# *(Policy Number) SAMPLE* POLICY ON ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

## Rationale and Policy Considerations

The service has a duty of care to all of the children and their families, and to the adults who work in or visit the service, to prevent accidents and to respond effectively to accidents and emergencies that occur at the service or while in the care of the service, i.e. during planned outings.

Parents or guardians have a right to expect that any accidents, incidents or injuries to their children will be taken seriously and that a quick, efficient response will be available. In the event of serious injuries, treatment will be accessed immediately. They are also entitled to expect serious investigation and, if necessary, remedial action to be taken to prevent a similar accident from occurring again.

The purpose of the policy is:

* To help to prevent accidents and injuries.
* To ensure that in the event of accident, incident or injury, the necessary actions are taken to protect the safety, health and welfare of children, staff members or visitors.
* To ensure that any accidents, incidents or injuries are managed in a controlled and precise way and that the children’s welfare is a priority.
* To ensure the provision of a clear, structured procedure for staff members to deal with emergency situations.
* To ensure that accidents and incidents are recorded in a consistent manner.
* To provide parents or guardians with appropriate information to make necessary decisions.

### Legislation and regulatory requirements

* The [Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/221/made/en/print) require that a policy on Accidents and Incidents is written and implemented.
* Under the [Safety Health and Welfare at Work Acts 2005 and 2010](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/10/enacted/en/html) and the [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2007/si/299/made/en/print), employers have a duty to ensure the employees’ safety, health and welfare at work as far as is reasonably practicable and to carry out risk assessments and provide safety statements.
* [The Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1981/si/390/made/en/print)

### Children’s needs

Children need:

* To be as safe and protected as possible.
* The adults responsible for their care to respond as quickly and efficiently as possible in the event of an accident or incident.
* If they are injured to be kept under adult supervision and as comfortable and reassured as possible until their parents/guardians arrive or medical assistance is provided.

### Parents’/Families’ needs

Parents/guardians need to:

* Be confident that procedures are in place that ensure that the service is a safe place and their child’s needs will be fully met in the event of an accident, incident or injury.
* Know that should an accident, incident or injury involving their child occur:
* they will be contacted at the earliest possible time;
* they will be informed sensitively of the accident/incident; and
* following any investigation, all relevant information about their own child will be shared with them.

### Staff needs

The staff members need:

* Absolute clarity on the service’s approach to dealing with accidents, incidents or injuries involving any of the children, any staff member or any visitor to the service.
* To know exactly what the procedure is immediately following any accident, incident or injury to ensure the protection of the children and each other as well as any visitors to the service.
* To be clear on what information must be recorded and who must be informed/notified of what, when and in what way.

### Management needs

Management needs to:

* Know that this policy provides the information and clarity that all staff members and parents/guardians who use the service need, in order to help them to protect the safety, health and welfare of the children, all staff members and visitors to the service.
* Ensure that any safety issues and/or notifications of any accidents/incidents are brought to their attention, that all required reporting and notifications are carried out appropriately and efficiently.

### National Quality Frameworks

* [Tusla: Quality and Regulatory Framework](http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/)
* [Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education](http://siolta.ie/)

## Definitions/Glossary

*[Include definitions here of any words used that may need explanation.]*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Injuries | These may result from choking, falls, burns, drowning, swallowing toxic or other materials, cuts from sharp objects, exposure to environmental hazards such as chemicals or lead, animal bites or other accidents. Injuries can also be due to bites, fights, assault or abuse. |
| Serious injury | Injury to a child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner in hospital or otherwise. |
| Incident | An unusual, unplanned event that may result in injury, illness or damage or disruption of normal service operations. |
| Accident | An unpredictable and therefore, unavoidable event. Including an **unintentional injury**. |

3. Policy Statement*[Outlines the principles, values and purpose of the policy. It will generally be quite short. The Policy Statement can be included in the Parents/Guardians Handbook.]*

All possible precautions are taken to prevent and avoid any accidents/incidents that could cause harm to children or adults (staff and visitors) in the service. This includes carrying out risk assessments and providing a safety statement as guided and informed by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), ensuring the environment is safe (while allowing for appropriate levels of risk and challenge) and providing adequate and appropriate supervision of the children at all times.

