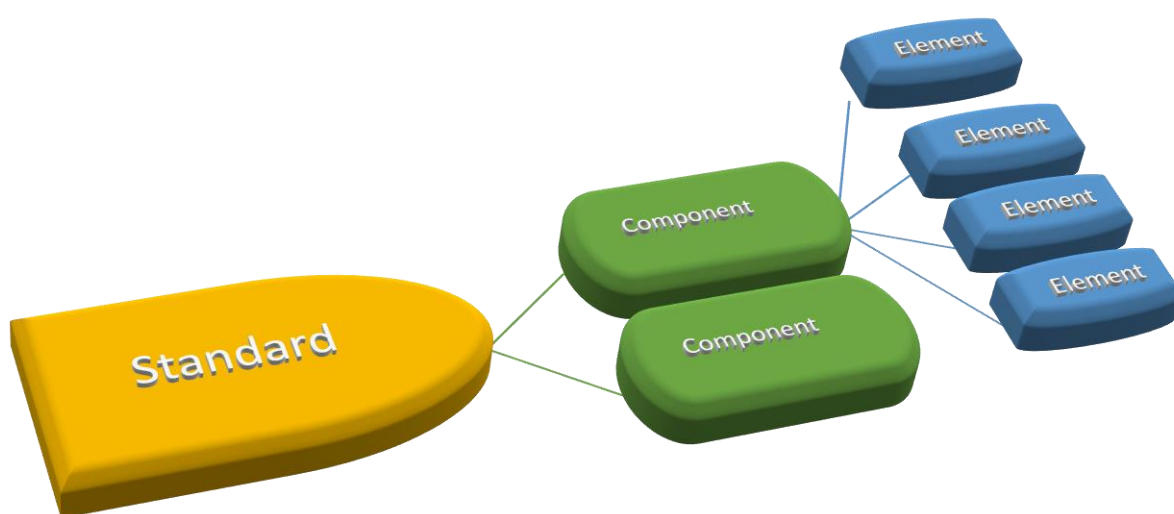
Standards

Components

Elements

Each of the seven **National Quality Standards** consist of **Components** and **Elements**.

Together, they cover key areas of practice that must be addressed within a service. The **Components** break each Standard into more manageable parts, which are further broken down into **Elements** that provide a detailed focus upon specific aspects of service delivery.



Standards are set out in chapters

Components are the divisions of each standard

Elements contain the detail

Information boxes provide useful reading, further details, explanations or recommendations to help guide you through the standards.



Cross Referencing is indicated in brackets (), where some areas of practice are interrelated.

SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS



Standards and their Components

Standard 1. Leadership, Governance and Service Management

The success of the service is dependent upon having an effective, responsible and responsive management structure in place that ensures compliance with all applicable legislation and regulations including health and safety, child protection, financial, administrative and human resource requirements.

Components

- 1.1 Children's Rights
- 1.2 Legislation and Regulation
- 1.3 Ethos of the Service
- 1.4 Policies and Procedures
- 1.5 Management Structure
- 1.6 Documentation
- 1.7 Staff Supports
- 1.8 Quality Improvement
- 1.9 Grievances and Complaints

Standard 2. Staff and Professional Practice

Management ensure, on recruitment and selection, that all staff have appropriate values, attitudes and dispositions for working in the area of school age childcare. Staff are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and qualifications required to carry out their role and responsibilities.

Components

- 2.1 Recruitment
- 2.2 Qualifications
- 2.3 Record Keeping
- 2.4 Reporting Responsibilities
- 2.5 Homework
- 2.6 Programme Planning and Implementation
- 2.7 Management and Staff Communication and Relations
- 2.8 Staff Professional Development

Standard 3. The Environment

The environment is well maintained, safe, accessible and adaptable. It is equipped with a range of appropriately sized furniture to suit the various age groups attending the service. Equipment and materials are sufficient in number and carefully chosen to offer a variety of challenging and stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences. Children/young people are consulted about the

environment and are involved in the review and evaluation and the purchasing of equipment.

Components

- 3.1 Legislation and Regulation
- 3.2 Design, Layout and Organisation
- 3.3 Safety
- 3.4 Environmentalism

Standard 4. Health, Well-being and Safety

Management and staff provide and maintain a safe, physically and psychologically, healthy environment for children and young people, staff, parents, visitors and volunteers.

Components

- 4.1 Legislation and Regulation
- 4.2 Child Protection
- 4.3 Risk Assessment
- 4.4 Fire Safety
- 4.5 Food Safety
- 4.6 Accidents, Emergencies and Illness
- 4.7 Health and Welfare
- 4.8 Supervision
- 4.9 Children and Young People's Involvement in Health & Safety
- 4.10 Well-being of Children and Young People
- 4.11 Food and Nutrition
- 4.12 Health Promoting Activities
- 4.13 Internet, Digital Media, and Mobile Phones

Standard 5. Nurturing Relationships and Supportive Interactions

All children and young people attending the service feel welcome, secure and valued. Staff build warm, positive, collaborative relationships that support children's/young people's social skills, self-esteem, well-being and identity.

Components

- 5.1 Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion
- 5.2 Nurturing Relationships
- 5.3 Supportive Interactions
- 5.4 Developing Relationships with New Children/Young People
- 5.5 Key Person Approach
- 5.6 Listening to, Hearing and Responding to the Voice of the Child
- 5.7 Responding to Children's and Young People's Behaviour
- 5.8 Bullying Prevention Strategy

Standard 6. Programme of Activities

The service provides a wide range of play, rest and recreation activities to meet children and young people's individual and collective needs and interests. Staff work collaboratively with children and young people to develop a programme that is rich in experiences and opportunities that support the holistic development of all children and young people.

Components

- 6.1 Planning for Play and Recreation
- 6.2 Programme of Activities
- 6.3 Play
- 6.4 Rest and Relaxation
- 6.5 Resources and Equipment
- 6.6 Supporting Children and Young People's Homework

Standard 7. Collaborative Partnerships with Parents, Families and Communities

Collaborative and respectful partnerships and links with children and young people, parents, families, schools and communities are central to service provision.

Components

- 7.1 Partnerships with Parents and Families
- 7.2 Partnerships with Schools
- 7.3 Partnerships with Communities

SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS, COMPONENTS and ELEMENTS

Standard 1.

Leadership, Governance and Service Management

The success of the service is dependent upon having an effective, responsible and responsive management structure in place that ensures compliance with all applicable legislation and regulations including health and safety, child protection, financial, administrative and human resource requirements.

1.1 Children's Rights

These standards are underpinned by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, ratified by Ireland in 1992, with particular emphasis on:

- **Non-discrimination**
- **Best interests of the child/young person**
- **The right to play**
- **Respect for the views of the child/young person**

Useful reading:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Available from Children's Rights Alliance

1.1.1 Services are underpinned by the rights of the child, having respect for each child/young person's individuality, integrity and autonomy.

Useful reading:

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION CHARTER
AND GUIDELINES FOR
EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS 2016

1.2 Legislation and Regulation

Those managing and working in the service operate within the law, meeting all applicable legislation and regulations.

1.2.1 Compliance with the following is critical:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Employment Law
- Equality Law

- . Health & Safety Regulations
- . Food Regulations
- . Infectious Diseases
- . Tobacco Regulations
- . Building and Planning Regulations
- . Fire Regulations
- . Toy Safety
- . Finance and Taxation
- . General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- . Freedom of Information
- . Garda Vetting (National Vetting Bureau)
- . Insurance Requirements

This list is not exhaustive and professional advice should be sought, as legislation is continually being updated.

