



Guidance for Policy on Accidents and Incidents in Pre-school Services

Contents

1.0 Purpose	3
2.0 Core policy requirements	4
Requirement 1	4
Requirement 2	5
Requirement 3	5
Requirement 4	6
Requirement 5	7
3.0 Best Practice in developing and implementing an Accident and Incident Policy ...	7
4.0 Appendix.....	9
4.1 Supporting Information	9

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide pre-school services with the regulatory requirements for the specific policy on Accidents and Incidents, as set out by the [Child Care Act \(1991\) Early Years Services Regulations \(2016\)](#). This document provides the core requirements for this policy, as well as prompts and considerations that will support registered providers to ensure that their policy and procedures are fully developed and are reflected in the practices in their service.

The information in this document should be applied to the specific policy on Accidents and Incidents and the accompanying procedures of the pre-school service. This document should be read in conjunction with [A Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Pre-school Services, the Quality and Regulatory Framework](#), and the [Guidance to Critical Incidents in Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare Services](#).

This document is for reference only. It should not be assumed that the guidance provided is comprehensive or that it provides a definitive answer in every situation.

Further resources are available in [Appendix 1](#).

Regulatory Requirements of this Policy

Child Care Act (1991) Early Years Services Regulations (2016), Schedule 5.1 (j)

A policy on accidents and incidents in relation to a pre-school service, means a policy specifying:

- (a)** the measures to be taken in the service to prevent accidents and incidents,
- (b)** the procedures to be followed when an accident or incident involving a pre-school child occurs while the child is attending the service, including the steps that are to be taken to contact the parent or guardian of the child or the emergency services, if necessary,
- (c)** the manner in which a record of the accident or incident should be kept,
- (d)** the manner in which a record should be shared with the parent or guardian of the child to whom it relates.

2.0 Core policy requirements

A Policy Statement is recommended for this policy alongside the core requirements as set out further in this document. This policy statement should confirm that should an accident, or incident occur, the service has policies and procedures in place to respond to, identify, document, and review the incident or accident, and to communicate associated information. The statement should state that the service takes the necessary actions to prevent any reoccurrence of accidents or incidents. The policy should also promote a positive and open culture of reporting to parents and guardians when accidents or incidents occur and giving feedback to parents and guardians on any investigations or reviews.

Requirement 1

The policy outlines the measures to be taken in the service to prevent accidents & incidents.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

(a) The measures the service will take to prevent accidents and incidents occurring in the service, including (but not limited to):

- setting out how children are adequately supervised, with adult/child ratios maintained at all times,
- ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of each child and their stage of development,
- procedures for assessing the environment (indoor and outdoor) to address hazards and minimise risk,
- ensuring the appropriate use of equipment and materials in the service,
- ensuring the service's Safety Statement is understood and implemented.

Requirement 2

The policy sets out the procedures to be followed when an accident or incident involving a pre-school child occurs while the child is attending the service.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) That where there is an accident or an incident in which a child or an adult in the service is injured, staff members will follow specified procedures to ensure that:
 - the child or adult is attended to,
 - proper treatment is given,
 - appropriate measures are taken to avoid any worsening of the situation.
- (b) That all injuries will be given immediate attention and be assessed by a staff member with First Aid Responder training to determine what type of medical attention, if any, is required.
- (c) That a medical practitioner and/or the emergency services will be contacted immediately if there is any concern for a child's welfare (including a missing child). Steps to take in such an emergency are detailed clearly on the notice boards in rooms and the office.
- (d) That at least one person on the premises at any given time will have up-to-date First Aid Responder training.
- (e) That where children are off the premises (for example, on an outing) that they will be accompanied by a staff member who is a trained First Aid Responder.

Requirement 3

The policy outlines the steps that are to be taken to contact the parent/guardian of a child, and/or the emergency services if required.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) The measures to take to ensure parents/guardians are informed of an accident or incident. This includes when they are to be informed and the manner in which they are to be informed.
- (b) The measures to take when it is necessary to call the emergency services following an accident or incident.
- (c) The steps to take when contacting emergency services (including phone numbers), and that these steps are displayed clearly on the noticeboards of the rooms and offices.

