**Naíonra Dhún Dealgan**

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**Partnership with Parents Policy**

Parents are the primary educators of their children and active partners in the continuing process of education. Parents will receive an induction upon registering with the Naíonra. Parents will be informed of any changes in our setting. Parents will be given the opportunity to attend concerts, sports days and they can volunteer to assist with the children on trips to the farm or fire station.

Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we have an open door policy, parents can come into the setting and discuss any issues about their child or the setting.

In order to promote parents as partners it is essential that we act professionally and try to maintain a non - judgmental attitude.

At all times the welfare of the child is paramount and all decisions must be taken for their benefit.

**Confidentiality Statement**

* All information regarding concerns should be shared on a “need to know basis” in the interest of the child with the relevant statutory authorities.
* No understandings regarding secrecy can be given. Children and Families and all parties involved will be made clear of this
* The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or Data Protection,
* Information gathered for one purpose will not be used for another without consulting the person who provided it.
* **Confidentiality Policy**

 In all aspects of our work here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan. Confidentiality is essential.

* We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.
* If parents tell you something in confidence you may be obliged to pass this information to the manager if it is in the best interest of the child/ i.e child protection issues.
* You must inform them of this, never discuss one parent to another, never gossip about their children, it is important not to make judgments on families. Never discuss information about parents, children or other members of staff outside of setting with friends or family.
* **Methods** We keep two kinds of records on children attending our setting.
* Developmental records
* These include observations of children in the setting; samples of their work. They are usually kept in the Naíonra and can be accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents. All work will be sent home weekly and a folder will also be sent home at the end of each year.
* Personal records
* These include registration and admission forms, signed consents, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
* Personal information about children, families and staff is stored in a lockable file whilst remaining as accessible as possible.
* Parents have access to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.
* Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person
* **Other records**
* Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
* Students on work experience or other recognised qualifications and training, when they are observing in the pre-school, are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.
* **Confidentiality Agreement**
* I agree to adhere to the Confidentiality Statement of Naíonra Dhún Dealgan as set out in their Policies and Procedures. I fully understand the importance of this agreement and I am aware of the consequences. Any breach of this Policy will result in disciplinary action or dismissal

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Manager\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent’s handbook**

Dear Parent,

*Fáilte Romhat*, Welcome to Naíonra Dhún Dealgan. It is with your child’s comfort and safety and the successful running of the pre-school, we would like to draw your attention to the following points:

* The Naíonra will open Monday to Friday from 8.45a.m to 11.45am.for insurance reasons child cannot be left into Naíonra before 8.45a.m. Please do not be late when collecting your child as he/she can become upset. Staff members also have cleaning duties to carry out.
* Here in the Naíonra we have a settling in period, two hours per day for the first two weeks. 10.00am-12.00pm.
* There will be no charge for children availing of the ECCE Scheme; Non ECCE children will pay a fee of €69.00 per week. We would ask all parents to pay each week, and try not to let payments double as this money pays for our rent, material wages, etc. If a child is absent the fee is still payable.
* We would ask that a responsible person over 16 would bring and collect your child from the Naíonra, on no account will the child be permitted to leave the Naíonra with an adult whom the staff do not know. It is very important that the staff is made aware of any changes regarding the collection of the children.
* Please ensure that your child is brought into the building and presented to a member of staff. NEVER leave a child to come in by him/herself.
* When collecting children from school, we would be grateful if parents would wait outside the main gate until the class has finished. Please use main school gate, never walk through the car park entrance.
* The maximum number of children catered for in a room at any one time is twenty two.
* The adult staff ratio is 1:11 ECCE
* Here in the Naíonra we have full insurance cover, we are HSE Registered, and we adhere to principles and Standards of Síolta and Aistear. We are affiliated to Gaelscoileanna.
* Naíonra opens for 38 weeks per year, holidays in the Naíonra run in conjunction with Gael Scoil Dhún Dealgan i.e. midterm breaks, Christmas, and summer holidays, an annual calendar of holidays will be given to the children in September.
* All Children must be fully toilet trained before attending the Naíonra, As we have no changing facilities in our service. A change of clothes for the child is needed, in case of accidents.
* We would ask all parents to send their child in wearing old clothes as we cannot be responsible for children getting paint, dough etc. on their clothes. A Naíonra uniform is also available, these can be purchased from Mc Evoys Dundalk at a cost of approximately €20.00, and this uniform is optional.
* As a treat at the end of the year we go on a school tour, usually to one of the local indoor play areas. The cost will be €10.00 lunch is also included in this price. Any children not wishing to attend will be fully catered for in the Naíonra on that day.
* Here in the Naíonra we promote healthy eating. Children are required to bring in a healthy lunch including one piece of fruit each morning. We would ask if all lunch could be placed in a small lunch as lunches must be refrigerated.
* Friday is treat day! Children can take in one small treat only on this day, ie cereal bar, chocolate bar, crisps
* We would be grateful if children did not bring toys into the Naíonra.
* **Childrens Birthday Parties:**  If you would like to send in a cake, we will organise a small party for your child on his/her birthday.
* **Sickness:**  It is vital that you inform our staff of any sickness from which your child may suffer so that we can make the necessary arrangements.
* Children should not be sent to the Naíonra if they feel sick, they should remain in the comfort of their own homes until they are well again. There are two reasons for this:
* **1**. It is vital that children enjoy the time they spend at pre-school and that they are healthy at all times. When a child is sick, they need love and care usually from a parent/carer.
* **2**. It is important also that children are not infected and do not infect others. Children must stay at home for the stated period of time which is on the attached information leaflet on infectious diseases**. Children must stay at home for the first three days while taking an antibiotic.** This is to prevent your child’s illness from relapsing and also to prevent the spread of infection within the setting.
* Children will be sent home from the Naíonra immediately if they have a high temperature or they are vomiting / diarrhea. They must remain at home if they are sick **and for 48 hours** after their last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.
* We ask all parents to encourage their child’s use of Irish by using whatever Irish they have themselves. Information on Irish classes will be made available to all parents.
* If you change your phone number please let us know as parents need to be contactable in the case of emergency, we also use the text a parent network to send home information and reminders.

