

## OUTINGS POLICY

### Introduction

In Tigers Childcare, we take part in outings to extend and enhance children's emerging interests as part of our child led curriculum. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all outings are safe and provide valuable experiences to extend children's interests and knowledge beyond the centre and into their community.

This policy outlines how outings are conducted in Tigers Childcare and is informed by:

- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016
- Tusla (2018) Quality and regulatory framework; Full day care service and part-time day care service. Dublin: Tusla Early Years Inspectorate

### Definition

**Outings** Occasions when the children attending the service are under the control of the service but not on the service premises.

### Policy Statement

Tigers Childcare is committed to supporting each child's health, welfare, development, and well-being; regular outings provide varied, meaningful, and interesting learning experiences. Children come to Tigers every day telling stories of their experiences with family and friends in their local community. Outings enable colleagues to respond to these stories by bringing children into the community. Outings promote children's identity and belonging acting as a bridge between community life and life in Tigers. This bridge enables children to apply learning across environments which deepens their experiences, understandings, and growing knowledge (*Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Hayes et al 2019*). There is also the added benefit of learning about road safety awareness.

*These are just examples of incorporating outings into children's learning; knowing children well will enable colleagues to respond to their own children's family and community interests*

- Bringing children on a regular buggy walks in the locality.
- If a child talks about baking, a colleague could bring children on a walk to the shop to buy ingredients. Sample activities: make lists of what's needed, a map of how to get there, review road safety, how much money they will need etc.
- In springtime bring children on a walk around the estate, park, etc. on a daffodil hunt to find flowers and other signs of spring.
- If parents are open to the idea, go on a visit to children's gardens.

### Procedures and Practices

Two types of outings are undertaken in Tigers Childcare. The first type is a local community-based outing i.e., visits to parks, shops and other places of interest in the nearby locality on foot and/or



using buggies. The second type involves trips that are long distance via bus or train. Two different types of parental permission are used for each type of outing.

### **Parental Permissions**

Two different types of parental permission are used for each type of outing.

1. Regular local community outings require parents to grant a general permission for their children to attend on a regular basis on the registration form on enrolment. A parent can change their mind about their child's involvement in outings after a child enrolls. Parents will not automatically be notified in advance of regular local community walks but will know about the outings through daily and weekly updates on children's activities via Child Paths and weekly newsletters.
2. Long distance outings require explicit written parental permission for each trip. Parents will be notified in advance with all relevant information and will be requested to provide written consent for their child(ren) to attend. Parents are invited to question and seek clarification about the trip before consenting.

Parents/guardians can decline permission for their child(ren) to partake in an outing and alternative arrangements will be made by the service to accommodate children in this case.

Sample permission wording is outlined in form 21 (i).

### **Parental Involvement**

Parent/guardian involvement is encouraged and welcomed for both types of outings. Colleagues will invite parents to join on outings via child paths or at collection/drop off. Garda vetting is not required for parents on condition that parents do not have unsupervised access to children. Parents who join in outings act in a supportive role alongside colleagues. Parents attending outings will be referred to our Child Protection policy to read and become familiar with our child protection processes while present with children on outings.

### **Risk Assessments**

Risk assessment exercises are completed to assess safety on outings and to determine the suitability and accessibility of locations, facilities, and activities for all children. Transport is assessed for long distance trips. Parents are invited to view and contribute to outings risk assessments. Two risk assessment forms are used as follows:

<b>Number</b>	<b>Risks Identified</b>	<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
21 (a)	Outings General Risk Assessment  (Review annually)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Outings Policy</li><li>2. 21 (e) Outing planning/checklist - local</li><li>3. 21 (f) Outing planning/checklist - long</li><li>4. 21 (g) Outings roll call</li><li>5. 21 (h) Parents and emergency contacts list</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ongoing</li><li>2. Each outing</li><li>3. Each outing</li><li>4. Each outing</li><li>5. Each outing</li></ol>