Requirement 4

The policy describes how information is recorded, documented, and stored regarding accidents and incidents.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) What information in relation an accident or incident must be recorded, including when first aid is administered. Templates for consistent recording and reporting of accidents and incidents should be available within the procedures.
- (b) The measures to ensure records of accidents and incidents are stored safely and appropriately in the service.
- (c) That accident and incident records are retained for a period of two years from the date on which the child to whom the record relates ceased to attend the service.
- (d) That relevant staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and have received training in relation to the notification of incidents to the Early Years Inspectorate.
Please refer to Regulation 31, and to the [Quality and Regulatory Framework](#) for a list of notifiable incidents.
- (e) That the registered provider will notify the Early Years Inspectorate within three working days of becoming aware of any notifiable event.
- (f) Which accidents or incidents need to be reported to parties other than Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate and measures to ensure that all such reports are made.

Examples of reporting to other parties (not an exhaustive list)

- [Tusla Social Work services](#) - if there is a child safeguarding concern.
- [HSE Public Health Dept](#) - if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease in the service.
- [An Garda Síochána](#) - if there is a presenting danger to staff and/or children, or a criminal offence has been committed.
- [Health and Safety Authority](#) - if the incident is dangerous, or a staff member has been injured as a result.
- The service's insurance company - as appropriate.

Requirement 5

The policy outlines risk assessment procedures to be taken following an incident/accident occurring in the service.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) The procedures to be followed in the service after an accident or incident has occurred, to ensure that there is a review of existing practices and procedures in the service and following a risk assessment to effect a change in practice, policy or procedure (if required).
- (b) How information on new practices or changes to practices as a result of a review and/or risk assessment of an accident or incident to be communicated effectively to management, staff, parents/guardians and children as appropriate.

3.0 Best Practice in developing and implementing an Accident and Incident Policy

In addition to the regulatory requirements for this policy as set out earlier in this document, service providers can enhance the quality of practice in the implementation of the Accident and Incident Policy in the service. In this section, best practice in this policy area is outlined and further information is signposted where available.

- Implementation of the policy should reflect Síolta Standards in particular [Standard 2 Environments](#).
- A 'Hazard' is a potential source of harm or adverse effect on a person. There may be potential hazards in an years service such as very hot water in taps, broken equipment/materials, accessible cleaning agents, accessible heat sources, sharp objects at child height, finger traps, and/or open staircases.
- A 'Risk' is the likelihood of harm, danger or of adverse effects if exposed to a hazard. It is the responsibility of the adults in the environment to recognise the potential hazards and conduct risk assessments to control the hazard and mitigate the risk to children.
- Young children should be taught about safety and accident prevention from a young age and supported to follow health and safety rules. However, it shouldn't be expected that young children will act in a safe manner every time they approach a risky situation.
- Incidents occurring should be viewed by the service as an opportunity for learning and for service improvement.

- All persons who may be affected by an incident should be aware of the incident and the steps to be taken to learn from it.
- Staff should be confident when reporting an incident that the process will not seek to assign blame but rather to understand any weaknesses in the systems of care/work that contributed to the incident occurring.

4.0 Appendix

4.1 Supporting Information

- Aistear Siolta: [Practice Guide](#)
- Barnardos: [Health and Safety in Childcare](#)
- Barnardos: [Critical Incidents in Early Learning and Care and School Age Services](#)
- CHI: [Simple tips to prevent accidents](#)
- ROSPA. [Accidents to children](#)
- Health and Safety Authority: [Keep Safe Programme](#)
- Health Service Executive: [Child Safety](#)
- NCSP: [Child Centred Practice](#)

QMS Reference	EYI-GDE12.37
Version	V2.0
Date	12/12/2025