Staff Details

**Máire Ní Mhaolchalann- Manager**

* Currently studying Degree in Early Childhood Studies
* Advanced Diploma in Childcare & Education
* Diploma in Nursery Nursing
* Diploma in the Irish Language
* Cáilíocht Stiúrthóra Naíonra
* Child Protection- Children First- Tusla
* Occupational First Aid
* Paediatric First Aid

Garda Vetting- Yes

**Lisa Nic Uiginn – Assistant Manager**

* Currently studying Degree in Early Childhood Studies
* Advanced Certificate Supervision in Childcare – level 6
* Cáilíocht Stiúrthóra Naíonra
* Child Protection- Children First - Tusla
* Occupational First Aid
* Paediatric First Aid

Garda Vetting - Yes

**Elaine Ní Chaba – Early Years Practicioner**

* Advanced Certificate Supervision in Childcare – level 6
* Child Protection – Children First
* Paediatric First Aid

Garda Vetting- Yes

**Siobhán Ní Mhurchú – Early Years Practicioner**

* Advanced Certificate Supervision in Childcare – level 6
* Child Protection- Children First
* Paediatric First Aid

Garda Vetting- Yes

**Caoilbhfiona Ní Mhuirí – Relief Staff**

* Currently studying Degree in Early Childhood Studies
* Advanced Certificate Supervision in Childcare – level 6
* Early Childhood Care and Education – QQI-Level 5
* Diploma in the Irish Language
* Child Protection- Children First- e-Learning Tusla

Garda Vetting- Yes

**Charlene Uí Mhaoilbheanna – Early Years Practicioner**

* Currently Studying -Advanced Certificate Supervision in Childcare – level 6
* Child Protection-Children First - Tusla
* Occupational First Aid

Garda Vetting- Yes

**Aoife Ní Bheollain**

* Currently Studying -Advanced Certificate Supervision in Childcare – level 6
* Child Protection-Children First – Tusla e-learning

Garda Vetting- Yes

**Roisín Fox – Relief Staff**

* Early Childhood Care and Education – QQI-Level 5
* Child Protection – Children First – Tusla e-learning.

**Niall Teather – Fit Kids**

* PE instructor

Garda Vetting- Yes

**Naíonra Dhún Dealgan**

**Person in charge:**

Máire Ní Mhaolchalann.

**Person to deputise:**

Lisa Nic Uiginn

**Room leaders:**

Máire Ní Mhaolchalann/ Elaine Ní Chába

Lisa Nic Uiginn /Siobhán Ní Mhurchú

**First Aiders:**

Lisa Nic Uiginn, Máire Ní Mhaolchalann. Charlene Uí Maoilbheanna

**Fire Safety Officer**

Máire Ní Mhaolchalann/Lisa Nic Uiginn

**Health and Safety Officer:**

Lisa Nic Uiginn/Máire Ní Mhoalchalann

**Designated Child Protection Officer:**

Máire Ní Mhaolchalann.

**Person to deputise:**

Lisa Nic Uiginn

**Opening hours**

Monday to Friday 8.45 -11.45

The ECCE programme operates for 38 weeks which amounts to 183 open days.

