Kelly’s Bay

 ****

Montessori Limited

“The best possible start!”

**Parent’s handbook**

**Of**

 **Policies and Procedures**

**(Last revised September 2022)**

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**Important information**

*(Throughout this document the use of the word* ***‘you’*** *refers to the parent/guardian of the child attending the service)*

1. **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

The purpose of this service is to provide affordable, accessible, high quality early education and care to young children in our community in an inviting warm environment.

Kelly’s Bay Montessori is a private part-time and sessional childcare facility owned and managed by Cheryl Boardman. We are open from 8.15am–4.15pm, Monday to Friday. We offer morning sessions from 9.15am-12.15pm (senior class – class 1) and 9.30am-12.30pm (junior class – class 2) with an optional extra of morning clubs from 8.15am-915am (class 1) or 8.30am-9.30am (class 2) with afternoon clubs from 12.15pm-1pm (class 1) or 12.30-pm-1.15pm (class 2) we have afternoon sessions from 1.15pm-4.15pm (class 3) and 12.45-3.45pm (class 4). We operate for 38 weeks per year for ECCE and 50 weeks per year for National Childcare Scheme (we run camps throughout the year outside of the ECCE calendar, 9am-1pm). We cater for 40 children at any time, aged between 2 ½ and 5 ½ years of age which are required to be toilet trained.

Kelly’s Bay Montessori supports each child reach their full learning potential in a safe, secure and stimulating environment. Our aim is to support and encourage the overall development and wellbeing of the child at this stage of their life and development. We aim to offer and help facilitate joyful and rich opportunities using the core principles of Aistear alongside the pedagogy of Maria Montessori. We aim to support each child in their overall development in these formative years. We will do this through a quality curriculum and stimulating environment facilitated by our dedicated Early Years Educators. Our core values are to respect ourselves, others and the environment alongside responsibility, security, happiness, equality and nurture.

We offer an open door policy which means we pride ourselves in sustaining open lines of communication between parents, carers, the child and ourselves. We always take into consideration the needs and opinions of parents/carers as a paramount part in maintaining a happy healthy environment and relationships for all involved in the child’s welfare.

We run a **part time and sessional service** in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

1. **CURRICULUM**

Children will follow a comprehensive play-based and Montessori curriculum combined with other good practice methods. The curriculum is based on the principle, aims and learning goals of Aistear (National curriculum framework).

*“Encouraging each child’s holistic development and learning requires the implantation of a verifiable, broad-based, documented and flexible curriculum or programme”. (Siolta, 2009)*

*“Active learning, relationships, play, language, and meaningful experiences are priorities for supporting children’s early learning and development”*. (Aistear,2009)

This Curriculum aims to encourage active learning, problem solving, effective communication, creativity and socialization. It aims to give children a good start that will benefit their long-term success in life. Our service recognises the diversity of experiences and relationships that shape children’s lives.

**Children learn best when they:**

* + - * Participate in making decisions as much as possible.
			* Make choices and contribute to learning experiences.
			* Share their opinions and diverse experiences and discuss their learning.
			* Have positive role models within the staff team.
			* Learn in a responsive and supportive social environment.
			* Learn through multi-sensory experiences.
			* Participate actively in experiences that engage them emotionally, physically, cognitively and socially.
			* Supportive well equipped learning environment.

**Montessori Approach**

The classrooms are called “prepared environments” where children are given an array of stimulating learning and purposeful activities. The children follow a set programme of tasks or exercises. They learn everyday life skills such as dressing themselves, washing themselves etc. They learn social graces and manners but also cover a wide range of subjects including Mathematics, Reading and Writing, History and Geography, Science, Sensorial, Music, Irish, Art, Drama.

The 5 defined Montessori areas we focus on are:

* Practical life
* Maths
* Cultural
* Language
* Sensorial
1. **STAFFING**

We will ensure a sufficient number of suitable and competent members of staff are working directly with the pre-school children in the Pre-School at all times

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SERVICE** | **AGE** | **ADULT/CHILD RATIO** |
| **SESSIONAL****ECCE PLACES** | **2 ½ – 5 ½ YEARS** | **1:11** |

**We expect staff to have the following minimum qualifications:**

* Manager/room leader: FETAC Level 6
* Staff: FETAC Level 5
* Children First child protection
* Paediatric First aid
* Appointed fire safety officer: A staff member with up to date fire safety training
* Appointed staff member for FAR: A staff member with up to date First Aid Responder

All staff, including students, are required to have **Garda vetting** (and international Police vetting if required) prior to commencement of work.