Further Information Contact:

City and County Childcare Committees or National Childcare Organisations for further advice or signposting to the relevant statutory agency

1.2.2 The service has a designated person, within management, who is responsible for ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation making sure that the service is up to date with any new regulations or legislation that may impact on practice.

1.3 Ethos of the Service

The ethos underpinning the service is established and guides all aspects of practice.

1.3.1 The written ethos is reflected in the vision, aims, objectives and principles, defining the function of the service and statement of purpose.

1.3.2 The ethos is representative of the diversity of the service and the community.

1.3.3 The ethos forms the basis of practice and promotes positive interactions and relationships between: staff/children and young people; parents/families; and between staff/staff and management/staff.

1.3.4 The ethos is regularly reviewed and up dated by the manager, in collaboration with staff, parents, children, young people and others as necessary (for example, schools).

1.3.5 All stakeholders, including children, parents, staff, volunteers, are made aware of the ethos of the service.

1.4 Policies and Procedures

A range of comprehensive policies and procedures are drawn up in consultation with staff, parents, children / young people and others where necessary. They are reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually, in line with any legislative or regulatory changes and made available to all those using, or intending to use the service.

1.4.1 The ethos underpins the policies, procedures and practice of the service.

1.4.2 Practices within the service are underpinned by documented policies and procedures that are consistently implemented, readily available at the service, and regularly reviewed and updated, at least annually.

1.4.3 Systems are in place to ensure all staff, parents and volunteers are aware of, and adhere to relevant policies and procedures.

See [Appendix 1](#) for a list of policy areas.

Contact:

City and County Childcare Committees or National Childcare Organisations for further advice on policies

1.5 Management Structure

A clear management structure is in place that operates within the ethos of the service.

1.5.1 All parents are made aware of the management structure. The views of parents are sought, and taken into account by management either through a committee or consultation process.

Suggestion:

- Display an organisational chart.
- Who is the designated person in charge/manager?
- Who is the deputy?
- Manager and staff have a clear understanding of their own roles and range of responsibilities.

1.5.2 The manager of the service has the necessary qualifications, skills and competencies to fulfil her/his role.

1.5.3 The management or manager has overall responsibility for all administrative, financial, staffing, environment, equipment and activities.

1.5.4 Financial management systems are in place to ensure financial accountability and stability, and to ensure compliance with mandatory taxation and financial reporting requirements.

1.6 Documentation

Well maintained records and clear policies and procedures are in place for the efficient and safe management of the service.

1.6.1 A system is in place for recording, upon arrival and when leaving the service, both children/young people and staff attendances and absence on a daily basis. (1.7.7)

1.6.2 Comprehensive enrolment records containing all relevant information for each child attending the service are kept, including:

- Name and date of birth of child/young person
- Name, address and contact details of parents/guardians
- Details of school attended by the child/young person.
- School drop off arrangements (if necessary)
- Authorisation for collection of the child/young person from the service (4.2.3)
- Emergency contact details
- Details of any illness, allergies, disability
- Details of a child/young person's specific dietary needs
- Name and contact details of doctor
- Permission for administration of medication
- Permission for outings
- Permission for photographs, video, social media, etc.

1.6.3 Records and information are stored appropriately in line with the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003. Data protection rights apply where details are held on a computer, on paper, in the form of videos, digital recordings and photographs. The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) replaces the existing data protection framework from 25th May 2018.

Further Information Contact:

The Data Protection Commissioner

See: [12 Step Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#)

1.6.4 Records and information about individual children/young people are shared only with the child/young person's parent/guardian/carer and are kept secure and confidential.

1.6.5 Children's, parent's, staff's and volunteers' personal details are kept for clearly stated lawful purposes; their personal information kept safe; the information stored must be factually correct, complete and up-to-date, and must be changed if they are not and remove personal details if they are not factually correct.

1.6.6 Children/young people, parents, staff and volunteers know if their personal details are being held by the service; know that they can request a copy of their personal information from the service; and know that they have a right to access these details.

1.6.7 Systems are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed in a timely matter, investigated fairly and consistently, and documented in accordance with the ethos, policies and procedures of the service. (1.9.3)

1.6.8 Records of staff recruitment, selection and personnel details (e.g. qualifications, Garda Vetting etc.) are properly maintained and stored in line with the Data Protection Act and Framework, 2018. (2.3.1)

1.6.9 Children/young people, parents, staff and volunteers know that they have a right to complain to the national Data Protection Commissioner if they believe that the service has not observed its obligations on privacy and data protection.

1.7 Staff Supports

All staff working in the service are supported to create safe, caring, interesting and fun environments for children, to develop and promote warm, respectful relationships with the children/young people, parents, staff, management and others as appropriate.

1.7.1 The management/manager ensures that a comprehensive induction process is conducted for all new staff, students and volunteers. (2.1.4)

1.7.2 A system is in place to ensure that each individual who begins work at the service has a clear understanding of their role and what is expected of them.

1.7.3 Appropriate staffing arrangements are in place to ensure the recommended ratios of staff are present to guarantee safe supervision and to support the programme of activities with the children, including:

- Activity rooms
- Outdoors
- Outings
- Transport
- Community engagement

Indoor Staff/Child Ratios:

Age Range	Adult to Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
4 – 15	1 Adult to 11 Children	26
A minimum of 2 adults on the premises at all times Clear floor space of 2.3 square meters per child		

Outings, transport and community engagement – as per the service insurance requirements

See Appendix 2 for information on criteria for calculation of ratios

1.7.4 A staff support and supervision and staff appraisal processes are in place to enable staff to discuss, and reflect upon their performance, and to work towards addressing any issues or concerns they may have in a structured and respectful way.

1.7.5 Regular staff meetings take place, which are recorded to ensure effective communication, and to promote the development of the team.

1.7.6 A staff roster is in place outlining who is on duty each day, including who is responsible for drop off and pick up for the various schools (where applicable).

1.7.7 There is a procedure in place to cover and deal with staff absence.

1.7.8 There is a code of behaviour in place for staff.

1.8 Quality Improvement

A system is in place to ensure quality development of the service.

1.8.1 Systems are in place to document self-assessment and quality improvement processes.

1.8.2 Staff are committed to, and responsible for continually evaluating all aspects of service provision and practice, and contribute to the self-assessment and quality improvement processes within the service.

1.8.3 Children/young people, parents and staff contribute to the evaluation and review of the service and the programme of activities on offer.

1.9 Grievances and Complaints

An effective management system is in place to ensure that any grievance or complaint is addressed and dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

1.9.1 There is clear information, readily available and displayed in a prominent place within the service, for all stakeholders, on how grievances and complaints are made, and how they are managed by the service, including:

- Whom to make a complaint to
- Response time
- Process for investigation
- Appeals process if unhappy with the outcome

1.9.2 All grievances and complaints are investigated fairly and promptly according to policy and procedure.

1.9.3 All grievances and complaints are documented. (1.6.7)

1.9.4 A system is in place to ensure children and young people know who they can complain to and are aware of the procedure for doing so. Information on the complaints procedure is made available in child friendly language.

Standard 2.

Staff and Professional Practice

Management ensure, on recruitment and selection, that all staff have appropriate values, attitudes and dispositions for working in the area of school age childcare. Staff are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and qualifications required to carry out their role and responsibilities.

2.1 Recruitment

Comprehensive and robust recruitment policies and procedures are in place, taking account of all relevant employment legislation.

2.1.1 The service recruits staff and volunteers through a robust recruitment process which includes Garda vetting (Police vetting if required), proof of ID, up to date CV and, at least two verified references, written and verbal, from reputable sources, including one from the most recent employer.

