**Maynooth University Creche**

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**Parent Handbook**

**See also the main Policy Document for further information.**

**Parents are encouraged to refer to the full document**

**available in the service upon request.**

**Address: North Campus, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co Kildare**

**Phone number: 01 7083319**

**Email: creche.care@mu.ie**

**Website: www.maynoothuniversity.ie/creche**

**Manager: Mary Coleman**

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**Welcome to Maynooth University Creche**

Welcome to Maynooth University Creche. We are committed to providing an early care and education service of the highest standard. We are registered with Tusla - The Child and Family Agency. Trained, motivated and friendly staff are the cornerstone of our service.

We aim to provide a quality service and a stimulating environment for children to develop their social, personal and educational skills and learn through a planned curriculum.

Your child’s welfare and your peace of mind is most important to us. We provide a warm, loving, home-from-home environment, where each child is treated with respect and will develop and learn as individuals while feeling safe and secure.

We have a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that our staff are obliged to adhere to. This handbook is a shorter version of the main document, developed for your convenience. You are welcome to read our main document at any time. Just ask us!

Thank you for choosing Maynooth University Creche.

**Manager**

**Mission Statement and Ethos:**

The Maynooth University Crèche was established in 1977 to support the students and staff of the University. Its inception was to enable students to continue their education and for staff to provide said education.

The aim of the crèche is to provide a safe, secure, stimulating environment which embraces children;

* to value all children as individuals and appreciate their uniqueness;
* to support the learning and development of each individual child by providing an intergraded, balanced, broad, stimulating and differentiated curriculum.

To achieve this, we work in partnership with parents, carers and children as a multidisciplinary team. We want to provide a secure learning environment, which enables children to be

* Respectful of themselves and others
* Happy and confident
* Independent and inter-dependant
* Compassionate and caring
* Tolerant and patient
* Curious and creative
* Appreciative and appreciated.

We endeavour to ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and maintain high levels of practice.

**1. Children’s Charter**

* *Children’s welfare and their rights to secure, healthy and happy childhood are paramount.*
* *The experiences children receive in their early years are critically important in terms of future development.*
* *Children are entitled to expect that all adults will respect, uphold and preserve their rights and to ensure that their feelings and wishes are considered.*
* *Children should have the opportunity to make choices and develop a sense of responsibility for their own actions appropriate to their age.*
* *Children, parents and carers should not be discriminated against, particularly in relation to colour, age, race, religion, gender, disability medical conditions or background.*
* *Parents should be recognised and respected as children’s first and continuing educators.*

**2. Our Purpose**

We offer a Full Day Care as defined in the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. These are the regulations that govern our service and we are inspected under these regulations by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. It is aimed at families who require full-day care for their children for reasons of work or respite.

Our modern and friendly purpose built crèche is located on the North Campus directly across from the student apartments. The crèche is available to staff and students of the university.

The aim of this service is to provide a full day care facility for children aged 1 year to 5 years and 6 months. We open 50 weeks per year and daily from 8:45am-6:15pm (term-time) and 9am-5:30pm (Summer), Monday to Friday. We have capacity to cater for 59 children at any one time and our ratios are listed overleaf.

This Service is a community-based facility operated by a Board of Directors.

We deliver a Playbased Curriculum.

**Key Personnel:** **In-House**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Manager (Person in charge): | Mary Coleman |
| Deputy in the absence of Manager: | Deborah Lawlor |
| Health and Safety Officer: | Mary Coleman |
| Fire Officer: | Karen Tracey |
| First Aid Co-ordinator: | Mary Coleman |
| Designated Liaison Officer: | Niamh Lynch and Mary Kelly |
| Deputy Designated Liaison Officer: | Niamh Lynch and Mary Kelly |
| Data Controller: | Mary Coleman |

 **Key Information:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Opening Hours:**  | 8:45am-6:15pm (term-time)9am-5:30pm (Summer) |
| **No of Weeks per year opened:** | 50 |
| **Capacity:**  | 57 |
| **No. of Children attending the Service:** | 38 |
| **Age Range:**  | 1 year to 5 years and 6 months |
| **Ratios:** | 1 – 2 Years 1:52 – 3 Years 1:63 – 6 Years 1:8 |
| **Curriculum:** | Playbased |
| **Address:** | North Campus, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co Kildare |
| **Phone Number:** | 01 7083319 |
| **Email:** | creche.care@mu.ie |

**3. Our Facilities**

* Two toddler rooms, one playschool room, one preschool room, one ECCE room, one large dining room
* Large kitchen and office
* Two nappy changing rooms
* Two cot rooms
* An outdoor area with part grass and part safety flooring
* Outdoor play equipment consisting of slide, playhouse, obstacle cubes, sand-pit.
* An outdoor planting area for growing vegetables
* Trained and qualified staff
* Buggy storage area.

