**This document provides guidance for policy development in outline/template form only. It is not a sample policy.**

# *(Policy Number) TEMPLATE* FIRE SAFETY POLICY *WITH GUIDANCE*

## Rationale and Policy Considerations

All providers of services for children must take all reasonable measures to guard against the outbreak of fire and in the event of a fire occurring ensure as is reasonably practicable the safety of the staff and children on the premises.

The purpose of this policy is to meet the legislative and regulatory requirements that are in place to ensure that the service is fully prepared for in terms of fire safety.

### Legislation and regulatory requirements

Under the [Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/221/made/en/print), Regulation 10 requires a Fire Safety Policy. This means a policy specifying:

* The frequency and timing of fire drills to be carried out in the service; and
* The way in which the record in writing referred to in Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures is to be maintained.

The policy must also specify the way the registered provider ensures that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are:

* Aware of and trained in the procedures to be followed in case of fire in the service; and
* Familiar with the location of any fire fighting equipment and trained in the use of such equipment.

There are further requirements under:

* Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child sets out what is required for implementation with regard to the stated policy requirements.
* Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures sets out the fire safety records that must be retained by an early years service, how long they must be kept for and who can have access to these records.

This policy is developed with reference to Fire Safety in Preschools 1999 available at [www.housing.gov.ie](http://www.housing.gov.ie).

In addition the Fire Services Department at your local authority may have specific guidance in relation to fire safety for your service. The Fire Authority for your area can be contacted for clarification on any fire safety issue. Contact details of local Fire Authorities can be accessed at <http://www.housing.gov.ie/local-government/fire-and-emergency-management/fire-authorities/fire-authorities>

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 also sets out specific requirements for employers regarding fire safety requirements. *[It is important that this is considered within your service policy also.]*

**Children’s needs**

Children need:

* The adults who are responsible for their safety to be appropriately prepared for dealing with the risk of fire.
* The adults to be absolutely clear on all aspects of fire safety, the service’s approach to fire safety and their responsibilities for ensuring the children’s safety.

**Parents’/Families’ needs**

Parents/guardians need:

* To be absolutely clear on what the service does to prevent fire, to ensure that any fire would be quickly detected and to ensure that their child will be prepared for an emergency evacuation and will be safely evacuated from the building should an alarm sound or a fire occur.
* To know that they will be contacted at the earliest opportunity in the event of any fire occurring at the service.

**Staff needs**

All staff members need:

* To know clearly and precisely what is required of them in relation to their specific responsibilities to help prevent fire occurring, to ensure that any fire will be detected quickly, to prepare the children for emergency evacuation and to ensure that everyone is safely evacuated from the building should an alarm sound or a fire occur.
* To be clear on the procedure for informing parents/guardians.
* To be familiar with the location of fire-fighting equipment.
* To be clear on what must be recorded, who is responsible for recording it and how.
* Very clear and precise written step-by-step procedural guidance to help them with correctly implementing this policy. *[The procedures needed are outlined in the sample policy statement below.]*

**Management needs**

Management needs to ensure that:

* All of the legislative and regulatory requirements relating to fire safety are adequately and appropriately met.
* All staff team members are provided with clear and precise information on what their individual responsibilities are in relation to fire prevention.
* Any fire can be detected quickly, to prepare the children for any emergency evacuation and to safely evacuate everyone from the building should an alarm sound or a fire occur.
* All staff members are clear on their responsibilities in relation to monitoring, reviewing and record keeping including what must be recorded and how.
* A Fire Safety Officer is nominated, appropriately trained and is clear on the role and responsibilities.

**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/)
* [Keeping Communities Safe – A Framework for Fire Safety in Ireland](http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/migrated-files/en/Publications/Community/FireandEmergencyServices/FileDownLoad%2C32381%2Cen.pdf)

## Definitions/Glossary

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

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

At *[insert name of service]* we do everything necessary to ensure that all reasonable measures for fire prevention and fire safety are taken.

We have a nominated Fire Safety Officer *[this is a member of staff who is assigned responsibility for the implementation and overseeing fire safety in the service].* Our Fire Safety Officer is appropriately trained. All staff members are trained in fire prevention and fire safety procedures and practices. Each individual staff member understands their role and responsibilities in relation to the fire safety measures in the service.

All of the children who are old enough are educated about fire, fire safety and the evacuation procedures and are supported to regularly practice how to evacuate calmly and safely from the building.

Appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and fire extinguishers) are in place and we ensure that they are properly maintained and in proper working order.

Records are kept of monitoring and maintenance of all fire detection and control equipment. Records are also kept of all fire drills as well as all monitoring and reviews carried out.

Fire exits are clearly identifiable. All fire doors are kept free from obstruction and are easily opened from the inside.