2.1.2 The service strives to recruit suitably qualified staff that are able to offer diversity within the staff team, informed by their background, experiences and skills.

2.1.3 Employment contracts are issued within one month of commencing employment (in keeping with employment legislation).

2.1.4 Management ensure that there is a comprehensive induction programme for all new personnel, with staff being strongly supported throughout the probationary period. (1.7.1)

2.1.5 Each member of staff has a clear job description.

2.1.6 Line management structures are in place which include supervision, appraisal, performance management, and continuing professional development (CPD) appropriate to the development and age ranges of the children/young people in the service.

2.2 Qualifications

The service works to ensure staff members have the recommended qualifications for working with school age children.

2.2.1 The service employ staff with skills, experience, training and qualifications appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

2.2.2 Staff qualifications are compliant with nationally agreed qualifications.

2.2.3 Untrained staff / adults are not included in the recommended staff-to-child ratio.

'The matter of appropriate qualifications for those working in school age childcare has been discussed by the working group on School Age Childcare standards. It is the recommendation of the group that all those working in SAC hold a Level 5 and that room leaders hold a Level 6 qualification in a relevant discipline such as early years, education or youth work. It is understood that a qualification for SAC will be developed through QQI, led by the Department of Education (SAC Action Plan, Action 10Q). Following this, further consultation and deliberation is required to determine which other qualifications may also be appropriate for SAC workers.'

2.3 Record Keeping

A system is in place to maintain and update staff, students (undertaking work placements) and volunteers personnel details in accordance with the data protection policy of the service, and compliant with the National Data Protection Requirements. (1.6.3)

2.3.1 The service maintains full and comprehensive staff records for all those who are employed in the service, including:

- Proof of ID
- Employment history, as appropriate
- Two references, including from the most recent employer
- Garda vetting (Police vetting if required)
- Evidence of qualifications
- Contact details of next of kin
- Employment contract and job description/person specification

2.3.2 Student Portfolios are maintained to support those on work placement within the service including:

- Students' ID and contact details
- Introductory letter from the college
- College Tutor/Supervisor contact details
- Letter of insurance from the college
- Garda vetting (Police vetting if required)
- Two references, including from the most recent employer
- Record of staff - student support meetings

2.3.3 Policies and procedures are in place to guide and support students on work placement, as well as volunteers.

2.3.4 Management ensure all students/volunteers take part in an induction process.

2.4 Reporting Responsibilities

All staff have a clear understanding of the service's record keeping and reporting procedures regarding the maintenance of children/young people's records.

2.4.1 Staff complete all necessary records for individual children/young people, including day to day monitoring, evaluation, progress records, special events, use of equipment/environment, accidents/incidents/illness, etc.

2.4.2 There is a system in place to enable staff to pass on clear information to a child's/young person's key person (as appropriate). (5.5)

2.4.3 Systems are in place to ensure that staff communicate regularly with parents/guardians/carers, keeping them informed of all matters concerning their child.

2.4.4 Management and staff are aware of their reporting procedures in line with Children First Guidelines. (4.2.6)

2.5 Homework

Staff understand and follow the services policies and procedures regarding homework support.

2.5.1 A policy and procedure is in place for homework support, taking account of the following:

- Maximum time allocated for homework (6.6.4)
- Nature of homework supervision
- Parental responsibility
- Provision of a calm and quiet environment

(See Component 6.6)

2.5.2 This policy is shared and agreed with parents and children/young people.

2.5.3 Parents' expectations about homework completion are negotiated at the beginning of the year.

2.5.4 A quiet and calm environment is provided for all children/young people doing homework.

See Further Information:

Homework Support
Moloney, Higgins & Ryan. 2007.
Voice and Choice Curriculum Framework - Part One
Limerick City Childcare and Mary Immaculate College

2.5.5 Homework support is balanced with other needs of the child/young person, including the need to relax, develop new skills, eat, engage in physical activities, and socialise.

2.6 Programme Planning and Implementation

Staff plan, implement and evaluate stimulating, challenging fun experiences and activities based upon children/young people's interests, needs and abilities, in collaboration with children/young people. (See Standard 6)

2.6.1 Non-contact time is provided to enable staff to plan for play and recreational activities, as well as time to review and evaluate these as a staff team, and with children/young people.

2.6.2 Staff ensure that activities and experiences take account of opportunities for:

- Relaxation and play
- New interests, skills and hobbies
- Socialising with friends or siblings

2.6.3 Both structured and non-structured activities are included in the programme of activities. The staff respond to opportunities for spontaneous activities, based on children/young people's emerging interests and needs.

2.6.4 There are opportunities for children/young people to have access to both indoor and outdoor activities, staff encourage and support children/young people to participate in physical activity.

See Further Information:

Healthy Ireland, Get Ireland Active!
The National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland

2.6.5 Children/young people's health, well-being, learning and development is promoted by providing a diverse fun and exciting range of activities, based on their interests, abilities, talents and needs in consultation with children/young people.

2.6.6 A diverse range of activities are offered to support children/young people to learn about themselves, their community and the world around them.

2.6.7 Staff observe and record children/young people's experiences and development, using observations, and documentation for example, to enhance and extend their experiences, and inform programme planning.

2.6.8 All children/young people are treated with fairness and consistency, staff avoid favouritism in their relationship with children/young people.

2.6.9 Staff recognise and respect the values and beliefs which result from the children/young people's cultural, ethnic and religious background.

2.7 Management and Staff Communication and Relations

Management, staff, students and volunteers support each other in their interactions, modelling mutual trust, respect, confidentiality and ethical practice.

2.7.1 Policies and procedures are in place to facilitate effective communication between management, staff and all other stakeholders.

2.7.2 A strategy is in place for clear communication with and between all team members.

2.7.3 All staff are aware of their individual roles and responsibilities.

2.7.4 Staff work collaboratively through the sharing of information, joint planning, evaluating and implementing the programme of activities. They also develop a shared understanding of how to achieve programme objectives.

2.7.5 Staff support and learn from each other through acknowledging diversity, personal strengths and each other's professional experiences, and/or qualification/training.

2.7.6 The service has an anti-bullying policy in place to provide a statement on the expectations from staff and volunteers, address bullying in the workplace, and clearly set out the procedures to address bullying. All stakeholders are made aware of this policy. Regular audits, through support and supervision or ongoing review of staff's performance are conducted to ensure no bullying is taking place.

2.7.7 Anti-bullying procedures are fair and transparent, and allow for due process.

2.8 Staff Professional Development

The performance of all staff members is appraised. Individual development plans are in place to support staff with self-evaluation and reflection, ongoing professional development and continuous improvement.

2.8.1 Staff are committed to accessing ongoing training, information and development opportunities. Staff training needs are assessed and carefully planned, evaluated and the impact of the training on the practice is monitored.

2.8.2 The service has an effective system for identifying and supporting staff developmental needs. (1.7.4)

2.8.3 All staff attend and contribute to regular staff meetings. These meetings are recorded in writing.

2.8.4 Line Managers support staff and provide appropriate feedback and advice. (1.7.4)

Standard 3.

The Environment

The environment is well maintained, safe, accessible and adaptable. It is equipped with a range of appropriately sized furniture to suit the various age groups attending the service. Equipment and materials are sufficient in number and carefully chosen to offer a variety of challenging and stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences. Children/young people are consulted about the environment and are involved in the review and evaluation and the purchasing of equipment.

3.1 Legislation and Regulation

The building and environment complies with all relevant legislation and regulation.

3.1.1 The premises is compliant with all legal requirements, including:

- Building and Planning
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Fire safety
- Insurance
- Toilet and hygiene facilities
- Food Safety
- Heating, ventilation, and lighting
- Accessibility

This list is not exhaustive and legislation is continually being updated.