Should an incident occur, staff will immediately alert the manager or designated person. It is the responsibility of the manager to determine whether the incident is deemed to be a critical incident. In the case of a critical incident, the manager or designated person will lead the emergency response guided by the **Critical Incident Plan[[1]](#footnote-1).**

Where there is an accident or an incident in which a child or an adult in the service is injured, staff members will ensure that the child or adult is attended to, proper treatment is given and appropriate measures are taken to avoid any worsening of the situation.

The injury will be given immediate attention and be assessed by a staff member with First Aid training to determine what type of medical attention, if any, is required.

The GP and/or the emergency services will be contacted immediately if there is any concern for a child’s welfare. Steps to take in an emergency are detailed clearly on the notice boards of the children’s rooms and the office.

Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately if the accident, incident or injury involves a child and is serious enough to require attention from a qualified medical practitioner or the emergency services. In the case of an adult, their next of kin will be contacted immediately if the injured person requires an ambulance and/or hospitalisation.

At least one person working with the children will have up-to-date training in First Aid and Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

At a minimum one person trained in First Aid for children will be on the premises at all times. At least one person with training in First Aid for children will always accompany the children on outings.

A written Incident Report will always be documented and kept on record in the event of any accident, incident or injury to any child or adult in the premises or while in the care of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*name of the service*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. State agencies will be notified as appropriate and as required by legislation or regulation.

4. Procedures & Practices*[Outlines the specific steps and/or guidance to be followed in order to implement the policy.]*

**Preventing accidents, incidents and injuries**

The risk of an injury happening is directly related to the physical environment and how this is managed. The level of risk also relates directly to the level of supervision of children, especially while at play, and to the ways in which children are supported to deal with any potential conflict with their peers.

The environment is reviewed and assessed regularly and frequently to ensure that there are no hazards for young children.

Adequate staff ratios are always maintained and team members are assigned specific responsibility for named children to ensure that at least one staff member knows where each child is and what they are doing at all times.

We promote realistic play limits and behaviour limits that guide children’s safety and security rather than curb their play experiences, curiosity or creativity.

Safety is ensured and injuries prevented by:

* Supervising children appropriately.
* Regularly checking both indoor and outdoor play areas for, and getting rid of, hazards.
* Using safety equipment for children, such as car seats and seat belts (when travelling), protective helmets and padding, such as for the knees and elbows.
* Providing appropriate soft fall surfaces under climbing equipment.
* Checking for and removing choking hazards in areas where children under the age of three years are present (or any older child who regularly puts items other than food in their mouth).
* Ensuring that no cords are accessible to children, in particular cords on blinds.
* Ensuring that all hazardous cleaning materials are stored in a locked cupboard out of reach of children.
* Ensuring that bars in cots or stairs are no more than 6cm apart for round bars/7.5cm apart for flat bars.
* Keeping all electric cords out of reach of the children.
* Teaching children how to use playground equipment safely e.g. ensuring that another child is not standing near the swing as they are swinging.
* Understanding what children can do at different stages of development. Children learn by testing their abilities. They should be allowed to participate in activities appropriate for their stage of development even though these activities may possibly result in some minor injuries, such as scrapes and bruises. Children should be prevented from taking part in activities or using equipment that is beyond their abilities and that may result in serious injury such as broken bones.
* Ensuring equipment, furniture and materials used by the children are appropriate for use and used in a safe manner.

Children are allowed to engage in risky play and explore the limits of their bodies. While injuries can happen during any type of play, the following are ways to help prevent injuries:

* Opportunities for children to release anger in acceptable ways are provided. Running outside, kicking balls, and other physical play allows children to let off steam. Outdoor play in general helps to keep children engaged and calm.
* Coping skills are taught and reinforced.
* Children are encouraged and supported to express feelings verbally.
* Clear limits are set for children's behaviour. The children are involved in deciding those limits so that they understand their purpose. Parents are made aware of the limits.
* It is explained to a child who is showing aggressive behaviour how the aggressive actions affect the other person.
* A child's aggressive behaviour will be redirected where possible by, for example, engaging the child in play or activity that interests the child.