All staff are fully aware of the code of ethics and behaviour that we follow in this establishment and are expected to adhere to these at all times. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure the safeguard and wellbeing of the child’s best interests at all times.

1. **COLLECTIONS AND ARRIVALS**

It is essential, to the efficient running of the service, that parents/guardians inform the Manager if their child is unable to attend the service via a telephone call or text and to inform the Manager when the child will be returning.

**Arrivals:**

* The child will be greeted and signed in by a **designated staff member.**
* The premises are secured by a locked door which only opens from the inside.
* Parents must ring the doorbell to gain access to the service.

**Collection Policy:**

* Parents/guardians must collect their child promptly by the agreed collection time. Names of at least two other people who are authorised to collect the child.
* We ask whoever is collecting the child to patiently wait at the gate in a respectful manner to all other people there and each child will be called out in due course as safely as possible.
* Children will not be released into the care of a person under the age of 16 years or to a person who appears to be incapable of caring for the child.
* We ask that parents/guardians do not collect their child from the service while under the influence of alcohol.
* We **MUST** be informed, if anybody, other than the persons named on the collection details, are to collect the child. A child will **NOT** be allowed leave without written permission from a parent/guardian or at a very minimum verbal permission if parent needs to be rang for confirmation of who has come to collect the child and parental permission is granted over the phone. The latter form of consent is to be avoided if at all possible and only a last resort, prior consent/arrangement is always most suitable.
* Parents/guardians are asked to park safely and not to cause an obstruction, even for a very short time. We have a full car park available.
* In the event of a parent/guardian collecting another child, a prior arrangement must be made.

**Separated and Divorced Parents:**

Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this. Some unmarried fathers also have automatic guardianship.

* 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.

(Further information on this matter refer to full set of policies and procedures).

**Change in collection or drop off of Children:**

We understand that sometimes a parent/guardian 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.

* The manager must be contacted to make new arrangements
* Persistent lateness can result in a €5 for every fifteen minutes of lateness.
* Inform staff of early pick up or late drop off so that we can have the child ready and to minimise disruption.
1. **HEALTHY EATING POLICY**

Our Service promotes healthy nutritional choices for our children. We feel it is important at this young age to introduce and educate our children about good nutrition and the health benefits of eating well.

**Policy and Procedures:**

* Children bring in their own healthy lunch that is **clearly labelled** and easy for them to open – to aid independence.
* Please avoid snacks that could be a choking hazard e.g. popcorn, grapes should be cut in half length ways etc.
* Lunch will be put in a box and kept in the fridge upon arrival each morning.
* Children with allergies and special diets will be carefully supervised.
* We do NOT allow fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate, crisps, popcorn, nuts or nut spreads (due to allergies).
* Healthy eating is promoted with treats provided by staff on special occasions will be kept to a minimal.
* On birthdays and other special occasions, a shop bought cake will be provided by the service.
* Drinking water and small snacks are available throughout the day if needed.
* Snack times are used as an opportunity to encourage good social habits.
* Children will be encouraged to sit down when eating and/or drinking.
1. **SAFEGUARDING THE CHILDREN & CHILD PROTECTION**

The welfare of the child is paramount, to ensure the safety of all children whom attend our service we have certain measures in place to do our utmost to protect the child from any form of harm wither in our care or outside. All staff are to be aware of possibilities of abuse of any kind and have moral and legal obligation to make a conscious effort to always be alert and responsive to any reasonable grounds for concern of each child’s safety and overall wellbeing.

**Procedures put in place:**

* A designated liaison officer is appointed.
* A deputy designated liaison officer is appointed.
* Staff and students are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
* All staff are Garda vetted/(International Police vetted where applicable) and have children first training (child protection and reporting concerns training).
* All staff are aware of their legal obligations for reporting concerns for a child.
* Open door policies for parents/carers to inform the DLP of any concerns they may have for any children in the service.
* Confidentiality of all staff is a requirement in this area.
* A list of contact info for important government bodies (TUSLA & Gardaí) in this area is available.
* Reporting of reasonable concerns of a child’s wellbeing and safety to TUSLA.
1. **SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

We believe children are competent and confident learners. *We believe that children should be supported to make choices and accept responsibility for their actions and behaviour.*  We acknowledge children are continually learning about their emotions, feelings and how to manage same.