21 (b)	Outings venue and transport risk assessment  (Review each new outing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outings policy</li> <li>2. 21 (c) venue safety checklist</li> <li>3. 21 (d) transport safety checklist</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. First time to a venue and regular review</li> <li>3. Each long outing involving transport</li> </ol>
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## Planning

Each outing must be well-planned in advance. Colleagues will liaise with the centre manager when planning each outing (both local and long-distance). Written plans are completed on *Outings Forms 21 (c)* and include:

- Location and timing of the outing
- Purpose and activities
- Risk assessment
- Welfare and wellbeing of children (food, warmth, enjoyment)
- The adult/child ratio and supervision requirements at the centre and on the outing
- The effective functioning of the service while the outing is taking place
- For long-distance trips, plans will be made around transport to include methods, compliance with transport safety legislation such as seatbelts, insurance, etc.

## Clothing Requirements

Children will be regularly going on local community outings. Parents are requested to continually consider the weather and dress the child accordingly each day, including appropriate footwear.

- For outings during the summer months, sun cream is required for outings and protective clothing including sun hats.
- For outings during the winter, children are advised to wear warm clothes including coats, hats, and gloves.
- For rainy days, the use of wet gear/overalls are required.
- Parents must ensure that their child has a spare change of clothes each day

## Insurance

Adequate insurance cover is in place for all outings in the Public Liability Section of the service's insurance policy.

## Adult:child ratio

Regulatory minimum adult/child ratios will be met on each outing as a baseline. Students/volunteers are not included in the minimum adult/child ratio. When planning and risk-assessing an outing colleagues and centre managers agree on any additional adult/child ratio requirements.

## Supervision Measures

- Colleagues will ensure that children are holding hands in pairs and that colleagues position themselves in a way that provides adequate supervision to all children. If there are two colleagues present, one will go to the front and one to the back, if a third is present they will float in the middle.
- Colleagues are to remain in close proximity to any "flight risk" children and hold their hands where necessary.
- Colleagues will take regular rollcalls at specified intervals (on leaving Tigers centre, on arrival at the destination, on leaving the destination and on return to the Tigers centre). *Form 21(g)* is used for rollcalls.
- Colleagues will carry out ongoing headcounts throughout the duration of the outing. All colleagues are responsible for knowing the number and whereabouts of children at all times.
- Children will wear easy recognisable clothing such as hi-vis jackets where possible. Other items such as armbands or Tigers Childcare t-shirts can be used.
- Depending on an individual outing context and risk assessment, the manager may decide that before leaving the centre each child is assigned to an adult (parent or colleague) while on the outing. In this case, each adult (colleague or parent) is responsible for knowing the location of their assigned children at all times.
- Centre managers are responsible for ensuring that colleagues are aware of and implement appropriate supervision on outings.

## Buggy walks

- A stroller, double buggy or 4-seat buggy are used for walks, depending on the number of children on each outing
- Children are securely harnessed into the buggy
- Where possible 2 colleagues should go on walks together.
- New colleagues taking children for a walk for the first time should be accompanied by another colleague who is familiar with the area and route.

## First Aid

At least one colleague trained in first aid (FAR) will be available to children on long-distance outings. It is preferable to have a FAR trained colleague on a local outing, but this may not always be possible. A FAR trained colleague must always remain available at the service.

## Essential Items

A trek-bag containing the following items must be taken on all outings:

1. A fully stocked first aid kit
2. Emergency medication required by children attending the outing, stored out of reach of children and in accordance with the medication storage guidelines

3. *Individual Emergency Action Plan form 20(d)* (as required)
4. A fully charged mobile phone
5. A centre tablet (use the mobile phone to hotspot)
6. All children's parents and emergency contact details (print out and laminated)
7. A set of spare clothes
8. *Outing Checklist 21(e) or 21(f)*

### **Food and Drinks**

- Where food and drinks are brought on the outing, food safety guidelines must be followed.
- Children must have their hands washed before eating. If handwashing facilities are unavailable hand sanitiser or wipes are permissible.
- Children must have access to drinking water and be kept well hydrated during all outings.