Further Information Contact:

City and County Childcare Committees or National Childcare Organisations
for further advice or signposting to the relevant statutory agency

3.2 Design, Layout and Organisation

The physical environment is welcoming and inviting. Children/young people and families of all backgrounds and abilities are respected and included, in line with the ethos, vision and purpose of the service.

3.2.1 The vision of the service takes into account various features including provision for: rest, relaxation, socialisation with friends, homework support area, activity areas, physical play, access to natural environments, etc.

3.2.2 The indoor and outdoor environment supports and encourages children/young people's independence and autonomy in a safe and homely atmosphere, reflecting the informal nature of school age childcare services.

3.2.3 The environment is planned to respond to the different ages of children/young people attending, providing space for younger and older children/young people to engage in activities on their own or with friends or peers of similar, or mixed ages as appropriate.

3.2.4 The design and layout provides for ease of movement between the indoor and outdoor environments. Children/young people are consulted about the design and layout of the environment to ensure it meets their needs and interests.

3.2.5 The indoor and outdoor environments are flexible and adaptable to support the interests, needs and abilities of all children/young people.

Universal Design Information:

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) at the National Disability Authority (NDA) refers to Universal Design as “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of age, size, ability or disability”.

3.2.6 The indoor environment provides a range of areas where more than one activity, by an individual child/young person or a group of children/young people, can take place, supporting their choice and interests.

3.2.7 The outdoor space provides opportunities where children/young people can take an appropriate level of risk, supporting the development of autonomy, self-reliance and well-being. (6.2.6)

3.2.8 The outdoor space (where possible) embraces areas of nature and the natural environment, shade and activity areas, promoting children/young people’s interests in their natural environment.

3.2.9 Careful consideration of use is given to other non-activity areas including lobby / entrance hall, storage facilities, toilets, kitchen and food preparation and dining areas.

3.2.10 Accessible, separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls and access to a gender neutral toilet for transgender children/young people. Girl’s toilets should include the provision of sanitary disposal units in at least one cubicle. One toilet and one wash hand basin for every 11 children. (5.1.8)

Useful Information:

‘BEING LGBT IN SCHOOL’

A Resource for Post-Primary Schools to Prevent Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying and Support LGBT Students

Section 4. Specific Guidance in Relation to Transgender Students

Published by glen = gay + lesbian equality network, with support from Department of Education and Skills

3.2.11 Designated areas for staff and parents are available, i.e. staff room, staff toilets, office space and parents' meeting area (where possible).

Useful Information:

'We like this place' NCNA
Guideline 8. Space to Grow - Design Guidance for Early Learning

3.3 Safety

Buildings, outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are safe, well maintained and fit for purpose.

3.3.1 Health and safety policies and procedures include the security of all stakeholders in the service as well as the buildings and contents.

3.3.2 Risk assessments are regularly undertaken and documented to identify, reduce and eliminate any hazards associated with the service, either on site, or when engaging in outings. (4.3)

Useful Information:

A Short Guide to The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
Health and Safety Authority

3.3.3 There is a system in place to manage and monitor access to the service, i.e. maintaining a record of all visitors to the service.

3.3.4 All children/young people attending the service are appropriately supervised, giving consideration to their age and stage of development. There is an adult in the room with groups of children/young people at all times. (1.7.3)

3.3.5 Off site activities are planned in advance, taking account of health and safety requirements and with due regard to the age/stage and needs of children/young people, including:

- Insurance
- Parental consent
- Parent/guardian contact details as well as emergency contact details
- Supervision: adult/child ratios as determined by the services insurance policy
- Children's records: register, medical requirements, food allergies and other relevant details
- Transport: type of transport to be used
- First Aid: first aid kit and person/s who is first aid trained

3.4 Environmentalism

The service takes an active role in caring for both indoor and outdoor environments and contributes to a sustainable future.

3.4.1 The principles of conservation (reduce, reuse, recycle) are observed and evident throughout the service.

3.4.2 The service promotes environmental awareness through activities with children/young people. (6.5.8)

3.4.3 Staff act as good role models in promoting and protecting the environment.

Standard 4.

Health, Well-being and Safety

Management and staff provide and maintain a safe, physically and psychologically, healthy environment for children and young people, staff, parents, visitors and volunteers.

4.1 Legislation and Regulation

All staff employed within the service have a duty of care with regard to health, hygiene and safety issues.

4.1.1 The service has written policies and procedures taking account of legislative requirements that safeguard the health and safety of all those participating in the service, including children/young people, staff, parents, visitors and volunteers.

4.1.2 Staff promote, and support children/young people to develop good habits with regard to hygiene and safety.

4.1.3 There is adequate insurance cover for children/young people attending the service.

4.1.4 There is adequate motor insurance for collections and the driver holds a valid driving licence, the vehicle holds a current NCT certificate, is roadworthy and all children/young people are provided with seat belts and booster seats if necessary.

4.2 Child Protection

Child Protection is central to all practices within the service. The service has a child protection & welfare policy and procedure.

4.2.1 All staff have a comprehensive understanding of, and abide by the Children First Act 2015 and National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011).

See Further Information:

Codes of Behaviour between Workers and Children

Our Duty to Care - Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People

4.2.2 All staff have undertaken, and have access to on-going, training in relation to child protection and welfare. Training is refreshed every three years.

4.2.3 The Child Collection Policy clearly states that only authorised persons can collect a child/young person from the service. (1.6.2)

4.2.4 All staff understand their role and responsibility in meeting children/young people's needs, and are vigilant in responding to, and following up on any concerns about a child/young person's welfare. The Child Protection Policy clearly outlines the process for reporting child protection concerns (e.g., neglect or abuse) and dealing with disclosures in accordance with The Children First Act (2015).

4.2.5 A Designated Liaison Person and a Deputy Liaison Person are appointed.

4.2.6 The Child Protection Policy is clearly communicated to parents/guardians,, and available to all stakeholders. (2.4.4)

4.3 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are undertaken on a regular basis, the findings are recorded and any issues arising from the assessments are addressed. Hazards are clearly identified and managed. The service has a named person with overall responsibility to report directly to management.

4.3.1 The Risk Assessment Policy clearly states the person responsible, timing, frequency and plan of action for undertaking risk assessments.

4.3.2 All staff are actively involved and trained in identifying and managing risks and hazards. Where risks are identified, staff report them to management and take practical steps to manage them. Regular risk assessments are undertaken with regards to the following areas, including, but not limited to:

- Physical environment
- Environmental, for example weather conditions
- Activities
- Equipment
- Outings
- Transport issues

4.3.3 In Line with Section 20 of the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005, a safety statement is prepared, signed and displayed in a prominent place within the service. This identifies the hazards, assesses the risks, and identifies the controls to be put in place, the person/s responsible and the resources necessary to secure the safety of persons at work. (3.3.2)

4.3.4 Management/manager has an ongoing responsibility to ensure all relevant persons are aware of, and understand the Safety Statement.

4.3.5 The Safety Statement is reviewed at least annually or more often as the need arises.

4.4 Fire Safety

The organisation and implementation of effective fire safety is an ongoing duty of the management and all staff in the service.

4.4.1 The service has written plans, policies and procedures for fire and other emergencies.

4.4.2 A designated fire officer is in place.

4.4.3 All staff and volunteers are trained in fire safety procedures.

4.4.4 Monthly fire drills take place with all children/young people and adults in the building. These are recorded and evaluated by management and staff.