 In our Pre-School positive behaviour is encouraged from all children.

* The staff will ensure expectations on behaviour are fair and consistent to all children depending on their age and stage of development.
* We ensure all children are treated with respect, by adults and other children alike to allow children to develop and sustain a positive sense of self. As a result, children will feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included. The children’s well-being is crucial.
* The staff are role models for the children and should treat one another with respect, use appropriate tone of voice and body language to one another and the children.
* We encourage children to respect themselves, others and the environment. We facilitate children to make positive decisions and choices about their own learning and development to develop a positive sense of self.
* We aim to facilitate a happy, caring environment with stimulating activities for all children. In the case of a particular incident, or persistent unacceptable behaviour, we will *always* discuss ways to move forward with your child.
1. **ILLNESS & EXCLUSION**

Your children’s welfare is the first and most important consideration. In the event of sudden illness, we will contact you immediately about our concerns regarding your child’s health and well-being. We aim to provide as healthy an environment as possible for children and Staff. We will endeavour to minimise your child’s exposure to infection by excluding sick children/adults. We encourage parent’s uptake of vaccinations and inform you and the Health Service Executive where necessary of any infections in the service. Record of vaccinations are required upon completion of the registration form.

**Policy and Procedure:**

* We do request you to sign a medical consent form, at the beginning of term, for Calpol in the case of a high temperature which could result in an anti-febrile convulsion. Either parent will be attempted to be contacted prior to administration of any medication but in the event we cannot get in touch this form is adequate permission. If you do NOT wish to consent to this a declaration of refusal for this will be required to be signed.
* For the administration of any medicines, e.g. inhalers, antihistamine, rash cream etc, the parent is required a medical consent prior to administration, unless situation deems unable then verbal permission will be sought followed by written documentation.
* Trained parent/s of the child that requires lifesaving medicine, such as an Epipen or inhalers, must show appropriate staff the step-by-step procedure followed when administrating the medicine.
* You will be informed of our concerns and procedures we are taking.
* If you cannot be reached, the next name on the emergency list will be contacted.
* The child’s temperature will be monitored and recorded. If a child requires “one to one” attention and we cannot facilitate this at the time, you will be asked to collect your child.
* You will be required to take your child home immediately in the case of vomiting or diarrhoea.
* We request that you inform us if their child is unable to attend due to illness, stating details.
* We advise that sick children must be kept at home (see exclusions appendix).
* In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease, all parents/guardians will be notified.
* We advise all persons to inform the manager if they have come in contact with an infectious or contagious disease.
* The HSE recommends that all children in pre-school receive the appropriate vaccinations, this acts as a safeguard for your child as well as protecting other children.
* Observation of children following immunisation is essential – you should inform staff of recent of upcoming immunisations. It is good practice to encourage two-way communication on all health issues.

***Exclusion:***

In order to ensure the safety and health of all our children and staff those who have any of the following conditions will be excluded from the service:

* Acute symptoms of food poisoning/gastro-enteritis.
* An oral temperature over 37.5 degrees which cannot be reduced.
* A deep, hacking cough.
* Severe congestion.
* Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing.
* An unexplained rash (see exclusion list also).
* Vomiting (48 hours from last episode).
* Diarrhoea (48 hours from last episode).
* Lice or nits - see Head Lice Policy and Procedure.
* An infectious /contagious condition.
* A child who is on an antibiotic for less than 48 hours.
* A child that complains of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms.

*Any child or adult with symptoms of an infectious illness will be asked not to attend The Pre-School until they are no longer infectious. The management of Pre-school will ensure all areas of the premises are thoroughly disinfected, including play areas, toilets, toys and all equipment.*