### **Transport**

Transporting children in private cars for the purpose of an outing is not permitted. When transport is needed for any outing, the colleague in charge of the outing must ensure that:

- There is safe supervision of children during transport and getting in and out of vehicles.
- Children are never left alone inside a vehicle, even when the engine is turned off.
- Where required, a vehicle is equipped with a ramp or hydraulic lift to allow entry and exit.
- Records are kept of the vehicles used to transport children, with named drivers and appropriate insurance cover in accordance with data protection requirements.

### **Emergency Plans**

#### **Minor Accident or Incident**

1. The safety and welfare of all children is upheld if a child becomes injured or an accident occurs. The injured child will remain under close adult care until the child recovers or the child's parents/guardian, or other authorised person takes charge of the child.
2. Close supervision of the remaining children continues
3. An accident report is completed on return to the centre in line with Tigers Childcare Policy 38 - Accident, Incident and Injury
4. A risk assessment is undertaken in line with Tigers Childcare Policy 42 - Risk Management

#### **Accident Causing Serious Injury**

There is a clear plan of action in place in the event of a serious accident occurring. The following steps are followed:

1. First aid is administered by the First Aid Responder (FAR)
2. Emergency services are called
3. The centre manager is informed
4. The child's parent/guardians are informed
5. All remaining children are supervised and returned to the centre in a safe manner

6. If emergency services bring the child to the hospital before parents/guardians arrive, a Tiger's colleague known to the child must accompany the child and remain until the parent/guardian arrives
7. An accident report is completed in line with Policy 38 Accident, Incident and Injury policy
8. The centre manager informs the Managing Director of Operations (Therese Noonan) or, if unavailable, another person on the Critical Incident Steering Group (Karen Clinice, Susan Clinice, Eimear Flynn, or Margaret Bermingham).
9. The Critical Incident procedures are invoked and followed. Refer to Tigers Childcare Policy 38 - Accident Incident or Injuries.

### **Missing Child**

Before leaving the centre, a group photograph is to be taken. This is to provide the most recent picture of the children and their clothes.

There is a clear plan of action in place in the event of a child going missing on an outing. The following steps are followed:

1. A roll call is completed immediately to ensure that the remaining children are present.
2. Remaining children are supervised closely.
3. A brief discussion will take place between colleagues and children to ascertain when and where the missing child was last accounted for.
4. One colleague will search the immediate area and the area where the child was last accounted for.

### **If the child is immediately found**

1. All adults (colleagues and parents) and children will return to the centre in a safe manner
2. Tigers Childcare Policy 38 - Accident, incident and Injuries Policy will be invoked and the procedures followed as per *Procedure to be followed in the event of an accident or incident*.

### **If the child is not immediately found**

1. The centre manager is informed.
2. The child's parent/guardians are informed, and an agreed meeting place determined
3. An Garda Síochána is informed.
4. All remaining children are supervised and returned to the centre in a safe manner.
5. One colleague stays to meet parents and An Garda Síochána.
6. The centre manager informs the Managing Director of Operations (Therese Noonan) or, if unavailable, another person on the Critical Incident Steering Group (Karen Clinice, Susan Clinice, Eimear Flynn, Margaret Bermingham).
7. The Critical Incident procedures within Policy 38 Accident Incident or Injuries policy will be invoked and followed.



## Policy Forms and documents

	Documents	location	Purpose
21	Introduction to outings (presentation)	Drive	Information
21	A parent's guide to outings	Website, Child Paths	Information
21	A colleague's guide to outings	Website, Child Paths	Information
21 (i)	Parental permissions - local	Child Paths	Permission
21 (j)	Parental permissions - long distance	Drive	Permission

## Communication Plan

A copy of all policies will be available during hours of operation to colleagues and parents/guardians in the Policy Folder located in Tigers Childcare.

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

Parents/guardians and colleagues will receive written notification of any updates via emails and/or Child Paths.

## Related Policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Student / Volunteer Policy
- Risk Assessment policy
- Accident Incident, Injury policy

## Policy Review

Policy Created: October 2015

Policy Updated: September 2022

Policy Reviewed: Annually