We have clear written procedures attached to this policy for all aspects of fire safety including:

* Fire prevention
* Training and informing staff members
* Educating and preparing the children on fire safety and safe evacuation
* Raising the alarm if necessary and contacting emergency services
* Emergency evacuation
* Notifying parents of any accidents or incidents
* Monitoring, reviewing and recording all activities relating to fire prevention and fire safety

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

*[There are common elements in all fire procedures but the actual procedures used in any setting will need to be tailored to that particular setting/building.*

*You will need to write clear and precise procedural guidance* ***for your own setting*** *for each aspect of fire safety (as outlined above) to accompany your Policy Statement.*

*When writing these procedures it is also important to take into account the nature of the activities in the building, as well as the availability of adults to respond to emergencies and to fulfil the roles required by the procedures.]*

### Fire Prevention

*[Chapter 2 of Fire safety In Preschools 1999 sets out the required Fire Prevention Measures.]*

#### Fire Safety Officer

*You will need to:*

* *Nominate a Fire Safety Officer, this is a member of staff who is assigned responsibility for the implementation and overseeing fire safety in the service. Clearly outline their responsibilities and duties. (Refer to Chapter 2 of Fire Safety in Pre- schools 1999)*
* *Ensure your nominated Fire Safety Officer is appropriately trained.*

### Training and information

*You will need to:*

* *Ensure staff receive instruction and training on fire prevention and fire safety procedures. The required training is set out in Chapter 2 of Fire Safety in Preschools 1999 and includes that staff are:*
* *Aware of and trained in the procedures to be followed in case of fire in the service; and*
* *Familiar with the location of any fire fighting equipment and trained in the use of such equipment.*
* *Outline the procedure for ensuring that clear information and appropriate training is provided. The way in which people respond when they discover a fire or hear a fire alarm will determine whether the fire will pose a threat to their safety. Prompt and appropriate action by staff members will allow them to leave the building unharmed and can help to make sure that any fire is brought under control quickly.*
* *State in your procedures that fire safety training is to be included in your inductions (as well as having regular fire drills).*
* *State how often staff will receive training.*

#### Fire safety equipment

*You will need to:*

* *Name who is responsible for updating and monitoring the fire prevention and fire safety equipment in the building and making sure it is in working order (e.g. fire extinguishers and fire blankets). This must be a person qualified in fire safety - a competent service company.*
* *Specify who is responsible for ensuring that records are kept of the monitoring and maintenance carried out, how these records are to be kept and for how long.*

*The service’s Fire Safety Officer or a staff member must determine by visual inspection that the equipment is in place and is ready to use if required.*

***Fire Doors***

* *Ensure that fire doors are kept closed at all times (unless they are doors which automatically close when the alarm is sounded) to prevent the spread of the fire and/or toxic smoke.*

*Consider also:*

* *How you can make sure fire doors are kept free of obstructions?*
* *How to ensure that corridors, landings, stairways and escape routes are kept clear at all times of anything that is likely to cause a fire or accident, or slow down evacuation in an emergency. Everyday objects, such as a box of toys left in a corridor, can get in the way during an emergency evacuation.*
* *How to ensure that all legal requirements and safe working practices are followed when storing, using and getting rid of hazardous materials.*

### Procedure for preparing the children for fire drill/evacuation

*[You will need to:*

* *Outline clearly how fire drills with the children are to be carried out, the frequency and timing of fire drills and that fire drills will be practised by the setting off of the fire alarm.*
* *Make it clear what record keeping is required and who is responsible for recording the fire drills that take place.]*

### Procedure in the event of fire

Fire Safety in Preschools 1999 Chapter 2 (Section 2.5) sets out the requirements for the emergency procedures and evacuation drills in the event of Fire or other emergency.

In addition your local authority may have specific guidance in regard to evacuation and fire drills

*Everyone needs to know how to respond correctly in the event of fire. A plan must be prepared outlining the exact procedures to be followed in the event of fire. This predetermined plan can be broken down as follows:*

* *Raising the alarm*
* *Calling the fire brigade*
* *A clear evacuation procedure*
* *An assembly point and roll call procedure*
* *Fighting the fire (if safe to do so)*
* *Assisting the fire brigade.*

***Raising the alarm***

*Depending on the size of the service the fire alarm system may be very simple or may need to be more complex. All occupants should be aware of how to raise the alarm. Alarm sounders should be different and distinct from any other signal used in the building.*

***Calling the Fire Brigade***

*The Fire Brigade should be called immediately in the event of fire, however small. (Where there is a receptionist or administrator they are often given the responsibility of contacting the Fire Brigade.) When calling the Fire Brigade give clear information including:*