**APPENDIX 1: EXCLUSIONS**

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| --- | --- |
| **Conjunctivitis** | Kept at home for two days; thereafter until eyes are no longer weeping |
| **Diarrhoea** | 48 hours from last episode |
| **Chickenpox**  | 7 days from appearance of the rash |
| **Gastroenteritis, Food poisoning, Salmonellas & Dysentery** | Until authorised by GP  |
| **Hand, Foot and Mouth**  | Until child well/seek managers advice  |
| **Infective hepatitis** | 7 days from onset of jaundice |
| **Measles** | 7 days from appearance of the rash |
| **Meningococcal** (infection mumps)  | Until recovered from illness Exclude child for five days after onset of swelling |
| **Pertussis** (Whooping cough)  | 21 days from the onset of paroxysmal cough or 5 days from the commencement of antibiotics  |
| **Poliomyelitis** | Until declared free from infection by GP |
| **Rubella** (German measles) | 7 days from appearance of the rash  |
| **Streptococcal** (infectionof the throat) | Until appropriate medical treatment  |
| **Scarlet fever** | Child can return 48 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment. |
| **Impetigo** | 3 days from the start of treatment Until the skin is healed |
| **Pediculosis (lice)** | Until appropriate treatment has been given |
| **Temperature** | Over 37.5 degrees |
| **Vomiting** | 48 hours from last episode of vomiting |
| **Antibiotics prescribed** | First 48 hours at home |

1. **NTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Principle:**

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. All use of multimedia is in moderation and for educational purposes as interlinked with the planned curriculum such as themed music rhymes, brief videos of seasonal or cultural events etc.

At the service, we value music because it is a powerful and unique form of communication that can change the way children feel, think and act. It also increases self-discipline and creativity, aesthetic sensitivity, and fulfilment.

Below is a list of ways we carefully monitor this area:

* Computers and gaming machines are not available to children in the service.
* Children do not have access to phones in school and staff are required to limit phone usage during work hours and to only use in relation to work issues.
* Children do not have access to the internet.
* Television/YouTube viewing is supervised and minimal in the service. It is used for educational purposes when deemed appropriate.
* Music forums (Spotify, YouTube) listened to are appropriate for young children and will contain no offensive or inappropriate language.

**Social Media:**

Social media is an important element to promote our service. It is also an important method of ongoing communication and updates to our parents. The use of all social media is monitored closely by the manager and deputy manager.

Social Media forums used are:

* Facebook
* WhatsApp
* Instagram
* LinkedIin

It is ensured the confidentiality of the child or parents is compromised by:

* Limiting the personal information posted (no second names or specific details).
* All pictures uploaded do not have the child’s face clearly identifiable (unless prior consent from parents).
* All information shared on a professional basis.
* Each forum is accessible to only people with invested interest in the school.
1. **GENERAL INFORMATION ON ENROLMENT AND ADMISSIONS**

It is the policy of this service to offer equal access to children and their parents/guardians inclusive of special needs, cultural, financial status and religious orientation. We provide a service for ECCE eligible and non-ECCE children. The lowest age is 2 ½ years. Priority for ECCE full time children come before that of part time non-ECCE places which be prioritise to siblings of children already attending. Places are then allocated on a first-come, first served basis with a deposit of €100 is payable to secure a place.

The following information applies to both ECCE and Non-ECCE children:

* **4 weeks-notice will be required for any changes or cancellation of the original agreement.**
* The main point of contact for parents/guardians is the manager and child’s room leader.
* Within the classroom setting, each child is allocated a keyworker who will carry out observations on your child.
* Children wear a uniform of a navy tracksuit embroidered with the school’s logo. Velcro shoes are preferable, Uniforms will be available to purchase prior to start date at **€15/hoodie** (navy hoodie with logo) and **€35/ tracksuit** (2 white polo shirts – one with logo, navy v neck sweatshirt with logo and navy tracksuit bottoms).
* All long hair must be tied up. No hoop or long earrings, jewellery or watches. Shoes appropriate to outdoor play should be worn.
* An optional extra contribution of €100 is requested at the beginning of each school year. This goes towards many extra resources and activities provided by the Montessori e.g. baking, Christmas concert, graduation, Christmas and birthday gifts etc.
* A parent information evening will usually be arranged prior to your child starting.
* Children **must be toilet trained** before starting in the service.
* The following are required with the **child’s name clearly labelled** on all items:
* Healthy snacks
* Spare change of clothes

*Note: Parents/guardians should apply sun cream before their child arrives in the service on days where sun cream is necessary. Sun cream should be individually labelled with child's name on the original bottle and parents "must" supply the bottle in order for us to apply if required during the day.*

**ECCE Scheme**

Applies to children eligible under DCEDIY terms, for two years, generally starting age 2 years 8 months from September until the end of June of the year they will be starting in Primary School, child will not be older than 5½ years.

**Criteria for Enrolment:**

* Children’s date of birth must fit the eligibility for the scheme as directed by DCEDIY.
* Full time places (5 days) will be given as a priority.
* Part-time places will be offered if not all full-time places are filled.