The rooms are designed in such a way as to meet the developing needs of each individual child. The children are guided through a range of educational and play activities at their own pace. Our staff create a positive and secure environment where children feel confident in exploring their surroundings.

**Toddler Room 1:**

Number of children: 10 children

Age range: 1yr – 2.5yrs

Staff/Child Ratio: 1:5

The room provides a wide range of activities to aid all areas of development. On offer are puzzles, music, books, circle time, sand and messy and home play, to name but a few. To further enhance childrens’ interest and development, monthly themes are carried out such as colours, farm animals, pets, shapes. Children will have lots of opportunity to play outside therefore ensure appropriate clothing is provided. Time for sleep or rest is allocated for whenever a child needs it.

**Toddler Room 2:**

Number of children: 6 children.

Age range: approximately 2yrs and 3yrs

Staff/Child Ratio: 1:6

For busy hands and curious minds, this room provides short structured programmes, such as sand and water, puzzles, circle time, music and dance, assorted arts and crafts, construction play. Varied learning programmes through monthly curriculum themes, e.g. shapes, numbers, colours, etc. also aid areas of development. Children will have plenty of opportunity to play outside therefore ensure appropriate clothing is provided. Time for sleep or rest is allocated after the child’s lunch time.

**Playschool:**

Number of children: 6 children

Age range: 2yrs to 3.5yrs

Staff/Child Ratio: 1:6

Once again, we focus on the child’s overall development and use a variety of toys and equipment to aid and refine the child’s physical, intellectual emotional and social skills. Children are still very young, so short works periods are encouraged. Tabletop activities such as jigsaws, sorting and pairing are introduced to promote motor skills and hand eye co-ordination along with introducing children to basic numeracy and literacy skills. Home corner, role play, various arts and crafts and music also contribute to developing your child’s growing confidence. Varied learning programmes through monthly themes, e.g. friendship, transport, nursery rhymes also aid areas of development and interest. Outdoor play is very important, and children are given plenty of opportunity to go outside, therefore ensure that appropriate clothing is provided. Time for sleep or rest is provided every day after lunch time.

**Preschool:**

Number of children: 16 children

Age range: 3yrs to school going age

Staff /Child Ratio: 1:8

Our focus is on the whole child and developing the child’s physical, intellectual, emotional and social skills. Once a child is in preschool, they are encouraged to be independent in toilet facilities, mealtimes and self-care. Children are encouraged to get involved in the planning of their day. This room provides a variety of activities taking into account diversity and equality. Monthly curriculum themes such as life cycles, community workers, me and my family also support learning and interests. Children are given plenty of opportunity to go outside, it is essential that appropriate clothing is provided.

**4. What you Should Bring for your Child**

Parents/guardians are required to provide the following, clearly marked with the child’s name:

* Nappies, wipes, creams and/or powders
* A full change of clothes
* Wellies
* Sun hats
* Any prescribed medications
* Small snack. Please see information below on healthy snacks

**What not to bring:**

We don’t encourage your child to bring their own toys, apart for a small comforter. Children are not allowed mobile phones or tablets.

**5. Curriculum**

We are fully committed to being guided by the principles of Síolta and the national curriculum framework Aistear. We recognise how important high quality early childhood experience can be in children’s lives. This Curriculum aims to encourage active learning, problem solving, effective communication, creativity and socialisation. It aims to give children a good start which will benefit their long-term success in life. This service recognises the diversity of experiences and relationships that shape children’s lives.

**Aistear, *the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework:***

*Aistear* is Ireland’s curriculum frameworkfor children from birth to six years. It assists us plan for and provide challenging and enjoyable learning experiences that can enable all children to grow and develop as competent and confident learners in the context of loving relationships with others. *Aistear* describes the types of learning and developmentthat is important for children in their early years and offers ideas and suggestionson how these might be nurtured. We use the Aistear guidelines to help plan our curriculum. We also encourage you as parents to research this curriculum framework and the benefits of play. The research is so clear about the benefits of play, so it is not surprising that play is **central to the Irish early childhood curriculum framework. The Irish word ‘Aistear’ means ‘Journey’ and together we look forward to supporting your child’s learning journey in Maynooth University Creche.**

We encourage learning through free play with a range of activities including imaginative play, books & storytelling, music activities, sand and water, arts and crafts and energetic play. We encourage messy play as we believe the benefits are enormous for children. We believe that the ‘process’ of making a piece of artwork is more important than the ‘end product’ so make sure you support your child when they present their masterpieces to you and remember it was created from their imagination and their wonderful skills.