* *Name of the building*
* *Address of the building*
* *Eircode*
* *Directions to the building*
* *Type of fire situation (if available), for example, fire location, fire size, materials involved, persons missing.*

***An evacuation procedure***

*Initiate the evacuation procedure once the fire alarm has been sounded. The evacuation procedure will depend on the building use.*

***An assembly point and roll call procedure***

*Designate an assembly area (or areas) clear of the building. The location of the assembly area needs to be clearly stated in your procedures and, if necessary, shown on a diagram. All building occupants should proceed to the assembly area on evacuation. The assembly area should be clear of access points for the Fire Brigade. A roll call should be taken at the assembly point to ensure all occupants are accounted for. The Fire Brigade should notified about any missing persons when they arrive at the scene.*

***A procedure for fighting the fire***

*It may be possible, by the use of fire fighting equipment such as a fire extinguisher or fire blanket (where it is safe to do so), to control or extinguish a very small fire incident, but any such intervention should not delay evacuation or calling the fire brigade.*

***Assisting the Fire Brigade***

*When the Fire Brigade arrives they need to be given as much information as possible in order to take the best course of action. The type of information required includes:*

* *The location of the fire; materials involved; details of missing persons; location of nearest fire hydrants; location of all access doors to the building; location of any special risks.*
* *Keys for access into any locked areas.*

***Fire evacuation drills***

*Drills should be carried out at regular intervals to test the effectiveness of the predetermined arrangements. The aims of a fire evacuation drill are:*

* *To ensure safe, orderly and efficient evacuation of all occupants of the building to use all exit facilities available in order that occupants are familiar with them.*
* *To test all aspects of the emergency procedures.*
* *To achieve an attitude of mind that helps everyone to respond appropriately in the event of a fire or other emergency situation.*

*Drills must be held at frequent intervals. Fire Safety in Preschools and the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework states that a drill should take place once a month and at the start of the new school year. These drills are undertaken at different times of the day and on different days of the week. The drill should be initiated by activating the fire alarm and all stages of the drill should be observed and a review of the drill should be held. Any deficiencies can then be noted and remedied. (Where the fire alarm system is connected to a remote monitoring centre, this centre should be notified of the proposed drill.)*

### Emergency evacuation procedure

*[As each setting and building is unique you will need to put together your own fire evacuation procedure. Although there are common elements in all fire procedures, the actual procedures used in your building will need to be tailored to that building.*

*The basic fire procedure that you write for your service should address the following:*

* *What to do when you discover a fire.*
* *What to do when you hear the fire alarm or evacuation signal.*

*The procedure should then expand as necessary - consider the following points when writing your own procedure:*

* *What the people with particular responsibilities should do.*
* *How you are going to evacuate children (including sleeping children, children not yet walking) or adults with special needs or disabilities.*

*Should a fire or emergency occur on your premises, all occupants must be able to evacuate the building safely and quickly.*

* *On hearing the fire alarm, children must be instructed to leave the building in single file and in a calm, orderly manner.*
* *The person in charge of each room must indicate the exit route to be used and everyone must be directed to a predetermined assembly point.*
* *An area outside the building must be designated as an assembly point.*
* *It must be clearly marked and easily identified.*
* *The assembly point must be far enough away from the premises to afford protection from the heat and smoke in a fire situation.*
* *The assembly point must be in a position that does not put children or adults at risk from emergency vehicles responding to the incident.*
* *Attendance registers and visitors book should be held at a central point and must be brought to the assembly point when the alarm sounds.*
* *One person should be nominated to have overall responsibility to ensure that a roll call is conducted in the event of evacuation of the premises.*
* *When all have assembled at the assembly point, a roll or count must be made immediately to ascertain that no one has remained in the premises.*
* *Any visitors or contractors in the premises at that time must be included.*
* *The count at the assembly point must be checked using the attendance registers and visitors book to verify that everyone is out of the building.*
* *Each room leader must report to the nominated person in charge of the evacuation procedure to verify that everyone in their charge is accounted for or to inform him/her of any persons missing.*
* *The person in charge of the roll call must identify themselves to the Fire Brigade on their arrival. In doing so, vital information can be relayed to the Fire Safety Officer, which will dictate the necessary actions to be carried out by the Fire Brigade.]*

