



A Guide to Reviewing Policies and Procedures as part of your Quality Plan

Policies and procedures are essentially a roadmap for many different aspects of operating an early childhood service and underpin compliance and quality practice. They provide a shared understanding of the various practices implemented within the setting to promote best outcomes for children, families, team members, and the early childhood service itself.

However, having the most professional and comprehensive policy manual is of no benefit if the policies it contains are not implemented. Likewise, procedures that outline and guide everyday practice do little to support staff if staff are not familiar with them. Policies and Procedures are an important tool for all stakeholders connected with the early childhood service. This ensures that there is a **shared understanding of compliance and procedures** enabling consistency across all aspects of the service.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Principles, Values

Outlines what makes your early childhood service unique, your ethos, services on offer, curriculum and value system.

Statement of Purpose.

Legislation, Regulation

Outlines how you adhere to regulations, as set down by Early Years and SAC Regulations.

Governance, HWDC, Safety.

Quality Practice

A variety of practical procedures outline common practice and strategies used that demonstrate quality standards and offer guidance for staff.

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Every person, from the registered provider or person in charge to the least experienced member of the staff team should be aware that policies are important. Students or volunteers, parents and guardians should know this too. Everyone within your service needs to be fully informed, and to understand how important it is for policies to be implemented consistently.

Owners/managers must follow their own stated policies. In teams, all staff team members must read and implement all relevant policies, procedures and statements. In all services, whether large or small, **parents and guardians** should be encouraged to read, and become familiar with, your service's policies, procedures and statements. Some policies, for example, Bullying and complaints will be relevant to school age children in an age-appropriate format.

Mandatory Policies, Procedures and Statements required by Tusla

#	Policy	Complete with Forms/ Templates
Section 1	Governance	
1.	Statement of Purpose and Function	
2.	Comments and Complaints	Complaints Form for Parents and Staff
3.	Recruitment Policy	
4.	Staff Absences	Weekly Staff Roster Template
5.	Staff Training	- Induction Checklist - Staff Training Record
6.	Supervision Policy	Support and Supervision Template
Section 2	Health, Welfare and Development of the Child	
7.	Settling In Policy	
8.	Policy on Managing Behaviour	
9.	Inclusion Policy	
10.	Policy On Healthy Eating	'Healthy Eating Specifications'
11.	Policy On Outdoor Play	Outdoor Play Risk Assessment Template
12.	Policy on the Use of Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices	- Staff -eSafety Agreement - Parent Consent form
Section 3	Safety	
13.	Policy on Administration of Medication	- Medication Consent - Medication Admin. Record
14.	Policy on Accidents and Incidents	Contents List for First Aid Box
15.	Policy on Infection Control	- Cleaning Schedule - Unvaccinated Child Declaration Form - Visitor Record
16.	Nappy Changing and Toileting Policy	
17.	Policy on Safe Sleep/Naps/Rest	Pre-School Version
18.	Risk Management Policy	COVID-19 Incident Plan Risk Assessment Template
19.	Policy on Authorisation to Collect Children	Nominated Collection Person Form Drop off and Collection Schedule
20.	Fire Safety Policy	Evacuation Procedure Fire Drill Log
21.	Outings Policy	Risk Assessment Outings Outings permission

***as supplied by MOSAIC Policy Packs www.mosaicearlyed.com In addition:**

Child Safeguarding Statement

Safety Statement

School Age Childcare specific policies.

REVIEWING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

AS PART OF YOUR

QUALITY PLAN



A positive first action in creating an ongoing Quality Plan is the **review of Policies and Procedures**. This is not simply replacing policies or updating them in isolation, this involves a **systematic review** that involves management, staff and parents. The key steps outlined will support services to undertake a policy and procedure review.

Renew or Review?

Firstly, consider your current policies and procedures and whether you need to **review and amend** your current policies **or develop/commission new policies**.

Using the guidance document - **Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in ECCE Services: Tusla, 2018 create or commission your policies and procedure documents. Ensure that:**

- They are written in line with most **updated legislation and guidelines**
- They are cognisant of the Tusla **Quality and Regulatory Framework 2018**
- You have **21 Mandatory Policies, Child Safeguarding Statement, Safety Statement**.

Reviewing Policies and Procedures

A step-by-step checklist

1. Reviewing your Statement of Purpose:

Your Statement of Purpose is a very fluid document and may change from year to year. Your statement of purpose is **unique to your setting, your values and the stakeholders involved**. Check your statement of purpose against the points outlined and amend your current policies as appropriate.

- ✓ Is the ethos of your service highlighted, what makes it unique and your values. For example, how is the ethos of your service maintained and translated into practice – parent partnership, play, inclusion, child participation. Refer to your curriculum approach and quality standards.
- ✓ List the current policies and procedures that you have in place.
- ✓ What makes your service different? How is your service integrated into the community?
- ✓ Outline the services you offer and details like session times, cost, age range etc.
- ✓ Contact information: Detail the person in charge and who in your service to contact for more information on any policy. Include name, role, address, email, telephone number.

2. Reviewing your Policies and Procedures

Review each policy against the points outlined and amend your current policies as appropriate.

Rationale and policy considerations:

- ✓ Is it stated **why** this policy is needed? Include any relevant legislation and regulatory requirements and the needs of stakeholders using your service. For example, in relation to a Behaviour Policy *'This policy supports positive behaviour by children attending our service and sets our approaches for managing challenging behaviour. This aims to help children manage their behaviour in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. The policy also supports staff to provide a framework of techniques and strategies for promoting positive behaviour and dealing with challenging behaviour.'*

The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 require that a policy relating to supporting children with their behaviour skills is written and implemented'.