4.4.5 All staff, children/young people, volunteers and parents are aware of, and understand the fire safety procedures.

4.4.6 Emergency procedures are displayed, and the designated safe assembly areas are clearly signed. These signs are accessible/readable by all (available in different languages/braille etc.)

4.4.7 A register of all fire safety equipment is maintained.

4.4.8 All fire safety equipment is serviced at least annually, or to a frequency specified by manufacturer, and a record of the service is maintained.

4.5 Food Safety

The purchase, storage and preparation of food is in accordance with the national food regulations (Food Safety Authority of Ireland). The service is registered with the HSE Environmental Health Department if providing food.

4.5.1 All staff handling food have training in the management and implementation of HACCP systems.

4.5.2 The service has comprehensive policies and procedures for the:

- Receipt of food products from food suppliers
- Purchase and transport of food
- Storing and protecting food from contamination

- Handling of food, preparation, including cooking, food processing, cooling and reheating food
- Serving food

4.6 Accidents, Emergencies and Illness

There are comprehensive policies and procedures to deal with emergencies including children/young people or staff who become ill while in the service.

4.6.1 Plans are developed, practised and implemented to manage accidents and incidents effectively.

4.6.2 At least one staff member with up-to-date First Aid training is available on the premises at all times.

4.6.3 All staff have access to first aid training and there is a clear policy & procedure in place to up-date training.

4.6.4 Written policies and procedures are in place for managing children/young people who are unwell including:

- Information for parents/guardians/carers of their responsibilities for sick children/young people
- Contacting parents/guardians/carers if a child/young person is unwell or has an accident while attending the service
- Arrangements to care for a child/young person who becomes unwell or has an accident in the service
- Parental/guardian written consent to treatment, including administration of medication, seeking medical attention, etc.
- Parents/guardians/ understand their responsibilities should a child/young person become unwell or have an accident
- Records of treatment/medication administered

4.6.5 There is a well-stocked in-date first aid box, appropriate to the number of children/young people and staff in the building that is regularly inspected and serviced at least twice annually. A checklist of all contents is contained in the first aid box.

4.6.6 All accidents and incidents are dealt with in accordance with the accident and incident policy, recorded and shared with parents.

4.7 Health and Welfare

The service supports all aspects of children/young people's health and well-being. Children/young people are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own physical health and wellbeing. (4.9)

4.7.1 The service has a policy and guidelines for the exclusion of children and staff who have infectious diseases.

4.7.2 Information is available for staff, children/young people and parents/guardians/carers concerning infectious illness/diseases, immunisation recommendations and exclusion periods.

4.7.3 The service has a clear policy for the administration of medication.

4.7.4 There is a procedure for communicating with the relevant authorities as well as parents/guardians/carers if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease.

4.7.5 Professional advice and instruction is acted upon immediately, for example, closing the service in the event of an infectious illness.

4.8 Supervision

It is the responsibility of the management to ensure appropriate staffing ratios are in place (1.7.3). The implementation of a key person approach ensures one staff member is accountable for every child (5.5).

4.8.1 Staff position themselves at a reasonable distance, but still have an overall view of the children/young people they are responsible for, so they can offer assistance and support as required.

4.8.2 Staff are skilled at adjusting their levels of supervision depending on the area within the service and the skills, age mix, dynamics and size of the group of children/young people being supervised.

4.8.3 The environment, equipment, furniture and activities are arranged to ensure effective supervision while also allowing children/young people access to private and quiet spaces depending on their age and needs.

4.9 Children and Young People's Involvement in Health & Safety

The service supports the development of children/young people's understanding of health and safety by consistently setting good examples, offering clear explanations and modelling and teaching them about health and safety practices.

4.9.1 Staff role model health and safety practices including good hygiene and self-care.

4.9.2 Children/young people are encouraged to learn and practice personal care routines, such as managing body odour, taking care of skin and hair, etc.

4.9.3 Children/young people are encouraged and supported to help each other, cooperate, and to take increasing responsibility for personal health, safety and well-being.

4.9.4 Children/young people are encouraged to discuss any concerns with staff members.

4.9.5 Children/young people are encouraged to be involved in health and safety practices e.g. reviewing and updating first aid kits. (4.6.5)

4.9.6 Children/young people are encouraged and supported to tidy away after themselves, take responsibility for personal belongings; maybe, involved in preparing meals in the service, setting tables, engaging in tasks in the service, etc.

4.10 Well-being of Children and Young People

Children/young people feel welcome, secure and valued. There is a shared understanding of values and respect for all (children/young people and adults) within the service.

4.10.1 A code of behaviour is developed in partnership with the children/young people and parents/guardians, outlining strategies for supporting respectful interactions between individuals and groups. (5.6.5)

4.10.2 The service provides opportunities and experiences that help to build children/young people's confidence, increase motivation and help them to develop positive dispositions.

4.10.3 Information material is available to children and young people on mental health and wellbeing, sources of support, etc.



4.10.4 The service has an anti-bullying policy and procedures, with input from children/young people and parents/guardians, in place to prevent and raise awareness of bullying among the children/young people in the service and to investigate and deal with bullying. (5.8) (7.2.2)

4.10.5 The service adopts and supports an anti-bias approach that respects and acknowledges the diversity of the children/young people, parents/guardians and families attending. (1.1.1)

Useful Information:

Section 2: DIVERSITY, EQUALITY and INCLUSION – DEVELOPING an ANTI-BIAS APPROACH
Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education
Department of Children and Youth Affairs

4.10.6 Children/young people, are enabled to express their views and voice their opinions, where they choose to do so, in a respectful manner.

4.10.7 Staff communicate respectfully and appropriately with all children/young people, each other, parents/guardians, families, and other stakeholders using the service.

4.10.8 The dignity and privacy of children/young people is respected at all times.

4.10.9 Staff build positive relationships with all children/young people, parents/guardians, families and each other.

4.11 Food and Nutrition

The service provides appropriate food and nutrition, and promotes positive habits and attitudes to healthy eating and physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

4.11.1 The healthy eating policy ensures a wide variety of well balanced and nutritious meals, snacks and drinks of adequate quantity are provided.

4.11.2 A hot nutritious meal is provided for all children/young people who are in the service for a period longer than one hour, if required.

4.11.3 Before school services provide a nutritious breakfast, if required.

4.11.4 Children/young people have access to food at different times during the day, for example, fruit bowl. Potable water is freely available.

4.11.5 Children/young people have time and space to sit and enjoy their meals and snack times in the service.

4.11.6 Meal and snack times are seen as social occasions where children/young people and staff share positive dining experiences including preparation and table setting, taking time to interact, catch up, share stories and interests, etc.

4.11.7 Children's/young people's individual needs are taken into account, such as specific dietary, religious or cultural requirements.

4.12 Health Promoting Activities

Healthy eating and health promoting activities are featured through a range of activities, this could include discussion, play, stories, music, poems, visits, cooking/baking/preparing food, research projects, newsletters, etc.

4.12.1 Staff support, consult and engage with parents/guardians regarding positive health promotion messages.

4.12.2 The service works with parents/guardians to support children/young people in adopting lifelong healthy eating attitudes and behaviours.

4.12.3 The service incorporates health promoting activities throughout their programme, for example, Dental Health Foundation, Healthy Ireland Smart Start.

Useful Information:

Nutrition Standards for School Meals

These Standards were developed with the assistance of safefood and the Health Service Executive in cooperation with members of the School Meals Programme in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and Department of Education and Skills.

4.13 Internet, Digital Media, and Mobile Technology

A safe and supportive internet environment is provided in the service. Children/young people are supported in developing awareness and responsibility, in relation to the appropriate use of the internet, digital media and mobile phones. Children/young people and parents/guardians are involved in developing policies and procedures regarding social media, mobile phones/tablets and screen time.