**Computers and the Internet:**

Computers are not available to children in the service and children do not have any access to the internet.

**6. Admission and Enrolment**

We aim to be clear and transparent about our enrolment policy.

* Places are allocated on a first-come, first served basis.
* A waiting list is established when all places are taken and child at top of the list is given first available place depending on availability for the type of place required.
* Children with additional needs and disabilities are welcome based on the resources available to us and any decisions regarding enrolment will be made in the best interest of the child.
* Parents/guardians are required to complete the Registration Form.
* All details regarding a child must be completed and any relevant important information or specific diet or health requirements must be noted.
* Children must be toilet trained before starting in ECCE free preschool programme.
* A deposit of €150 is taken, in advance, when a child is given a place. Deposits are refunded upon departure of the service or in accordance with funding schemes.
* We ask you to clarify any guardian or custody information that may be relevant at Registration

**7. Clothing**

No uniform is necessary, but we do ask that all children wear suitable, comfortable clothes, ideal for art work and outdoor messy play. (No ‘good’ clothes please). Velcro shoes are preferable. All long hair must be tied up. No hoop or long earrings are permitted for safety reasons.

**8. Allergies**

Please inform us if your child suffers from any allergies. This is recorded on the Registration Form. A Care Plan may be required, especially if your child needs life-saving medication. Management will discuss this with you.

**9. Attendance**

It is essential to the efficient running of the service that you inform the Manager if your child is unable to attend the service and follow up with a telephone call to inform the Manager when your child will be returning. It should be noted that the income received by the service from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs is based on the regular basis. A register of the times and days that children attend is kept. Continued failure to attend may result in your child’s place being withdrawn. If a child is absent for 4 weeks, he/she will become a ‘leaver’ on our system. If a child is absent for more than 4 weeks (without notice) the place can be filled by another.

**10. Children with Additional Needs**

We are committed to providing all children with the opportunity to access our service regardless of their ability but within the expertise and resources available and in accordance with the best interests of the child. Your child may benefit from assistance from AIM, the Better Start **Access and Inclusion Model** (AIM) which is designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. **This applies to ECCE children only**.

Please talk to us about this if you think your child is eligible for supports under this programme. There are a range of possible supports available.

For more information check http://aim.gov.ie/

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**11. Fees**

**The Fee Schedule is on display.**

Parents/guardians are required to sign a Parent Agreement regarding fee payment:

* Students pay fees on a weekly basis, in advance, by Student Card.
* Staff pay fees on a monthly basis, in advance, either through their salary or by bank transfer.
* A receipt will be issued with every payment.
* A deposit of €150 is taken, in advance, when a child is given a place. Deposits are refunded upon departure of the service or in accordance with funding schemes.

**Reviewing Fees:**

* Fees are reviewed annually by the management.
* Parents/guardians will be informed by giving service notice of increase in fees.

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**Payments in relation to Holidays or Illness of the Child/Children:**

* Parents/guardians will be required to pay for any days/weeks that their child/children do not attend the Service.
* In the case of a long term, medically certified illness of a child, parents/guardians are advised to keep in contact with the Manager on a regular basis. Further arrangements will be discussed with the Parent/Guardian.
* There is no reduction in fees for Public/Bank Holidays.

**Closure in Exceptional Circumstances:**

In the event of the closure of the Service in exceptional circumstances, that is beyond the control of the Management i.e. adverse weather conditions, full fees for the closure period will be payable.

**Late Collection of Child/Children from the Preschool:**

Parents/guardians should note that due to legislative requirements under the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016and *Children First* – Child Protection Guidelines two members of staff are required to be with the child/children.

* Parents/guardians are advised to keep within their agreed time for collection of their child/children for the above reasons. We require that all children should be collected by the designated time in order that the Service may follow health and safety practices to ensure that the Service may close safely.
* Please see the Collections and Arrivals Policy and Procedure.

**Withdrawal of Children:**

Parents/guardians sign up and agree in the Parents/Guardians Fee Agreement Form that they will:

* Give notice, in writing, that the child/children are leaving the Service
* Give one month's notice or pay one month of fees.
* Management also reserve the right to request that the Parent/Guardian withdraw their child/children from the Service if they are not ‘settling in’ or adapting to the environment. The Management agrees to give two weeks' notice of this to the Parent/Guardian so that they can make alternative arrangements.