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan will close for bank holidays, midterm breaks, etc.

See copy of Naíonra calendar

**Fees and Payments**

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan are approved by the DCYA as an Early Years Service, offering ECCE registered places, there is no charge for children eligible for ECCE places. The Fees for non –ECCE children are €69.00 per week. Fees are due on the Monday of each week.

**Optional Extras**

Uniforms are optional; Uniforms can be purchased in Mc Evoys Dundalk and roughly cost around €20.00- €25.00.

Annual trip to indoor play area will be €10.00, any children not wishing to go will be fully catered for in the Naíonra on that day.

**Staff ratio**

The staff ratio is 1:11 ECCE

The maximum number of children catered for at any one time in each room is **22.**

**Collection of children**

Please inform a member of staff if somebody different is collecting your child, as we cannot hand out your child to somebody unknown to us or somebody different, without your consent.

**Phone numbers**

If you change your phone number please inform us, as it is **very important** that we can contact you anytime between the hours of 8.45 -11.45.

**Behaviour Management Procedures**

Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we believe that all children have a right to expect positive approaches to discipline, which are consistent

Smacking, exclusion or any punishment that attacks the child’s sense of self and makes them feel helpless is damaging and will never be permitted, any breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action/or dismissal.

In Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we adopt and implement positive policies and practices, which foster self-esteem, respect, tolerance and self-control.

**Agreed boundaries**

All staff teams have agreed boundaries of what constitutes acceptable /non acceptable behaviours these are

* Based on child’s age and stage of development
* Kept to a minimum and are mainly relating to safety, respect and the welfare of others
* Consistently applied, if it’s not acceptable today, it is not acceptable tomorrow, and all staff are agreed on approach.

**Training**

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan also ensure in house training relating to behaviour management is conducted whenever the need is identified and updated annually.

All new staff, students and volunteers receive training, induction and copies of policies on induction

**Parents**

Parents are notified on registration of behavioural management policies and procedures. We view parents as the child’s primary educators, there for we welcome their input and involvement and seek to build a trusting relationship. Whenever there are any issues of concern, an appointment will be scheduled for parent/ guardian to visit and discuss and agree approach.

**Staff**

All staff has involvement in drawing up consistent boundaries, formulated in line with best practice principles.

* Staff adhere to strategies for managing behaviour positively
* At all times staff use calm, measured tones when dealing with children NO child will ever be excluded from play.

**Discipline Policy**

Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan the child will be expected to be considerate to others. He /She must learn to share, take turns, help tidy up. He /She will be discouraged from rude, selfish, rough, noisy and aggressive behaviour.

* It is our aim to create a safe, secure and orderly environment which will foster the development of the child wherein effective learning can take place.
* To establish a caring and positive climate supporting appropriate behavior through good relationships, praise and reward.

We recognise the enormous contribution parents make to their children and we look forward to your support.

**Safety Statement**

**General Policy - Health and Safety**

Safety is an essential element of childcare.The health & Safety of all Children and Staff is Paramount. Parents rely on carers to make sure that their children are safe while they are being cared for. It is the Naíonra’s Policy to provide a safe and secure environment for the children in its care, and it is our policy to protect them from danger, infection, and abuse and to educate children to keep themselves safe and healthy. Our Safety procedures are in accordance with Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

In particular the setting has a **responsibility** to:

* Implement legal requirements for health and safety in a childcare setting.
* Consider ways of dealing with accidents, injuries and emergencies
* Take into account the fact that different children have different needs with regard to safety e.g. infants, children with special needs etc

**Aims**

* Maintain a safe environment for the children in one’s care
* Identify hazards in the environment, both inside and out
* Protect children from hazards
* Understand the importance of keeping records essential for the safety of children
* Consult with parents and other main carers on safety matters
* Understand our responsibility with regard to protecting children from infectious disease
* Provide children, parents and other adults with a positive role model with regard to safety
* Modify the health and safety procedures used by Naíonra Dhún Dealgan
* Appoint suitable staff to carry out these procedures
* Offer ongoing staff training in health and safety matters
* Review these procedures at least annually

Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we adhere to the following procedures:

**Premises indoors**

. Security locks on front door, buzzer system. No unauthorized Person can enter setting with permission.