Useful Information:

The Digital Age of Consent has been set at 13 years in the Republic of Ireland

'CyberSafeIreland' Annual Report 2017

4.13.1 Staff and children/young people can access the internet including social media (where the child meets the age of digital consent) in a safe manner.

4.13.2 Use of mobile phones policy for both staff and children/young people.

4.13.3 Quality of screen time policy including, computer games, and television use.

4.13.4 Parents/guardians, children/young people are consulted and involved about what digital and social media their child/young person has access to when in the service.

4.13.5 Staff create awareness and provide information in relation to cyberbullying and E-Bullying. (5.8.2)

4.13.6 All policies and procedures relating to children/young person's use of the internet, digital media and mobile phones are agreed with and shared with parents/guardians and children/young people.

Standard 5.

Nurturing Relationships and Supportive Interactions

All children and young people attending the service feel welcome, secure and valued. Staff build warm, positive, collaborative relationships that support children's/young people's social skills, self-esteem, well-being and identity.

5.1 Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

All children/young people feel valued and are free from discrimination and prejudice. Staff plan and create opportunities to help children/young people learn about equality, diversity, fairness and respect for others through their play, activities and interactions.

5.1.1 The service has a comprehensive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy supporting the participation of all children/young people. This includes children/young people from identified minorities, regardless of their cultural background, ability or disability.

5.1.2 The staff promote culturally responsive and inclusive practices. Diversity, equality and inclusion underpins all aspects of practice within the service.

5.1.3 Positive attitudes are developed and encouraged. Staff challenge inappropriate practices and attitudes.

5.1.4 The staff incorporate content and materials reflective of the communities' languages and cultures for children/young people with English as an additional language, ensuring that all children/young people have equal opportunities to engage in one-to-one and small group conversations with staff.

5.1.5 Management and staff encourage respect for individual children's/young people's differences, and enable them to develop an understanding of themselves as being significant, respected and having a sense of belonging.

5.1.6 The values and beliefs of the children, parents/guardians/carers and their families are respected and valued.

Useful reading:

**DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION CHARTER
AND GUIDELINES FOR
EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS 2016**

5.1.7 The service is committed to providing accessible services to children and young people with disabilities.

5.1.8 The service is committed to providing safe, accessible services to children and young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).

Useful Information:

'BEING LGBT IN SCHOOL'

A Resource for Post-Primary Schools to Prevent Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying and Support LGBT Students

Published by: glen = gay & lesbian equality network, with support from Department of Education and Skills

5.2 Nurturing Relationships

The setting supports children and young people's social and emotional development and staff foster practices and activities that build pro-social skills and establish a safe and positive climate that actively promotes healthy and inclusive relationships.

5.2.1 Positive and responsive relationships are consistently promoted between staff and children/young people, children/young people and their peers, staff and colleagues, and with other programme partners including families and the community.

5.2.2 Staff nurture peer relationships to actively support children and young people's overall growth and development.

5.3 Supportive Interactions

Fostering positive adult – child/young people and peer interactions, connections and relationships with their wider socio-cultural environment, is central to the role of staff in school aged settings.

5.3.1 Staff are approachable, engaged and interested, they act respectfully towards children and young people.

5.3.2 Staff are welcoming, listen actively, model positive behaviour and maintain a positive tone of voice throughout the session in all interactions with children/young people, parents/guardians etc.

5.3.3 Staff interact in a supportive and encouraging manner to support children and young people's learning and development.

5.3.4 Staff share control in their conversations with children and young people.

5.3.5 Staff use positive interactions with children and young people which include open ended questions, and acknowledging and extending interaction strategies to support their learning and development.

5.3.6 Staff support positive peer to peer interactions.

5.3.7 Positive social skills are role-modelled with all individuals in the environment and reinforce positive social interactions.

5.3.8 Staff direct positive attention to all children and young people and provide 1:1 support and guidance.

5.3.9 Staff are aware of the different personalities within the group and are able to anticipate situations before they arise.

5.3.10 Staff accommodate unexpected changes that may occur throughout the day and adjust activities and the schedule to reflect the children's and young people's emerging needs.

5.3.11 Staff display empathy, understanding and support in their interactions towards individual's feelings and assist children and young people in understanding and processing their own emotions.

5.3.12 Staff consistently follow through with behaviour guidance strategies.

5.4 Developing Relationships with New Children/Young People

The transitions policy and procedures specifies ways for staff to support new children/young people to settle in, helping them to develop positive relationships with adults and other children/young people.

5.4.1 A system is in place to enable children/young people and parents to visit the service prior to their start date so they can get to know staff, their key person, other children/young people, the service layout and its operation.

5.4.2 Staff use the settling in period to develop relationships with the children/young people, getting to know their names, their interests, likes and dislikes.

5.4.3 Staff engage with parents/guardians/carers and develop positive relationships with families. Opportunities are created to discuss interests and concerns.

5.4.4 Staff provide an emotionally safe environment where children/young people feel safe and secure.

5.5 Key Person Approach

The service operates a key person approach. The key person builds a unique relationship with each child/young person for whom they are responsible, supporting transitions, and is a link between the service, the child/young person and their parents/guardians.

5.5.1 Parents/guardians are informed about the key person approach (how it works, the benefits, and the role and responsibilities of the key person).

5.5.2 The key person, parents/guardians/carers and children work together to share information, for example about the child's/young person's personality/dispositions, interests, needs, likes and dislikes, preferred play/recreational activities, culture and languages spoken at home.

5.5.3 The key person uses the information gathered, together with their observations, conversations and their learning about the personality/dispositions of each of their key children/young people to enable them to provide more meaningful support for individual children/young people if necessary.

5.5.4 The key person approach provides opportunities for staff to plan small group learning experiences for children based on their knowledge of the individual child's interest and developmental needs.

5.5.5 The key person supports children/young people as they navigate transitions between settings e.g. early childhood to primary school, school to school aged childcare settings and secondary school.

5.5.6 Staff are trained in the key person approach and have a clear understanding of its complexity and what is involved.

5.5.7 Staff engage in both formal and informal processes to share information on children's learning and development with parent's/guardians/carers and families.

See further Information:

Key Person Approach

Positive Relationships with Children in the Early Years

Barnardos

5.6 Listening to, Hearing and Responding to the Voice of the Child

Management, staff and children/young people work together to develop policies, and procedures, make decisions, and agree about other issues that impact upon the children/young people.

5.6.1 A variety of consultation methods are used to ensure that all children/young people have the opportunity to express their opinions specifically about their play, hobbies, interests, likes and dislikes, and also to raise any issues and concerns.

5.6.2 Children and young people's ideas and opinions are listened to and acted upon. A Code of Behaviour is developed in partnership with children/young people, which encourages development of children's/young people's self-esteem, well-being and positive relationships with others.

5.6.3 Staff actively listen to children and young people and share control of conversations.

5.6.4 Adults support and facilitate children/young people in their emotional and social development, understanding how these are foundational in mental well-being.

5.6.5 Children and young people are involved in discussing and negotiating an agreed code of behaviour. (4.10.1)

5.6.6 Experiences and routines are organised to maximise opportunities for children and young people to voice their opinions and suggestions.

5.7 Responding to Children's and Young People's Behaviour

Children and young people are supported to engage in regulating their behaviour and resolving conflicts. Strategies are in place to ensure there is positive support for, and cooperation between children/young people.

5.7.1 Staff are proactive in responding to positive and pro-social behaviours and model these behaviours in their interactions with children/young people.

5.7.2 Staff ensure prevention strategies are in place to minimise conflicts and promote and develop social and emotional skills.