**Non-Payment of Fees:**

* Non-payment of fees may result in loss of placement.
* A repeated failure to pay fees may result in suspension or withdrawal of child’s place until the matter is resolved.
* Any delays in payments must be discussed in advance and agreed with management.

**12. Working in Partnership with You**

* We recognise the importance of working in partnership with you and that you have a central role in educating your child
* We have an “open door” policy where families are always welcome but where the needs of all of the children in our care are always the first priority
* We will give you regular information about your child’s progress and welcome your contribution – please share information with us
* Please tell us of any difficulties that your child is experiencing at home such as bereavement, illness, relationship breakdown, a new baby – all these can change a child’s behaviour and we want to help
* If a parent needs to be contacted in relation to a concern about behaviour we will do this in a helpful rather than a complaining manner and we will together, try to resolve the situation
* Regular exchange of information with parents is important. Please inform us of change of personal details (e.g.) new house, phone number.
* Employees or students may not use social networking sites to befriend parents or accept requests to become a friend from parents who use this service or to exchange any information about the service or children attending the service or colleagues working at this service. We ask you, as parents/guardians to support our position.

**13. Settling In**

We aim to ensure children feel safe and secure in the absence of their parents/carers. We will therefore endeavour to make the settling-in process a positive experience for children and will work closely in partnership with parents/carers to ensure this is achieved. We recognise that in some cases there may be particular difficulties experienced by children, parents/carers, and staff during the settling-in period and we are prepared to explore and consider various ways of settling children into the service. All children are individuals and we plan to meet their individual needs and resolve any difficulties quickly and smoothly. If you are experiencing challenges in relation to settling your child we will work with you to assist in making this transition.

**14. Attendance, Arrival and Collection**

**Attendance:**

It is essential to the efficient running of this service that you inform the Manager if your child is unable to attend the service and follow up with a telephone call to inform the Manager when the child will be returning. A register of the times and days that children attend is kept.

**Arrivals:**

* Parents/guardians or their nominated person gain access to the Service by using the intercom system to buzz in.
* A member of staff will register each child on arrival.
* Parents/guardians are asked to ensure that all external doors are securely closed for the safety of all the children when they leave.
* If a child will not be attending, we request that parents/guardians advise us.

**Collection Policy:**

* Parents/guardians must collect their child by the agreed collection time. Parents/guardians will be asked to give the names of at least two other people who are authorised to collect the child. If the parent is late arriving to collect the child, the person in charge will endeavour to contact the parent. In the event of being unable to contact the parent, the person in charge will contact the other named persons to collect the child. Make sure you inform those named on the Registration form as collectors.
* Children will not be released into the care of a person under the age of 18 years or to a person who appears to be incapable of caring for the child. Should this situation arise the staff will contact an authorised collector. If no one is available to collect your child, we may have no option but to contact the TUSLA social work child protection team or Gardai.
* We ask that parents/guardians to do not collect their child from the service while under the influence of alcohol. This can lead to embarrassment and worry within the team. If parents/guardians feel that this situation may arise they should arrange for an authorised collector to collect their child.
* In the event of a parent collecting another child a prior arrangement must be made.

**Attempted collection by a person who is not on the child’s records:**

Children should be collected only by the adult/s named on the Collection Authorisation. Should the parent/guardian have an emergency and neither they nor the collector is available they may nominate an emergency person. This must be done by email or text where a full description of the collector is given. The parent will give the collector a password to use for verification purposes and ID must be presented. We will verify this arrangement by calling the parent as a double check before releasing the child.

**Late Collection of Children:**

We understand that sometimes a parent is unavoidably delayed when coming to collect their child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. Parents/guardians in this situation must contact the Manager to say that they will be late and arrange with staff what to do.

**Early Collection of Children:**

We have a complete open-door policy. However, ask that parents/guardians to let us know if they will be picking up their child early and if they are in a hurry so we can have the child ready.

**Late Drop Off:**

We ask that children be dropped off at the correct time to avoid disrupting the group once they have started and so that they child benefits from the full daily programme.

**Separated and Divorced Parents:**

Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this.

* We cannot refuse either parent to collect their child unless a court order is in place.
* We ask that parents give us information on any person that **does not** have legal access to the child.
* Where custody of a child is granted to one parent, we would ask parents to clarify the circumstances with us. This information will remain confidential and will only be made known to the relevant staff. If there are any legal documents i.e. custody order, barring order we would ask parents to provide us with a copy to keep on file.

**Attempted collection by a parent who has been denied access in a court order:**

* A parent who has been denied access to a child through a court order will not be permitted on to the premises
* If the parent who has been denied access becomes threatening or violent and insists on removing the child from the service, this will be viewed as trespassing. The service will in this event contact the Local Garda.