(See Policy on Managing Behaviour for further detail.)

Safety drills involving staff and children are regularly practised randomly, without warning and at different times of the day.

**Risk Assessment and Safety Statement**

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, risk assessments are carried out regularly to identify any hazards present, assess the risks arising from such hazards and identify the steps to be taken to deal with any risks.

A safety statement is prepared which is based on the risk assessment. The statement contains the details of staff members who are responsible for safety issues.

These persons are: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The risk assessment and safety statement can be viewed in\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The safety statement is reviewed by the management on a regular basis.

*[The Health and Safety Authority has published guidelines on risk assessments and safety statements. See* [*www.hsa.ie*](http://www.hsa.ie) *]*

*(*See Risk Management Policy*.)*

**Dealing with accidents/injuries**

Children are often injured unintentionally during the normal course of a day. Many of these injuries, such as scrapes and bruises, are minor and only need simple First Aid. Other injuries may be serious and require medical attention beyond First Aid.

A 112/999 call or a call to a local emergency number should be made in the case of any of the following:

* You believe the injury is life threatening or there is a risk of permanent injury to the child/adult, for example -
* Severe neck or head injury
* Choking
* Shock
* Chemicals in the eyes, on the skin, or ingested in the mouth
* Near-drowning.
* They are acting strangely, much less alert, or much more withdrawn than usual.
* They have difficulty breathing or are unable to speak.
* Their skin or lips look blue, purple or grey.
* They have rhythmic jerking of arms and legs and a loss of consciousness (seizure).
* They are unconscious.
* They become progressively less responsive.
* They have any of the following after a head injury: decrease in alertness, confusion, headache, vomiting, irritability or difficulty walking.
* They have increasing or severe pain anywhere.
* They have a cut or burn that is large, deep, to the head, chest or abdomen and/or won’t stop bleeding.
* They have a suspected fracture.
* Severe or persistent vomiting.
* They are vomiting blood.
* Their stool contains blood.
* They have a severe stiff neck, headache and fever.
* They are significantly dehydrated: sunken eyes, lethargic, not making tears, not urinating.

If a child or adult is bitten by a child:

* First Aid must be administered.
* Where the bite causes bleeding, it is advisable to attend the GP as soon as possible.
* In the case of a child being bitten, the parents/guardians of both children are notified.

**Responsibilities**

The manager is responsible for ensuring that:

* Risk assessments are carried out and a safety statement is provided
* All staff members are aware of their responsibility to help prevent accidents and incidents
* All staff members know exactly what to do in the event of an accident, incident or injury.

The written procedures, *agreed by the owner/management committee*, are made accessible and each staff member must be made aware of their responsibility to follow the outlined procedure in the event of an accident/incident.

It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that each staff member reads and understands the agreed written procedures.

It is the manager’s responsibility to:

* Ensure that contact details for emergency services are displayed clearly in a readily accessible location close to an easily accessible telephone.
* Ensure that contact details for the local GP are always immediately accessible.
* Ensure that least one member of staff on duty has completed a recognised First Aid course for children (First Aid Response- FAR).
* Provide a properly stocked First Aid box in each section of the service. The First Aid box must be accompanied by a list of essential contents.
* Assign a member of staff to restock the First Aid box after every use and to do a monthly check to ensure that the contents match the essential contents list and supplies are in date. See Appendix Afor First Aid box contents list.
* Contact the emergency services in the event of a serious injury.
* Contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible.
  + - In the absence of the parent/guardian being available arrange for a staff member to accompany a child in an ambulance or to a GP if necessary.
    - Arrange for relief staff, if required.
* Assess whether an incident is to be deemed a **Critical Incident**.
* Assess whether an accident/incident is one which is to be notified to Tusla and/or other appropriate outside authorities and to ensure that this is done effectively and efficiently.