* Childproof lock on doors, windows and cupboards
* Thermostatically controlled hot water
* Electrical sockets covered with inserts when accessible to children
* Safe storage of toxic substances
* No smoking in building

**Furniture**

* All furniture checked for sharp edges and finger traps
* Tables and chairs are child sized

**Fittings**

* Floor coverings are hygienic and non slip
* Any soft areas are easily maintained and regular washing takes place

**Maintaining the safety of the children**

* To ensure the safety of the children at all times the level of supervision must always be in line with statutory requirements
* Team leaders must ensure the safety of children in a calm and relaxed way and avoid being overprotective
* It is important to ensure that children understand the need for safety rules and supervision as soon as they are old enough to do so. Children should be encouraged to take some responsibility for their own safety.
* Agreed policies and procedures for the collection of children should be adhered to s that they are not handed over without authorization.

**Fire Policy**

In the event of a fire the main priority will be the quick and safe evacuation of the building. Avoiding the scene of the fire, members of staff should be alerted verbally. It is important that the fire is sealed off by closing all doors. Fire bell should be set off and the following procedures followed.

* Blow whistle
* Instruct children to stop playing and put hands in the air
* Count children before evacuation
* Fire safety officer will take roll book outside
* Adult at front and back of line
* All toilets to be checked
* Children in both rooms exit with staff through emergency exits, if fire is near emergency exit use the main entrance and proceed to fire point - PLAYGROUND IN FRONT OF GAELSCOIL where roll will be taken.
* Call fire brigade.

**Once outside DO NOT RE ENTER BUILDING**

* It is essential to practice fire drills regularly. Fire drills will be carried out on a monthly basis.
* It is also essential to alternate drills.

The allocation tasks as mentioned above would be carried out by the supervisor/team leader of each room. In the event of those persons not being present another member of staff will take over this task.

**No smoking is permitted in the building.**

**Aims of Naíonra Dhún Dealgan**

The aims and objectives of Naionra Dhún Dealgan are to promote a love of the Irish language and Culture through the medium of language and play. Preschool education is a very valuable and important experience for all children. The staff here believes it is important to maintain a close relationship with parents for the benefits of the children. We would ask parents, therefore, to contact us if any problems should arise and we the staff will do likewise. Personal information passed on by parents shall be treated in the strictest confidence.

By providing a safe, secure and interesting learning environment, we hope to encourage your child to become an independent, confident and happy individual. In order to achieve this, we believe in good discipline practice which creates conditions for effective learning and helps children to have responsible attitudes and values for life. Rules, regulations and discipline practices in school are necessary for the safety, wellbeing and enjoyment of all children.

**The Naíonra Team**

* Mary Mulholland- Manager
* Lisa Mc Guigan- Assistant Manager
* Siobhan Murphy - Early Years Practitioner
* Elaine Mc Cabe – Early Years Practitioner
* Charlene Mulvenna – Early Years Practitioner
* Caoilbhfiona Morrow – Early Years Practitioner
* Roisín Fox – Relief Staff

Learning through play

In Naíonra Dhún Dealgan, Your child will learn through playing within a carefully constructed programme suitable for his/her age and needs. Most activities listed below will be available daily for the children:

* Imaginative Play (House, Hospital, Drama)
* Natural Materials (Sand, Water, Clay, Dough)
* Physical (Rhymes, Games, Sport in school hall, Outdoor play)
* Construction (Duplo, Stickle and Wooden blocks, Lego etc)
* Table Top Toys ( Matching, Sorting games, jigsaws, lotto)
* Quiet activities (Stories, Daily Relaxation,)
* Culture and diversity (Respecting Difference programme

The curriculum will also include visits to the library (van), nature walks and other places of interest. Most days your child will bring a picture home. You should know by this craft or picture precisely what theme on which the children are working on. The theme of the week/month will always be displayed on our parent’s notice board in the hallway.

It would be beneficial to the children if you, as parents, were willing to familiarise yourselves with the various Irish words which should be written on the craft and to use these words and phrases as often as possible in your home.

**Settling in Policy and Procedure**

We want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents. We want them to recognise other adults as a source of authority, help and friendship and to be able to share with their parents afterwards the new learning experiences enjoyed in the pre-school.

In order to accomplish this we will:

* Encourage parents to visit the Naíonra with their child weeks before an admission is planned. An invitation will be sent to all children and parents to attend our open day.
* For the first two weeks a two hour session is in place to help children to settle in.
* Make clear to families from the outset that they will be supported in the Naíonra for as long as it takes to settle their child there.
* Reassure parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into the Naíonra.
* Encourage parents where appropriate to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious and unhappy. Our settling procedures aim to help parents to help their children to feel comfortable in the Naíonra, to benefit from what it has to offer and to be confident that their parents will return at the end of the session.

It is important for the staff and parents work together to help the child feel confident and secure in the group. This takes longer for some children and parents should not feel worried if their child takes a while to settle in.