By law, an unmarried mother is the automatic guardian of a child born outside of marriage. In some circumstances, unmarried fathers have automatic access. The service should be informed about access rights. Unmarried fathers will automatically become guardians of their children if they meet a cohabitation requirement. An unmarried father who cohabits for 12 months with the child's mother, including 3 months following a child's birth, will automatically become the child's guardian.

This provision is not retrospective, so guardianship will only be acquired automatically where the parents live together for at least 12 months after 18 January 2016.

**15. Car Parking**

* We currently provide a set down area located in Ryehall Car park (max 20 minutes)
* We ask parents to drive slowly and be aware of children in the area
* You are responsible for your children within the carpark please take caution

**16. Comments and Complaints**

We love compliments! You are welcome to make any suggestions, comments or complaints to the Manager. We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the service. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with any concerns or complaints that are raised. If you wish to make a complaint, please consult the complaints policy.

**17. Confidentiality**

We respect the right for all information, records and observations to be treated with respect and with due attention to confidentiality and privacy. Information will not be shared with third parties, unless required under law or Child Protection Guidelines. For more information please see our full policy on confidentiality and our Child Protection GDPR policy. We also have a Privacy Notice that explains the data that is collected, stored, shared and retained under the regulations. .

**18. Equal Opportunities**

Equal opportunity for children to learn is a fundamental aspect of this service curriculum. Equality means open access for every child and family to participate in the service’s activities. This service is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. We promote equal opportunities through a wide range of policies and procedures that are reflected in the practice of our early years setting.

This service is committed to promoting equality of opportunity:

* We encourage children to celebrate difference and multiculturalism
* We encourage children to show respect for all cultures, religions, races, abilities, disabilities, and genders
* We help children to become empathetic and considerate to their peers
* We foster a sense of fairness and respect and we will challenge any discrimination
* We nurture each child’s identity and self-concept
* We try to use our curriculum and equipment to encourage acceptance of all others, irrespective of cultural background
* Children will be discouraged from gender stereotyping
* Boys and girls are to have equal opportunity, and be actively encouraged to use all activities.
* Any discrimination (language, behaviour or remarks) by children, parents/carers or staff/volunteers is unacceptable in our service
* We aim to show respect for and awareness of all major events in the lives of the children and families in the service and in the wider society.

**Note:** We are always delighted to learn about different cultures and to celebrate diversity. If you can help us in this regard, please let us know.

**19. Supporting Positive Behaviour**

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

We have a comprehensive policy available on request.

* We want your child to enjoy his or her time with us.
* We believe in children’s ability to control their own lives, to make choices and accept responsibility for their actions.
* We use a positive approach to behaviour management and encourage good behaviour.
* We encourage children to respect themselves, each other and property. We aim to provide a happy, caring environment with challenging activities.
* In the case of a particular incident or persistent unacceptable behaviour we always discuss ways forward with parents.
* On very rare occasions and where, together with parents, we have worked to resolve a severe behavioural issue we may have to terminate the place. This is a last resort and such decisions will be made in the best interest of your child and other children attending the setting.

**20. Observations and Assessments**

In order to plan, prepare and organise for good quality care and education, adults need to observe children, review and evaluate the curriculum regularly and maintain systematic records. By observing how children respond to activities, staff will be able to evaluate if the activities and resources they have provided meet the needs of all the children and helps them to plan a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum. Observations also enable staff to provide challenges and extensions so that each child is able to progress.

All observations / records / assessments will be treated with confidentiality. Sharing observations with parents/carers strengthens the partnership between the home and the service, giving understanding and information and allowing staff and parents/carers to do their best for each child.

**21. Health and Safety**

The safety and wellbeing of every child attending our service is paramount. For the full risk management policy and health & safety policies consult the full policy and procedure document.

We will assess any potential risks to the safety of all children, employees or visitors attending the school, and will take the necessary steps to either eliminate those risks or mitigate them.

**22. Child Protection**

**The full and comprehensive Child Protection Policy is available. Please ask the Manager for details.**

We have a duty to care for every child attending our service. We will follow *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Our Duty to Care* published by the Department of Health and Children in this regard. This details our responsibilities and outlines the reporting procedures that we use if we are concerned about the welfare of a child.