#### [Other points to consider when outlining your procedures

* *How often you carry out an emergency evacuation drill and where and how is it recorded, monitored and reviewed.*
* *Where you keep the register, how it is accessed and by whom.*
* *If you keep an emergency evacuation box/bag near the emergency exit, that includes blankets, nappies, first aid kit and so on.*
* *Instructing people not to collect personal belongings.*
* *Instructing people not to use a lift (where applicable).*
* *The youngest children and babies, and how staff will be deployed to evacuate them. Do you need any special equipment?*
* *Closing all doors and windows, if it is safe to do so, and specifying who will do this.*
* *Turning off all electrical equipment, if it is safe to do so, and specifying who will do this.*
* *Not going back into a building unless it is safe to do so.*
* *Fire instruction notices and evacuation routes and assembly points must be displayed clearly for all to see.*
* *You will need to write a personal emergency evacuation procedure for every person who has a disability which may affect their ability to recognise that an emergency is taking place or to evacuate a building unaided. This procedure will be specific to the individual’s needs and abilities.]*

### Procedure for informing parents/guardians

*[Outline how you will access emergency contact details for parents, staff members or others as necessary.]*

### Monitoring, reviewing and recording all activities relating to fire prevention and fire safety

*[Make it clear what record keeping is required, including:*

* *Recording the fire drills that take place.*
* *The number, type and maintenance records of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms.*
* *How records are stored.*
* *The retention of records for five years after it has been created.*
* *Who has access to records]*

**Fire Risk Assessment**

Under the [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Legislation/Acts/Safety_Health_and_Welfare_at_Work/), a Fire Risk Assessment is 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 Fire Safety issues.

These persons are: ………………………………………………………..

The Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety Statement can be viewed in:

…………………………………………………………………………………

The Fire 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)*]*

* *Document your Fire Risk Assessment.*
* *Specify who is responsible for all aspects.*
* *Outline how a fire risk assessment is to be carried out to identify any possible dangers and risks.*
* *Consider who may be especially at risk.*
* *Eliminate or reduce the risk from fire as far as is reasonably possible and provide information on general fire precautions to deal with any possible risk left.*
* *Outline measures to make sure there is protection if you use or store flammable materials.*
* *Include guidelines to make sure people can safely and easily escape quickly if there is a fire.*
* *Create a plan to deal with any emergency and keep a record.*
* *Review when necessary.*
* *Specify who is responsible.*

*Risk assessments in relation to fire safety should be highlighted to everyone, including the committee members where applicable.*

*There are five steps to fire risk assessment:*

#### Step 1 Identify the fire hazard

*For example, how could a fire start? What could burn? Are exits accessible and are they easy and quick to open without having to locate any keys?*

#### Step 2 Identify people at risk

*For example, employees, visitors to the premises, and anyone who may be particularly vulnerable such as children, older people, disabled people.*

#### Step 3 Evaluate, remove or reduce and protect from risk

*Think about what you have found in steps 1 and 2 and remove and reduce any risks to protect people and premises.*

#### Step 4 Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

*Keep a record of the risks you have identified and what actions you have taken to reduce or remove them.*

*Make a clear plan of how to prevent fires and, should a fire start, how you will keep people safe. Make sure all staff members know where firefighting equipment is located in the building, what to do in the event of a fire and, if necessary, that they are trained for their roles.*

*Do you have designated routes out of your building? What are they? Do you have a designated assembly point? Include a sketch or map as part of your policy.*

#### Step 5 Review

*Regularly review your Risk Assessment to make sure it remains up to date and reflects any changes that may have happened. For example, if you change the layout of any rooms or how you use each room. If there are any changes to how your premises is used, you must tell the Fire Safety Officer.*

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

All parents are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Fire Safety on registration. 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. All staff members will receive training and 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 in the Policy Folder located in ……………………………………...

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

Parents and the staff team 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.]*

* **Risk Management Policy**
* **Staff Training Policy**
* **Policy on Accidents and Incidents**
* Health and Safety Policy
* Records and Record Keeping Policy
* Communication 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/)
* [Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/221/made/en/print)
* [Safety Health and Welfare 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)
* [Fire Safety in Pre-Schools](https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Fire-Safety-In-Preschools.pdf) Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 1999
* [Fire safety procedure Early Years and Childcare Service](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/50225/Fire-safety-procedure.pdf) Surrey County Council, UK
* [Fire Safety for Preschools and Childcare Facilities: General Guidance](http://www.limerickchildcare.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Fire-Safety-Folder-Apr-15.pdf) County Limerick Childcare Committee and Limerick County Fire and Rescue Service, 2015, contains some useful templates.
* [Fire Safety Information](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Fire/) from The Health and Safety Authority
* [Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education](http://siolta.ie/)
* [Keeping Communities Safe – A Framework for Fire Safety in Ireland](http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/migrated-files/en/Publications/Community/FireandEmergencyServices/FileDownLoad%2C32381%2Cen.pdf)
* [Guidance from Cork City Fire brigade](http://www.corkcityfirebrigade.ie/fireprevention/firesafetymanagementforyourorganisation/#introduction)

*[Also see useful links listed in the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework Appendix 7.]*

## 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 |  |