



Guidance for Policy on Fire Safety in Pre-school and School Age Services

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide early years (pre-school and school age) services with the regulatory requirements for the specific policy on Fire Safety as set out by the [Child Care Act \(1991\) Early Years Services Regulations \(2016\)](#) and the [Child Care Act \(1991\) Registration of School Age Services \(2018\)](#). This document sets out the core requirements that should be addressed in 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 Fire Safety and the accompanying procedures of the service. The provisions of the policy in a preschool should align with [Fire Safety in Preschools](#) (DoE 1999). This document should be read in conjunction with Tusla's [Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services](#), the [Quality and Regulatory Framework](#) and the [National Quality Guidelines for School Age Child Care Services](#). Please also refer to Tusla's [Guide to Building Safety- Fire and Planning Requirements](#).

Note: *This policy is required for both pre-school and school age services. This document will provide the reader with policy considerations for their service type, the children, young people and staff members within it. Unless specified, the policy considerations within this document apply to both pre-school and school age 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

Preschool Service

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

In relation to a pre-school service, a fire safety policy must specify:

- (a) the manner in which the registered provider shall ensure that all adults working or volunteering in the service are aware of and trained in the procedures to be followed in case of fire in the service,
- (b) all adults working and volunteering in the service are familiar with the location of any firefighting equipment and are trained in the use of such equipment,
- (c) The frequency and timing of fire drills to be carried out in the service.
- (d) the manner in which fire drills, the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms is recorded by the service.

School age service

Child Care Act (1991) Registration of School Age Services Regulations (2018), Schedule 6.1 (g)

A fire safety policy must specify:

- (a)** the manner in which the registered provider shall ensure that all adults working or volunteering in the service are aware of and trained in the procedures to be followed in case of fire in the service,
- (b)** familiar with the location of any fire- fighting equipment and trained in the use of such equipment,
- (c)** The frequency and timing of fire drills to be carried out in the service.

2.0 Core policy requirements

A Policy Statement is recommended for this policy alongside the core requirements as set out further in this document. The Fire Safety policy statement should set out the service's commitment to implementing all reasonable measures to guard against the outbreak of fire and in the event of a fire occurring ensuring, as is reasonably practicable, ensure the safety of children and adults on the premises.

A service's Fire Safety policy is a core component of the service's Safety Statement. While there may be over-lap, there is a legislative requirement to have both documents in place, and this should be clearly stated within the policy statement.

Requirement 1

The fire safety policy specifies the way staff are informed about and trained in procedures to be followed in the case of fire.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The Policy specifies:

- (a)** The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire in the service.
- (b)** How the fire safety procedures are communicated with employees, contractors and unpaid workers in the service.
- (c)** How employees, contractors and unpaid workers are trained in the procedures to be followed in the case of a fire in the service, and on their responsibilities in relation to safe evacuation in the case of a fire.
- (d)** How employees, contractors and unpaid workers are provided with required information and regularly retrained in the use of firefighting-equipment.
- (e)** The induction procedure for employees, contractors and unpaid workers regarding fire safety within the service.
- (f)** The location of the firefighting equipment within the service and how their location is communicated to employees, contractors and unpaid workers.

Requirement 2

The policy states the procedures for and how often fire drills are to be carried out.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The Policy specifies:

- (a) That fire drills are an evacuation of the service to a prearranged, designated assembly point.
- (b) That fire drills are carried out on a monthly basis in the service.
- (c) That the timings of the fire drills are varied to include differing exit routes, times and days to ensure all adults are aware procedures to follow in the event of a fire.
- (d) That as far as possible, all children will be in attendance for a fire drill.

Requirement 3

The fire safety policy specifies the record keeping requirements in relation to fire safety.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The Policy specifies:

- (a) How each fire drill which takes place in the premises is recorded.
- (b) How the service records fire drills, the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment, and smoke alarms in the premises.

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| Preschool Services | <p>Requirement 4 – Preschool services <u>only</u></p> <p>The manner in which fire drills, the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms is recorded by the service.</p> <p>Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)</p> <p>The Policy specifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) The policy specifies how the service records fire drills, the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment, and smoke alarms in the premises. |
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3.0 Best Practice in developing and implementing a Fire Safety Policy

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

Fire Safety Policy

- The fire safety policy should be clearly communicated with parent(s)/ guardians and the children attending the service, and the ways in which this is done should be recorded.

Fire Drills

- Fire drills are carried out by setting off the fire alarm every month and at the start of each new school year, and more frequently if necessary.
- The fire drill record should contain the following details:
 - date of drill,
 - time of drill,
 - how many children and staff are present,
 - length of drill,
 - routes of escape used.
- The record(s) of the fire drills are reviewed regularly, and preventive measures are put into place for any potential risk(s) identified. Risks may include delays on exiting, new children attending, students on placement, weather considerations or the evacuation of sleeping children. If required, preventive measures may include re-completing the fire drill, with consideration of the potential risk factor(s).
- Fire drills should take place be varied to include;
 - Varying the days and times of the day to hold the fire drill to ensure all adults and children/young people attending the service are familiar with the evacuation procedures,
 - Vary times to include arrival and departure times to ensure all records are accurate of the children and adults present in the service.
 - Using varying fire exit routes to ensure all children and adults are familiar with the evacuation procedure, regardless of their location in the service.
- Fire safety information, including the identified fire safety officer within the service should be clearly displayed in a prominent place in the service.
- The daily risk assessment carried out by the service prior to opening each day should include fire safety checks of the building. These may include ensuring the fire doors are not obstructed or propped [inside and outside], equipment and/or items are stored appropriately to ensure fire exit routes are clear, and fire exits are clearly identifiable.
- The service should ensure there is a notice setting out the procedures to be followed if there is a fire, and this should be displayed in a prominent place in the service.

4.0 Appendix

4.1 Supporting Information

- Barnardos: [Critical Incident Planning](#)
- Engineers Ireland: [Fire Safety Planning Requirements for Early Years Services.](#)
- Gov. of Ireland: [Fire Safety in Pre-Schools 1999 \(Department of the Environment and Local Government 1999\)](#)
- Gov. of Ireland: [Technical Guidance Document B - Fire Safety](#)
- Health and Safety Authority: [Fire Safety](#)
- Tusla: [Early Years Services Registration; A Guide to Building Safety - Fire and Planning Requirements \(2022\)](#)

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