**The Designated Liaison Persons are Niamh Lynch and Mary Kelly and her contact details will be displayed on the Parent’s Notice Board. All our staff are mandated to report any concerns of abuse.**

**23. Healthy Eating**

The service promotes healthy nutritional choices. We always sit with the children and supervise them when eating and drinking snacks or meals. Snack time will be enjoyed, and socialisation and interaction encouraged. Children are encouraged to feed themselves as appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Please let us know if your child has an allergy or dietary/religious/cultural food preferences. Cultural and religious dietary habits are respected. Parents/guardians are requested to provide details of foods that children can or cannot eat. If your child has a severe allergy that requires medical intervention (e.g. epi-pen) we will develop an emergency care plan with you and ensure our staff are trained in medication management. If children attending have a severe allergy to a food such as nuts parents will be asked to exclude this from their lunch-box.

Some children are allergic to peanuts/nuts. We request that parents/guardians do not include these in their child’s snack.

For Full Day Care:

* We provide healthy meals freshly cooked meals from a company called Little Dinners.
* A variety of foods is selected from each of the four main food groups every day:
	1. Bread, cereals, rice, pasta and potatoes
	2. Fruit and vegetables
	3. Milk and dairy foods
	4. Meat, fish and alternatives
* The weekly menu is displayed in the Service and includes a wide variety of healthy foods to include servings of protein, starch, dairy, vegetable and iron. Any changes in the menu are noted and any foods that are substituted are of equal nutrient value.

For ECCE children who bring own lunch:

* Parents provide small lunch-time snack
* We do not allow fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate, crisps, popcorn, nuts or nut spreads.
* Food portions will be age and stage appropriate.
* Healthy eating is promoted through an arrangement of activities for the children including play, stories, music, etc.

**Lunches:**

It is important that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food/drink is available for each child and we ask parents/guardians to become familiar with the following:

Meal and Snack definitions and sample Lunch Box Ideas:

* 1 food from all 4 groups is suggested:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Protein:** | Meat, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Beans, Pulses |
| **Carbohydrates:** | Potatoes, Pasta, Rice, Bread, Scones, Crackers, Milk, Pudding etc. |
| **Dairy:** | Milk, Cheese, Yogurt, Custard, Milk, Pudding, etc. |
| **Fruit/Vegetables:** | Chopped up seasonal fruit kept in an airtight container; Strawberries, Raspberries, Grapes, Mangoes, Kiwis, Apples, Oranges, Variety |

**Lunch Box Ideas:**

|  |
| --- |
| Sandwiches, Baps, Wraps, Multigrain rolls, Crackers with suggested fillings, Lettuce, Tomatoes, Cheese, Coleslaw, Turkey, Ham, Beef, Corn Beef, Jam, preserve to include foods from each of the food groups as suggested by the HSE. |
| Chopped up seasonal fruit kept in an airtight container;Strawberries, Raspberries, Grapes, Mangoes, Kiwis, Apples, Oranges, Mandarins, Melon, Peaches, Nectarines, Plums |
| Drinks; Low Sugar Juice Drinks, Smoothies, Milk, Water, 100 per cent fruit juice, diluted 1:5 parts. **No fizzy drinks allowed** |
| Treats: Ryvita fruity crackers, cheese cut up in cubes, plain biscuit, fruit cake, homemade biscuits/scone. |

**Snack Definitions:**

* 1 food from 2 of the 4 food groups

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Fruit and Dairy:** | Glass of milk and handful of raspberries |
| **Dairy and Carbohydrate:** | Cheese cubes and salt free crackers |
| **Carbohydrate and Fruit:** | Halved cherry tomatoes and bread sticks |
| **Protein and Carbohydrate:** | Salmon on brown bread fingers |

**Drinking water is always available.**

Parents/guardians will know if children have not eaten their lunch, as the lunch box is sent home with the eaten food. We will inform parents/guardians if we are concerned or if they haven’t eaten well.

**Lunch Box portions:**

We advise parents/guardians to use their child’s ‘cupped’ hand as a good indication of recommended portion size.

**24. Outings**

**The service does not go on outings.**

**25. Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is essential to early childhood development. Children learn social skills by interacting with other children, with adults, and even with objects and natural materials found in the environment. The outdoor environment exposes children to opportunities to explore, question, and develop theories about how things work. Negotiation, language, and cooperation are all skills that develop through a well-planned outdoor curriculum. Outdoor play, physical activity and fresh air are important to children’s overall health and wellbeing. Outdoor play is an important part of our daily curriculum. We aim to ensure that children play outdoors every day. Our intention, through our outdoor programme is to enhance gross motor skills, co-ordination, balance and body awareness. It also gives children opportunities to socialise freely and use imagination and initiative.

**Clothing:**

It is important that children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity. Parents are asked to ensure their children have the appropriate attire for the weather including hats and coats. Spare clothes and sun cream must be supplied by parents and everything should be labelled.