***Note: If a place is cancelled, the deposit of €100 is forfeited.***

* Each year of the two-year scheme is treated completely separately by our service with enrolment required for each year. If your child attends Year 1, you will be required to follow the enrolment criteria again for Year 2.
* A deposit of €100 is taken in advance when a child is given a place. The deposit will be refunded in October or can be used to pay for the additional hours/clubs, optional extra contribution or can be carried over for the following years enrolment.
* All details regarding a child’s Application Form must be completed and any relevant important information or specific diet or health requirements must be noted.
* We reserve the right to terminate our services.
* Parents/guardians should familiarise themselves with our policies and procedures.

**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 the child will be returning, a written and signed letter stating reason for the child’s absences may be required from the parent and to be kept on file for inspection purposes.

It should be noted that the income received by the service from the DCEDIY 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, the child can be designated a Leaver on The Early Years Hive which means the service will be paid for the 4 weeks. If a child is absent for more than 4 weeks (without notice) the place can be filled with another child.

**Children with allergies medical conditions and disabilities:**

It is important this is recorded on the Child Registration Form. Management will meet with the parent to discuss individual needs and how the child can be supported in the setting. Parent/guardian may be required to complete an additional Medical Emergency Form if their child has a medical condition that could result in a medical emergency.

**Camps:**

While every child is welcome to camps which we run throughout the year, e.g. Halloween, February Midterm, Easter and Summer, places are always subject to availability and every child’s individual needs and requirements will be considered.  This is to ensure each child gets an enjoyable and safe experience, whilst carefully utilising the resources available to us.

We always try our upmost to accommodate everyone in these camps but unfortunately due to availability of staff outside of their standard terms of employment and adhering to the correct adult to child ratio, spaces can be limited/restricted.

The hours per day and/or days per week a child can attend a camp will be taken into consideration by the Manager and Room Leader before confirmation of enrolment with parents.

As these camps are run outside of the ECCE programme parents will be required to pay additional fees for these camps, should their child attend.  As we are registered for the NCS parents may be entitled to the National Childcare Scheme during camps, log onto www.ncs.gov.ie to see eligibility.

*Please Note: For those who are receiving AIM: as AIM funding is not provided outside the ECCE calendar and whilst we strive to always provide an environment which is adaptable to all children's needs, unfortunately we may not always be in a position to offer a place in a camp as we will be unable to provide a reduced adult to child ratio, which the AIM funding provides.*

1. **FEES POLICY**

We endeavour to be open and transparent about all fees charged. This policy applies to all parents/guardians who use the services for their children.

* We operate the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) and the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) under the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).
* For all children a deposit of €100 is required to secure a place.
* We offer the following optional extras for ECCE/Non – ECCE children:

Morning club (Mon-Fri) 8.15am-9.15am Class 1 / 8.30am–9.30am Class 2 @ €5/day

Afternoon club (Mon-Fri) 12.15pm–1 pm Class 1 / 12.30pm–1.15pm Class 2

@ €5/day

* Monday- Lego club
* Tuesday –Science club
* Wednesday - Buntas
* Thursday - Arts and crafts
* Friday - Free play

Each club offered at a monthly rate.

* The monthly fees for non-ECCE children are
* €310 for 5 days per week, 3 hours a day
* €250 for 4 days per week, 3 hours a day
* €190 for 3 day per week, 3 hours a day
* €130 for 2 days per week, 3 hours a day

(Times: Class 1- 9.15am–12.15am, Class 2 - 9.30am–12.30am,

Class 3 - 1.15pm–4.15pm and Class 4 -12.45pm–3.45pm)

* Fees are payable monthly by cash or electronic bank transfer

 IBAN IE70BOFI90354148132109

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 Name on account Kelly’s Bay Montessori Ltd.

* No credit facilities are available. **All fees must be paid in full at the beginning of each month**.
* A receipt will be issued upon request.
* **Payments in relation to Holidays or Illness** - parents/guardians will be required to pay for any days that their child 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 pre-school in exceptional circumstances that is beyond the control of the service i.e. adverse weather conditions, full fees for the closure period will be payable.
* Non-payment of fees may result in loss of place for your child.

**Parents/guardians must give one months’ notice if they wish to withdraw their child from the Pre-School OR make a change to any extra hours they avail of.**