*[Note: it is important that you check the requirements under the* [*Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016*](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/221/made/en/print)*. Further details can be found in the* [*Tusla: Quality and Regulatory Framework*](http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/)*].*

**Procedure in the Event of an Accident or Incident**

1. Immediate First Aid is to be administered.
2. The person trained in First Aid for Children is to make an initial assessment of the injury to ascertain whether medical attention is required.
3. The child is to remain under continuous adult supervision and be comforted until the child recovers or the child’s parents/guardians or the parent’s nominated carer takes charge of the child.
4. In the case of a more serious accident, the child must not be moved and must be kept warm.
5. If an ambulance is needed the person administering First Aid must ask the manager or designated person in charge to call for the ambulance.
6. The manager or person in charge will contact the child's parents/guardians or, if they can’t be reached, their named emergency contact person to advise them of the incident.
7. The manager or person in charge will arrange for emergency relief cover so that one member of the staff team can accompany the child in the ambulance if necessary.
8. If the child has to go to the hospital before the parents/guardians arrive, an adult known to the child must accompany the child and stay until a parent/guardian arrives.
9. The manager or designated person in charge is to decide which staff member should accompany the child.
10. A parent/guardian is to be asked to sign an accident/incident report form as soon as possible to confirm their notification of the accident/incident.
11. The manager or person in charge will contact the Registered Provider (if he/she is not present at the time) to inform them of the accident/incident and the steps taken.
12. The manager or person in charge will contact the parents/guardians of the other children to advise them of an emergency, and request they arrive to collect their children as soon as they can.
13. The manager or person in charge will ensure that the Accident/Incident Report is completed, shared with parents/guardians and signed appropriately.

Information is to be shared with parents/guardians only in respect of their own child.

The accident will be investigated as soon as possible and all necessary corrective and preventative actions to eliminate the risk of recurrence will be taken immediately. Following the investigation, all information will be reviewed to determine if there is a need for a change in policy and/or practice.

It is essential that clear records and any supporting documentary, CCTV or photographic evidence is kept.

A staff member who witnessed the accident/incident/injury completes a report form on all accidents/incidents/injuries that occur in the service.

Maintain an accident/incident report including:

* Name, date of birth and age of the child or adult affected.
* Name of person/s dealing with the accident/incident.
* Date and time of the accident/incident.
* Place of the accident/incident.
* Detailed description of the accident/incident.
* Circumstances surrounding the accident/incident, including any apparent illness or symptoms.
* Name of the parents/guardians contacted and the time they were contacted.
* Nature of the injury.
* Treatment provided – medication or First Aid administered.
* Medical personnel or emergency services contacted and time of contact.
* Details of any person(s) present.
* Details and signatures of any witness/es.
* Names of those to whom the accident was notified and date and time.
* When the child was collected and by whom or removed to hospital.
* Details of the accident area/layout including the number of adults and children present.
* Details of all communications with parents or guardians in relation to the accident/incident.
* Signatures of parents or guardians.
* Details of any investigation completed in relation to the accident/incident.
* Details of all required corrective and preventative actions taken.
* Details of any changes made to policy and/or practice following the review of the accident or incident.
* Details of whether the incident/accident has been notified to Tusla – see Appendix B.
* Details of notification of the accident/incident to other external party such as:
  + Tusla Social Work Services if there is a child protection concern.
  + Garda Síochána where there is a danger to staff or children, or a criminal offence.
  + Health and Safety Authority where the incident is dangerous or a staff member has been injured as a result.
  + The Service’s insurance, where appropriate.
* Name and signature of the person writing the report.
* Time and date of the report.
* Review and close off of the report by the Registered Provider.

**Follow up contact with the child’s parents/guardians**

Out of concern for all of the children and families attending the service, in the case of an accident involving a child we would wish to contact the child’s parent on the day following the accident/incident to know how the child is recovering.