**26. Risk Play**

A natural part of children’s physical play involves engaging in play that is challenging and somewhat risky. Providing opportunities for all children to encounter or create uncertainty, unpredictability, and potential hazards as part of their play is extremely beneficial to children’s development. This does not mean putting children in danger of serious harm. Good risks and hazards in play provision are those that engage and challenge children, and support their growth, learning and development.

These might include being in touch with the natural environment and loose materials that give children the chance to create and destroy constructions using their skill, creativity and imagination. Bad risks and hazards are those that are difficult or impossible for children to assess for themselves, and that have no obvious benefits.

In our setting, we are aware of and alert to possible dangers, while recognising the importance of encouraging young children’s sense of exploration and risk-taking. We maintain children’s safety, while not unduly inhibiting their risk-taking.

**27. Internet and Multimedia**

We recognise that, to children, a variety of multimedia can provide entertainment and education to children, provided that the material listened to, watched or played is age appropriate and supervised and is a very small element of the curriculum provided.

**28. Security**

* The main door is locked for security reasons and there is no unauthorised access
* Parents are requested not to admit anyone else into the service whilst entering or leaving unless they know them and to check that all doors are securely closed behind them, at all times

**29. Accidents and Incidents**

If your child is involved in an accident or incident a record will be written up and shared with you. You will be asked to sign these records. Staff members at this service are trained in First Aid and will treat minor injuries. If a child needs to attend hospital a staff member will travel too.

**30. Illness and Exclusions**

You have entrusted your child into our care and we aim to ensure this environment is as healthy as possible and we want to minimise your child’s risk of infection. We encourage you to get your child immunised according to the HSE recommendations.

Children with the following cannot be admitted to the service:

* Acute symptoms of food poisoning/gastro-enteritis.
* An oral temperature 38 degrees C and over. Children that have a temperature will not be allowed to come to the centre and will be sent home. If a child develops a temperature of 38 degrees while at the centre, parents will be called, and the child will be monitored, and temperature recorded until their arrival.
* An earache.
* A deep, hacking cough.
* Severe congestion.
* Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing.
* An unexplained rash.
* Vomiting (in last 48 hours). Children who vomit in the centre and are sent home will not be allowed back into the centre until at least 48 hours has passed
* Diarrhoea (in last 48 hours).
* Complaints of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms
* Lice or nits
* An infectious /contagious condition.
* A child who is on an antibiotic for less than 24 hours

If a child becomes ill at the service parents will be contacted so that the child can be taken home. If, for some reason, the parent cannot collect they should organise an authorised adult to collect their child. All children must provide up to date record of immunisations. Should there be an outbreak of any infectious disease or incident you will be informed.

**Head Lice:**

Head-lice are very common amongst children. All parents should check their child’s head regularly for lice. If there is an outbreak you will be informed. If your child is infected, you will be asked to refrain from bringing your child to the service until it is cleared.

**31. Medication**

**We do not routinely administer ‘Calpol’ or other non-prescription/prescription medications.**

**We only administer medicines with the correct signed permission.**

Medicines must only be brought into this service for administration by the staff when it is essential. This means where it would be detrimental to the child’s health if it were not to be administered. Medicine should be in its original container with the doctor’s instructions. We cannot administer medication without its original packaging. We cannot administer medication not licensed for the age of your child or where the instructions are not written in English.

If your child has an allergy or a medical condition such as diabetes, epilepsy etc. you will be asked to complete a medical emergency care plan.

**32. Fire Safety**

All our staff are trained in fire prevention and evacuation. Your child will participate in monthly fire drills. The Designated Fire Safety Person is Karen Tracey.

**33. Photographs and Other Recordings**

We occasionally take photographs or video recordings of the children and these may be displayed within the service. You will be required to give consent to allow this

* Parents are only permitted to take photos or video record their own child at the discretion of the Manager.
* You will be asked to sign a photo consent form upon registration.
* We will dispose of photos in accordance with our Child Protection policy

**34. Data Protection**

Under the provisions of The Data Protection Acts of 1988 and 2003, and the 2016 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) this service has appointed a “Data Controller” to manage the storage of personal information about staff, children and families in its computerised and manual records. All data is stored confidentially.

**The Data Controller for the crèche is Mary Coleman.**

**35. Staff**

It is the policy of this service to recruit and select the best candidate for any vacant position within our Service. All our staff are qualified, and their qualifications are on display. Our staff are one of the key resources we have in achieving our aims and objectives of providing good quality care to the children in our Service. All are staff are garda vetted and reference checked. We are committed to training and development of staff in order to meet and exceed your expectations.