5.7.3 Staff encourage and facilitate children/young people to resolve any interpersonal conflicts that may arise, to help them learn and practise appropriate problem solving strategies.

5.7.4 Staff plan individual intervention plans for children/young people with persistent challenging behaviour by supporting developmentally appropriate skills, such as active listening, cooperation, conflict resolution and opportunities for children/young people to act as peer supports and mentors.

5.7.5 Staff ensure that the environment is conducive to supporting children/young people develop positive relationships with peers.

5.7.6 Staff give children/young people opportunities to develop leadership and decision-making skills.

5.7.7 Staff focus on the developmental needs of children/young people by nurturing autonomy with support and guidance, and offer challenges children and young people can rise to.

5.7.8 Staff are supported in managing children/young people's behaviour through support, supervision and training where appropriate.

5.8 Bullying Prevention Strategy

Staff understand and recognise the different forms of bullying behaviours that may occur. They work together to develop and maintain a shared vision of a positive emotional environment.

5.8.1 The service has clear policy and procedures in promoting positive behaviour so that children/young people, parents/guardians and staff know that certain behaviours, i.e. bullying will not be tolerated. The policy should reflect the age and stage of children's/young people's development and include procedures to be followed. These procedures should involve due process and fair hearing. (4.10.4)

Staff are conscious that bullying behaviour may stem from a child/young person being bullied themselves, or reacting to domestic situations.

The underage perpetrator needs support as well as the target - Children First

5.8.2 The management/manager creates awareness, provides information and affords opportunities for discussions with staff and children/young people on the dangers of bullying, including cyberbullying and e-bullying.

5.8.3 Parents/guardians/carers are supported to engage in bullying prevention initiatives to help/support them talk to their children/young people about bullying, empowering them to develop social skills for preventing, identifying and reporting any bullying behaviour.

5.8.4 Empathy, kindness and compassion for others is encouraged and modelled by the adults in the setting.

Standard 6.

Programme of Activities

The service provides a wide range of play, rest and recreation activities to meet children and young people's individual and collective needs and interests. Staff work collaboratively with children and young people to develop a programme that is rich in experiences and opportunities that support the holistic development of all children and young people.

6.1 Planning for Play and Recreation

The service provides a well-balanced, inclusive programme of activities for play, rest and recreational opportunities to support children's and young people's health, well-being, learning and development.

6.1.1 All stakeholders are actively involved in planning experiences and activities that provide a balance between unstructured and structured time, where children/young people are free to select activities of their choice and to play alone or with other children/young people.

6.1.2 Consultation with children/young people happens on an ongoing basis to allow them to actively contribute as participants and developers of the school age programme, so that it is based upon their needs, likes and interests.

6.1.3 Children/young people are encouraged to plan, evaluate and help with implementing activities.

6.1.4 Parents/guardians/carers are invited and encouraged to share their expertise, hobbies and interests with the children/young people in the service.

6.1.5 Plans are based on consultation, and are inclusive of the needs, likes and interests of individual children/young people and groups of children/young people.

6.1.6 Programme plans are regularly reviewed and modified as necessary, to ensure they are meeting the interests and needs of all children/young people.

6.1.7 Planning is sufficiently flexible to allow children/young people to take part and choose what they would like to do and is adaptable to meet their changing needs.

6.2 Programme of Activities

The service has a strong focus on play to support children/young people's holistic development and provides a broad range of activities and opportunities to support the needs and interests of all children/young people attending.

6.2.1 There is a daily and weekly routine which is flexible and meets the needs and requirements of all children/young people attending the school age service.

6.2.2 The programme of activities is based upon the services' ethos of inclusion, accommodating and reflecting the diverse nature of the families and children/young people attending.

6.2.3 The cultural background of the children/young people in the service is positively represented in the environment, through pictures, books, music, activities, resources, food, etc.

6.2.4 The children/young people attending the service are given the opportunity to learn about their family differences and cultures through play, projects, cooking and tasting different foods.

6.2.5 The programme of activities takes into consideration the individual interests and abilities of the children/young people and the information gathered from parents.

6.2.6 The programme of activities offers children/young people opportunities to take risk and challenges them to explore new learning and develop new interests. (3.2.7)

Risk in relation to play:

Safe risk - the opportunity to explore and experience new learning, enabling children and young people to challenge and test their limits.

6.2.7 The programme of activities offers opportunities for children/young people to be exposed to the arts, for example: dance, movement, drama, storytelling, puppetry, music, sound, painting, drawing, malleable materials, junk art, sculpture, 3D, textiles, fabric, photography, animation, natural materials.

6.2.8 All children/young people have autonomy in the environment (indoor and

See Further Information:

Voice and Choice Curriculum Framework - Part Two
Moloney, Higgins & Ryan. 2007
Limerick City Childcare and Mary Immaculate College

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with choice and freedom to move about freely within the service.

6.3 Play

The service provides a wide range of play activities and opportunities to support children's and young people's holistic development including well-being, communication and language skills, and their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

6.3.1 There are opportunities within the programme to take part in a variety of play experiences including engagement in the arts and creative pursuits, physical activities, games with rules, technology, science, nature and project based activities.

6.3.2 The programme offers a variety of experiences and opportunities to encourage the development of new talents, skills, interests and hobbies.

6.3.3 Staff understand and appreciate the value of play for children/young people of all ages and continually monitor the quality of the play provision.

6.3.4 Staff inspire the children/young people to explore the natural environment, by experiencing outdoor learning, developing a greater knowledge and understanding of nature, including horticulture, i.e. gardening and growing activities and caring for the environment.

6.3.5 The space and layout of both the indoor and outdoor environments allows children/young people to use their initiative, explore and develop their interests.

6.3.6 Opportunities are created to broaden experiences and interests through organised visits to recording studios, local radio stations, museums, art galleries etc.

6.3.7 The service offers a programme of activities, opportunities and experiences that caters for children/young people of all ages and abilities to include:

- **Everyday opportunities** to cover a wide range of activities that are always available for children/young people to explore and experiment or relax with.

- **Experiential or project-based learning opportunities** to give children/young people a chance to develop hobbies, skills and interests and get excited about learning.
- **Community service learning experiences** to provide various opportunities to prepare and engage children/young people in a range of projects within their community.

6.4 Rest and Relaxation

Opportunities and spaces for children/young people to rest, relax and enjoy quiet private time are a key aspect of service provision.

6.4.1 Both children/young people and staff understand the importance of taking time to rest and relax. Comfortable furniture, e.g. sofas, bean bags, large story cushions, and other soft furnishings are provided.

6.4.2 Developing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and stretching exercises, yoga, mindfulness are encouraged and taught by suitably trained people, who could be invited to the service by management.

6.4.3 Opportunities and spaces are created for children/young people to relax and enjoy private time. (3.2.2)

6.4.4 There are areas for individual children/young people to take time for themselves and social areas for them to talk quietly with friends or staff. (3.2.1)

6.5 Resources and Equipment

A wide range of age appropriate resources and materials are available, taking into consideration the mixed ages of children/young people attending the service.

6.5.1 The equipment, furniture and resources in the environment are accessible, well maintained and appropriate to the ages of the children/young people attending

6.5.2 There are lots of natural and open-ended materials that allow children/young people to engage in different types of play experiences.

6.5.3 The equipment and resources are accessible to children/young people of all abilities.

6.5.4 The resources and equipment reflect the diversity of children/young people, including ability and gender.

6.5.5 There is a range of real life materials in the environment such as, pots, pans, cups, telephones, bags, clothes, etc. to facilitate pretend play.