**Reporting to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate**

In addition, a Notification of Incident Form is completed and submitted to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate where any of the incidents detailed in Appendix B of this policy occur. The form used is available at [www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/notification-of-incidents-form/](http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/notification-of-incidents-form/)

**Retention of records**

Records are retained for a period of two years from the date on which the child to whom the record relates ceased to attend the service.

## Communication Plan *[For staff & families]*

All parents/guardians are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Accidents, Incidents or Injuries on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

The Policy Statement will be included in the Parent Handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with staff at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/guardians in the Policy Folder located in ……………………………………...

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents/guardians and staff will receive written notification of any updates.

## Related Policies, Procedures and Forms *[List of all related documents. The policies in bold are those required under the Early Years Regulations 2016.]*

* **Outings Policy**
* **Policy on Safe Sleep**
* **Policy on Administration of Medication**
* **Policy on Managing Behaviour**
* **Risk Management Policy**
* Confidentiality Policy
* Health and Safety Policy
* Records and Record Keeping Policy
* Parent/Guardian Involvement Policy
* Accident Report Form

7. References/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation*[List of any relevant Legislation and Practice Guides referred to in drafting the Policy.]*

* [Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework](http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/)

# [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx)

# [Child Care Act 1991](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1991/act/17/enacted/en/html)

* [Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/221/made/en/print)
* [Health and Safety at Work Acts 2005 and 2010](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Legislation/Acts/Safety_Health_and_Welfare_at_Work/) and the [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2007/si/299/made/en/print)
* Supporting Quality, Barnardos, 2008
* [CIP Critical Incident Plan Toolkit for Childcare Providers, Galway City & County Childcare Committee and Partners](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Critical_Incident_Plan_English_Feb2012.pdf)
* [RoSPA Fact Sheet 8: Coping with Accidents](https://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/play-safety/sample-accident-form.pdf)
* [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

## Who Must Observe This Policy

This policy must be observed by all managers and all staff members.

## Actions to be Followed if the Policy is not Implemented

*[Add in any relevant actions to be taken]*

10. Contact Information*[Who to contact for more information]*

If you need more information about this policy, contact:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Phone number or email |  |

## Policy Created

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date this policy was created |  |

## Signatures

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name and position | Signature |
| Approved by |  |  |
| Approved by |  |  |

## **Review Date**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date this policy will be reviewed |  |

***Appendix A***

*[You will need to create an appendix listing Contents of First Aid Box. See [Tusla: Quality and Regulatory Framework](http://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/) for what is required.]*

***Appendix B***

Notification of accident / incident must be made to Tusla in writing using the **Notification of Incident Form** available on the Tusla website, within 3 working days of the service becoming aware of any of the following accidents and/or incidents occurring in the Service:

* The death of a child while attending the Service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the Service
* The diagnosis of a child attending the Service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service, considered to be suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981, a notifiable disease is a disease that is on the list of diseases (and their respective causative pathogens) contained in the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 and subsequent amendments. A list of the notifiable diseases is available at: [www.hpsc.ie/NotifiableDiseases/](https://www.hpsc.ie/NotifiableDiseases/)
* The Registered Provider will notify Tusla at ey.registration@tusla.ie of the Infectious Disease when the service has been contacted by the Department of Public Health Medicine, HSE, and advised that the service has a confirmed case as listed. The Department of Public Health Medicine will advise as to the next steps regarding precautions to be taken and follow up of contacts and procedures.
* An accident or incident that occurs in the Service and that results in the Service being closed for any length of time
* An unplanned closure is where the service has to close due to unforeseen events. That is the service has to close unexpectedly. This may be for personal reasons (e.g. bereavement) or any other reason e.g. (burst pipe in the service, external factors, etc.)
* A serious injury to a child while attending the Service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner in hospital or otherwise
* An incident in respect of which a child attending the Service goes missing while attending the Service. (S.I.221 of 2016)

1. For guidance to develop a Critical Incident Plan see **CIP Critical Incident Plan Toolkit for Childcare Providers** Galway City & County Childcare Committee and Partners. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)