**Policy on Transitions**

We believe that all children should feel as comfortable, confident and emotionally secure as possible when entering the early years setting. Young children starting both nursery and school need support to enable them to adjust to a temporary separation from their family. They need to feel that they are a valuable, competent member of the new social group, and they need to develop positive attitudes towards the range of new experiences they will encounter. During transition children need to be helped to retain the self-confidence and self-respect that they have already gained at home or in previous settings. We believe the Naíonra needs to build on the work of the family and take steps to ensure that the child is valued as an individual in the setting. We understand that children enter school from a variety of backgrounds and will respond to it in many different ways. We therefore aim to welcome all children as individuals and will meet their needs accordingly. Getting to know a child and planning for admission to the Naíonra require parents and practitioners to engage in an equal partnership in which both learn from each other.

We want:

* Our Naíonra to offer a comprehensive transition period which is understood by staff, children and parents
* To provide close links between practitioners and families, so that children and adults already know someone in the setting
* To ensure children and families know what to expect when starting our Naíonra
* To ensure that each child is well prepared for the new experience, and is motivated to take part
* To allow each child to take things at their own pace, without being singled out or pressured
* Children to be encouraged by others without fear or ridicule
* Every child to be able to find something within the setting which connects with his/her previous life experience
* To ensure that children and families are able to communicate with staff in their own language where possible, and are fully aware of the routines, procedures and expectations of the setting, regardless of language
* To provide parents and carers with the opportunities to share information, concerns or ask questions
* To continue to give parents and carers time to tell staff what their child is experiencing at home
* Staff to demonstrate their respect for parent /carers knowledge by asking for their views and listening to what they say
* To encourage parents or regular caregivers to support their child within the setting for as long as is necessary
* To allow parents and children short periods of separation which are gradually built up to the whole session to limit stress and anxiety
* To provide an environment which is safe, secure, welcoming and inviting for children, parents, carers and visitors
* To create and maintain an ethos and learning environment that is responsive and flexible to cater for the entire range of needs

A mini brochure will be provided to all new parents, detailing all information about our Naíonra, A welcoming meeting for parents and children will take place in June on each year. This will be a chance for practitioners to introduce themselves, discuss routines and show parents and children the setting.

**Complaints Procedure**

* It is important that parents/carers and staff respect each other’s roles and responsibilities. Here in Naíonra Dhún Dealgan we operate in accordance with the legislation outlined in The Childcare act 1991 and preschool regulations 1996, and to have the welfare and safety of the children as their main priority.
* However, should there be any concerns or disagreements regarding the care of the child it is essential that the parent/carter addresses the team leader as **soon as it arises.**
* If a parent/carer should wish to have a more formal discussion with the Naíonra manager for any reason, a mutually convenient appointment should be arranged.
* If resolution cannot be found at this point, the issue/allegation should be put in writing to the manager for formal investigation. It should be noted however that all concerned have a right
* To natural justice
* To hear the allegation against them
* To have representation
* To have the right to appeal
* The manager shall conduct an investigation and provide feedback within a timeframe not exceeding 7days from the written complaint

If a parent/ carer are dissatisfied with the outcome of this investigation the matter can be referred in writing to:

The chairperson-

Naíonra Dhún Dealgan,

c/o Gaelscoil DhúnDealgan

Muirhevnamór

Dundalk

The issue will be fully investigated and a response given not later than 21 days after the written submission of the complaint.

If the matter cannot be resolved at this point, it may be referred to an external arbitrator, knowledgeable in the issue relating to the dispute.

**Comments**

We would love to hear your comments about our service; your comments can help us provide a better service for everybody involved. Please feel free to discuss your comment with the manager or you can write it down and leave it in the comments box in the Naíonra.

**Harassment and Bullying Procedures**

Tell the person(s) causing the offence to stop. This may be easier said than done. If you feel comfortable to do so, raise the issue informally at the earliest possible stage. In some cases the person may not be aware of the effect that their behavior is having.

Discuss the problem, Speak with manager. A meeting will be held to try and resolve the situation, should a solution not be forthcoming, and you may proceed to the next stage- making a formal complaint.

At this stage the complaint should be put in writing, outlining any incident dates, times etc. The manager shall then inform the accused of the allegation and ensure that all persons concerned have the right to have representation. An investigation will then take place, with all concerned having had an opportunity to have an input into the proceedings. The findings shall then be reported back to both parties. If either party is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation they have the right to appeal to the chairperson, who will deal with the matter within a period of 21 days.

These procedures are guidelines only; each incident will be examined on an individual basis, and appropriate action taken depending on the severity of the incident.

In the event of a matter not being solved internally the matter may be referred through normal industrial relations procedures.