6.5.6 There is a variety of books covering a wide range of subjects reflecting different themes, cultures, etc. There are also opportunities for children/young people to visit the local library.

6.5.7 There is a variety of musical instruments to explore sound and make music. Musical instruments could be brought from home, with parental guidance. There are opportunities for children/young people to visit local recording studios/radio stations etc.

6.5.8 Suitable waste materials are gathered to inspire creativity through recycling/upcycling. (3.4.2)

6.5.9 There are opportunities to use technology such as computers, cameras, tablets, in line with internet and screen use policies. (4.13.)

6.5.10 There is a wide variety of additional resources and equipment to offer challenge and stimulate children/young people's curiosity.

6.5.11 Children/young people are consulted and involved in purchasing new materials or equipment.

6.6 Supporting Children and Young People's Homework

The homework policy ensures that there is consultation with parents/guardians/carers and schools to help support children's learning by providing fun and enjoyable activities that complement the primary school curriculum. (7.2.2) (7.1.5)

6.6.1 Staff foster positive attitudes towards homework and encourage a positive outlook for learning, bolstering children's confidence in their ability.

6.6.2 Staff use fun and exciting activities to support homework e.g. quizzes, stories, art, discussion, games, etc. if instigated by the children/young people.

6.6.3 Staff ensure there is a supportive atmosphere when children/young people are engaged in their homework by encouraging peer support and shared learning.

6.6.4 The service provides support, suitable space and a maximum time allocation for children to spend on their homework. (2.5.1)

Approximate Maximum Time Allocation:

Junior infants – first class = 20 minutes

Second class – fourth class = 40 minutes

Fifth and sixth class = 1 hour

6.6.5 Parents/guardians/carers are responsible for sharing their child's reading exercises, checking and signing off their child's homework.

Useful Information:

**Homework. Supporting Parents Supporting Children
National Parents Council Primary**

Standard 7.

Collaborative Partnerships with Parents, Families and Communities

Collaborative and respectful partnerships and links with children and young people, parents, families, schools and communities are central to service provision.

7.1 Partnerships with Parents and Families

The management/manager works closely with parents/guardians and values and encourages parental involvement. The service has a system in place to provide information to parents/guardians on their child's learning, development and well-being, etc. and involvement in supporting the service within the community.

7.1.1. The service has an effective enrolment and orientation process for parents/guardians/carers and families.

7.1.2 Parental involvement is central to the success of the service. Parental involvement is actively encouraged, and staff develop and maintain positive and responsive relationships with parents/guardians/carers and families.

7.1.3 Parents/guardians/carers contribute to, and are aware of and understand key policies, procedures and information about the service.

7.1.4 There is a policy to provide parents/guardians with information about their children. Staff ensure there are opportunities for formal and informal information sharing about children/young people with their parents/guardians/carers at the end of each day, as necessary and appropriate.

7.1.5 Parents/guardians/carers are consulted about the level of homework support provided and are aware of the services' homework support policy. (6.6)

7.1.6 All staff familiarise themselves with the parents' and families' cultural and religious backgrounds and value and respect them.

7.1.7 Written information including policies and procedures are translated into different languages for all families attending.

7.1.8 Parents'/guardians/carers views and opinions are sought and considered when evaluating the school age programme and are subsequently provided with regular up-dates following evaluation of the programme.

7.1.9 There is an information board and/or on-line communication which provides regular current information on, for example, community events, policy

updates, outings, parental information sessions and other information relevant to parents/families.

7.2 Partnerships with Schools

The service and schools work together, as far as possible, to provide children/young people with smooth transitions between both settings.

7.2.1 Effective relationships are built and fostered with schools that the children/young people attend and also, with schools in the area that don't have any children attending the service at the moment.

7.2.2 The service works in partnership with the schools in the local area and collaborates in various ways, for example by:

- . Informing them of the service, its ethos, aims, objectives and programme of activities
- . Sharing information/reports on activities and events going on in the service
- . Meeting and establishing relationships with school staff
- . Inviting school personnel to family or community celebrations held by the service
- . Attending school activities
- . Exchanging newsletters
- . Obtaining the schools holiday schedule as soon as it is available
- . Agreeing a joint strategy for the prevention of bullying (5.8) (4.10.4)
- . Discussing the homework support policy of the service in collaboration with the schools and parents (6.6)

7.2.3 Transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities between the service, parents/guardians/carers and school.

Useful Information on Transitions:

QDOSS (2006). Quality Development of Out of School Services (QDOSS):
An agenda for development. Compiled by Dr. Paul Downes on behalf of QDOSS. Dublin: QDOSS

7.3 Partnerships with Communities

The service reflects community values and attitudes, contributes to, and utilises, community resources.

7.3.1 The service has a list of names and contacts in the local area that can enhance the programme of activities, such as, libraries, museums, parks, theatres, garden centres, etc.

7.3.2 Partnerships are developed with local community groups, community services such as, youth groups, local businesses, training agencies, colleges, universities, homes for the elderly and other relevant organisations.

7.3.3 There are opportunities for key people from the community to visit the service such as the local Garda, dentist, public health nurse, fire service, gardeners, musicians, artists, athletes.

7.3.4 The staff and management are involved with local and/or national professional networks/peer support groups, their City and County Childcare Committee, National Voluntary Childcare Organisations.

7.3.5 The staff implement activities that promote and benefit the local community and to make children/young people visible as active citizens in the community. (6.3.7)

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Appendix 1

List of Policy Areas

Administering Medication Policy
Admissions and Fees Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Arrivals and Departures Policy
Child/ Young Person Induction Policy
Child/ Young Person Protection Policy
Child/Young Person Collection Policy
Confidentially Policy
Dangerous Plants Policy
Data Protection Policy
Emergency Evacuation/Closure Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Fire Safety Policy
Food Safety Policy
Grievances and Complaints Policy – Staff, Parents and Children
Health and Safety Policy
Healthy Eating Policy
Homework Policy
Illness and Accidents Policy
Infection Control Policy
Interactions Policy
Involving Parents, Guardians and Carers Policy
Key Person Policy
Manual Handling Policy
Missing Child/Young Person Policy
Mobile Phone Policy
Outings and Visits Policy
Pandemic Flu Policy
Participation Policy
Partnership Policy
Photography, Video and Social Media Policy
Play, Recreation and Rest Policy
Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy
Risk Assessment Policy
Safe Recruitment Policy
Safe Use of Internet Policy
Safeguarding Children/young people Policy
School Drop off and School Collection Policy
Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs Policy
Staff Absence Policy

Staff Appraisal, Support and Supervision Policy
Staff Disciplinary Policy
Staff Induction and Development Policy
Staff Recruitment Policy
Staff Training and CPD Policy
Student Induction Policy
Student Work Placement Policy
Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
Transitions Policy
Uncollected Children Policy
Volunteer policy
Waiting List policy
Whistleblowing Policy

This list is not exhaustive and it is possible that some policies link with others

Appendix 2

Criteria for Calculation of Ratios

Calculation of ratios should also take into account the following criteria:

- The age profiles of the children who are attending the school aged service.
- The length of an individual child's day in the service.
- The number of day's children attend the service per/week/annum.
- The number of days the school aged childcare service is open per annum.
- The availability of a school collection service and the impact on the staffing level during collection times.
- Homework requirements of the children.
- Inclusion of children with disabilities or special needs.
- Space and layout of service.
- Insurance cover.
- The type of service provided i.e. wraparound service, stand-alone school aged service, integrated into full-day care service, home-work club, after school in a school service etc.
- Qualifications and experience of the staff working directly with the children in each age-group.

Ratios for outings and transport – follow insurance stipulations.