**36. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SERVICE**

Parents/guardians sign up to agree in the Parents/guardians Fee Agreement Form that they will:

* Give 4 weeks’ notice, in writing, that the child/children are leaving the service.
* Management also reserve the right to request that the Parent/Guardian withdraw their child/children from the service if they are not ‘settling in’ or adapting to the environment. The Management agrees to give two weeks’ notice of this to the Parent/Guardian so that they can make alternative arrangements.

**And finally, …**

***We would like to thank you for choosing us for your child’s early education and we assure you of our best attention at all times***

**37. Privacy Statement**

**Your Personal Data - What the Service Needs:**

Maynooth University Creche is what is known as the ‘Controller’ of the personal data you provide to it. We take your privacy seriously and will only use personal information about you and your child to provide the services you have requested from us and administer your account.

We collect a variety of personal data to be able to deliver the service requested by you. Most of this data is captured on an enrolment form or on the forms required to obtain government funded fees or fee subsidisation (where applicable).

**The Booking/Enquiry form** includes name, and contact details of the child and his/her family for the purpose of adding the child to a waiting list. This will be kept for the duration of the waiting list and will be destroyed when the waiting period expires, or the child is removed from the waiting list by the parent/guardian.

**The Enrolment Form** includes your name, address, details of your child including date of birth plus further detail on any specific medical and other relevant health-care details, and history necessary to allow us to ensure the welfare and safety of your child. Because of the sensitive nature of much this information, you will be asked to confirm your consent for us to collect and hold the information before it does so. We also ask you for other permissions regarding other data such as photographs etc

In addition to this, the Service will, at your request and again with your consent, gather additional information on your nationality, religion, and ethnic origin, if you believe this to be an important factor in providing the appropriate care and support for your child.

The enrolment form also collects the contact details and phone numbers of your child’s emergency contacts and authorised collectors. You are required to ensure these persons agree to their information being stored and you will be asked to confirm this on the enrolment form.

**The Funding Form** may collect personal data including your PPS number and your social welfare status. This is only collected to allow us process funding applications on your behalf to allow you access subsidies or free care and education for your child (where eligible and applicable).

**Why the Service Needs Data/Purpose of the Processing:**

The Service needs your basic personal data to provide you with its services in line with this overall contract.

The Service will not collect any personal data from you it does not need to provide and oversee this service to you.

**What the Service Does with Data/Disclosure:**

All the personal data is processed by management or by staff designated by Management. To deliver our services effectively, we may need to exchange your details with:

* The relevant funding bodies such as DCYA, Pobal, and the Childcare Committees,
* Regulators such as TUSLA or the Revenue Commissioners,
* Inspectors (TUSLA, Department of Education and Science and Health & Safety Authority), or
* External personnel such as HR contractors, accountants and professional advisors.

The Service has a Data Protection Policy in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.

**How Long the Service Keeps Data/Retention Period and Criteria Used:**

The Service will keep your and your child’s personal data for as long as he or she remains within the Service, and for the period afterwards required by the relevant statutory and legislative guidelines that apply.  More information on the Service's retention procedures can be found by contacting the Manager directly at the addresses given below

**What are your rights?**

If you wish to see what information the Service holds on you or your child, simply contact the Manager either by post or email and we will endeavour to respond to you within 30 days of receipt of your request.

If at any point you believe the information the Services processes on you is incorrect, you may request to have it corrected. You can contact the Manager at the address shown below. If you wish to raise a complaint on how the Service has handled your personal data, you can also contact the Manager.

**Data Controller:** Maynooth University Creche, Mary Coleman

**Contact Points:** Mary Coleman

**Manager:** Maynooth University Creche, Mary Coleman

**Data Protection Officer:**

Ann McKeon.

Maynooth University Creche,

17 Humanity House.

South Campus

Maynooth University

Maynooth

Co Kildare

01 7086184

dataprotection@mu.ie

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe the Service is not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain directly to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner at:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Email:** | info@dataprotection.ie |
| **Postal Address:** | Data Protection Commissioner Canal HouseStation RoadPortarlington  R32 AP23 Co. Laois |

**Maynooth University Creche**

**PLEASE SIGN and RETURN THIS SLIP**

I have read the Parents Handbook and I agree to abide by the conditions therein.

I am aware that this service has comprehensive policies and procedures and that these are available to read upon request.

I have been given a copy of the Privacy Statement

Child’s name is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date commenced at: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parents Name(s) (Block Capitals) and signature(s):

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_