Definitions:

- ✓ Have you included a short **definition of any terms** that you use which are not in everyday use in the context of the policy? For example, specific medical or education terminology. Not all policies will require this.

Policy statement:

- ✓ Does your Policy Statement **outline principles, values and the purpose** of the policy. This statement is generally quite short.

Procedures and practices:

- ✓ Does the policy clearly outline the specific steps and/or guidance to be followed to implement the policy? Think of yourself as a new member of staff – **would the policy provide you with all the practical procedures about for example, dealing with an accident, managing behaviour, or drop off and collection of children?**

Communication plan:

- ✓ Have you **stated how you will inform all stakeholders** (including parents, guardians, staff, volunteers, school age children) about the content of the policy. Have you noted that copies are available and have you specified where these are located?

Related policies, procedures and forms:

- ✓ Ensure that you have listed all the **related documents**. For example, your Medications Policy will have related recording forms and will be related to other policies such as your Outings Policy.

References, supporting documents and related legislation:

- ✓ List any **relevant legislation and quality guides** referred to in drafting the policy – this is useful for when you come to reviewing a policy. Identify relevant national quality frameworks if applicable.

Who must observe this policy:

- ✓ Have you clearly stated **who has a role** in implementing the policy? All stakeholders in the service should be mentioned here (management, staff, volunteers, etc)..

Actions to be followed if the policy is not implemented.

- ✓ Have you stated clearly the actions that will be taken if people do not comply with the policy? This includes staff disciplinary procedures where applicable.

Policy created: Add the date the policy was created.

Signatures: Registered providers, owners/managers who approved the policy and procedures sign.

Review date: When the policies will be reviewed (every 2 years or in light of change).

Ensuring staff engagement with Policies and Procedures

In both small and large services, **all staff are key players in implementing policies.** If necessary, training to some or all staff members so that they can fully implement some policies may be needed. The registered provider is responsible for making sure that necessary training is available.



Regular meetings with staff members to discuss changes to policies will provide a good opportunity to talk about how and who will implement any changes proposed and any perceived challenges.

Opportunities to check the meanings of any changes and to openly discuss their implications will help to avoid misunderstandings. These discussions may also highlight any issue that management may have overlooked. This involvement in policy review and development is key to ensuring policies work.

- **Make policy review a standard agenda item for meetings** and review a different policy at each meeting. Use this agenda item to either discuss a policy that is up for review, or to remind everyone about a policy that they need to particularly focus on.
- **Draw attention to specific policy requirements** by placing a copy of the relevant policy next to a task related to that policy. For example, display a copy of your policy on health and hygiene and nappy changing procedures in the nappy changing area. This will remind staff to make sure that when they change nappies, they must follow the required procedures.
- **Draw attention to a new policy or change in policy** in a larger service team by setting up a space on the staff noticeboard headed 'New Policies'. Refer staff members to the board whenever you display new information there. Provide a plain sheet of paper for team members to add their comments or ask questions.

Strategies that support Policy Implementation

Try to create an environment that implements policy and policy changes in a consistent way. Provide support for staff members who must put the policies in place.

- **Induct new staff members to service policies.** It is important to ensure that new staff members are carefully introduced to the service's policies and procedures during the induction process. In a large service, it will help if you provide a mentor or buddy to support the new staff member. This will help the new staff member to become familiar with service policies and help to ensure that they implement them consistently.
- **Set achievable tasks and realistic workloads.** It is important to give clear explanations about new policies or procedures and to make sure that staff members have enough time and the skills they need to implement the policies effectively.
- **Ensure policies and procedures are clearly written.** Policies and procedures are the guide to how all aspects of the work of your service will be conducted. Make sure that you have clearly written procedures that all team members fully understand.
- **Provide clear roles and responsibilities.** Be clear about who will take responsibility for what, and who staff members should report to. This is essential because lack of clarity in the scope and responsibility of the job and the expectations of others can lead to confusion. Clearly state roles and responsibilities, especially in a large team.
- **Encourage staff to raise questions about how they should implement policies.** Do this through non-threatening and inclusive interactions. Encourage staff to support each other to implement best practice standards.
- **Make sure that you provide opportunities for ongoing feedback and two-way communication between management and staff.** This is essential as it will help both management and individual staff members when they feel they need to raise any issues or concerns about how a policy is to be implemented.
- **Plan professional development opportunities for staff to learn about current best practice in specific areas of practice.** Support new ideas and encourage the staff to research their understanding of different practices. A well-trained staff team gains the expertise and knowledge to identify when poor practice occurs.

Communicating your policies to parents and families

Before a child is enrolled with your service, you must provide the child's parents and guardians with the information they will need. This includes the facts they need to decide whether or not to choose your service and to understand how they are expected to engage in partnership with the service to meet their child's needs. It is good practice to share this information in the form of a handbook for parents and guardians.

Make sure that the policy statements that are particularly relevant to parents and guardians are made easily accessible both to them and to all staff members.

Ref: Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in ECCE Services: Tusla, 2018

MOSAIC Policy and Procedure Supports

If you want to take the stress out of writing policies and procedures, MOSAIC policy and procedures packs are known for their comprehensive yet practical layout and adherence to Tusla requirements.

A range of supporting templates accompany each policy which is personalised for your service.

View our range of Policy Packs and contents at www.mosaicearlyed.com



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<https://mosaicearlyed.com/policies-procedures-statement-packs>

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