**Donna's Montessori**

**Parent Information**



**Babies – Wobblers – Toddlers – Playschool – Preschool - Afterschool**

**Cregane, Buttevant, Co. Cork**

**Earls Court, Churchtown, Co. Cork**

**Email: donna.cullen@live.ie**

[**www.donnasmontessori.com**](http://www.donnasmontessori.com)

**086 601 72 80**

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1. **WELCOME TO DONNA’S MONTESSORI**

At Donna’s Montessori, Cregane, Buttevant and Earls Court, Churchtown, Co. Cork, we are committed to providing a childcare service of the highest standard. We are notified to and inspected by Tusla, The Child and Family Agency.

This Handbook intends to provide a synopsis of our **Policies and Procedures Manual** which all parents are invited to view. This Policies and Procedures Manual is referenced throughout this handbook.

Trained, motivated and friendly staff are the cornerstone of our service. We encourage a strong teamwork approach to help build and support our shared objectives. Donna’s Montessori is committed to equal opportunity in employment.

Above all, your child’s welfare and your peace of mind is most important to us. Our Mission at Donna’s Montessori is a commitment to provide excellent standards of care for the development of each child. Through providing a warm, friendly, safe and caring environment we aspire to challenge and stimulate children to develop to their full potential through play, learning, interactions and experiences that are age and stage appropriate.

**We Aim To:**

* Ensure that each child is happy and has fun.
* Provide a safe & secure environment allowing children the freedom to explore while meeting each child’s individual needs in an atmosphere where they feel at ease. We will carry out observations on all children to ascertain their level of development and draw up individual learning plans as required, and consult with other professionals for the benefit of the children.
* Provide a wide variety of experiences that will stimulate the development of each child while encouraging them to make decisions and choose activities which will promote independence.
* To communicate openly with parents / children and other staff members to show transparency in all areas of the service.
* To work under the Montessori / Aistear Framework - [**The Montessori Method**](http://www.montessori.edu/method.html) begins with a deep respect of children as unique individuals, recognising that their emotional and social development is an essential part of their education. We encourage the children to do things for themselves and also to think for themselves. It allows them to become independent. **Aistear** is the early childhood curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland. Because early childhood marks the beginning of children's lifelong learning journeys, this framework is called **Aistear**, the Irish word for journey.
* To keep up to date with National Standards and make changes as and when necessary.
* To comply with and work according to The Pre-School Regulations 2006.

Thank you for choosing Donna’s Montessori.

***Donna Cullen***

**Owner / Manager**

1. **OUR STAFF**

At Donna's Montessori and Childcare, all our staff are highly qualified and experienced and have demonstrated a passion for working with young children.  We encourage all staff to undertake regular training in areas such as Paediatric First Aid, Diversity, Equality & Inclusion and Child Protection. All staff are Garda Vetted and are very familiar with our policies and procedures.

Staff are always available to discuss your child’s day or any special requirements you may have.  Just give a call to arrange a meeting.

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**MANAGER**

Owner / Manager Donna Cullen is responsible for day to day management of both Montessori’s, their staff and service delivery. Donna has owned the service since 2000 and has over 20 years experience in Childcare.

**CHILDCARE STAFF**

All of our staff are Childcare Practitioners who have completed a minimum of FETAC Level 5 in Childcare.

**BUTTEVANT STAFF**

Donna Cullen FETAC Level 6 20 Years Experience

Denise Cronin FETAC Level 6 3 Years Experience

Susie Kiely FETAC Level 5 10 Years Experience

Yvonne O’Callaghan FETAC Level 5 3 Years Experience

Sandra Cole FETAC Level 6 10 Years Experience

Denise Nolan FETAC Level 8 10 Years Experience

**CHURCHTOWN STAFF**

Karen Burke FETAC Level 7 5 Years Experience

Alison O’Dea FETAC Level 6 5 Years Experience

Yvonne O’Callaghan FETAC Level 5 3 Years Experience

From time to time, we employ the services of trainees, interns and students that act as auxiliary support to the core staff team. All of these will be Guarda Vetted prior to interacting with children and will have an expressed interested in working in the Childcare sector.

1. **ADMISSIONS & ENROLMENT**

All admissions are recorded of all children in attendance. This information is confidential. It is the policy of Donna’s Montessori that our service is open to all families in our community. We welcome children and staff from all ethnic origins, religious backgrounds, faiths and those who have special needs. We have a booking system, which operates on a first come first served basis.

We aim to work with you to best meet your childcare needs. To help us to do this you will be required to complete some pre-admission information sheets with particular attention given to identifying any special needs your child has. All information supplied by parents is treated in the strictest confidence.

1. **YOUR CHILDS FIRST DAY – SETTLING IN**

For many children and their families, starting child care is the first time they have been separated for any length of time. Donna’s Montessori is committed to the smooth transition of the children into our childcare service. It is our policy to advise parents / guardians to introduce their child to us before s/he starts in the Service.

It is the policy of Donna’s Montessori that every effort is made to ensure that the settling in period is as easy and pleasant as possible for the children and their parents / carers. On the first day, or during the first few days, the parent / guardian is encouraged to stay until the child feels comfortable in their new surroundings. There is no set time limit on the settling in period and our Childcare staff will give parents a daily account of the child’s progress during the settling in period.

1. **RANGE OF CHILDCARE SERVICES & CHILDCARE SUPPORT SCHEMES**

At Donna’s Montessori we support parents / guardians through the provision of the following services:

**CHILD AGE GROUPS:**

**Baby Room:** 3mths - 1 year

**Toddler Care:** 1-2.5 /3 years

**Playschool:** 2.5-3.5 years

**Preschool:** 3.5-5 years (Free Preschool Year available)

**Afterschool:** Up to conclusion of primary education including school drop off / pick up

**Camps:** During Halloween, Easter and throughout July & August each year

**FACILITIES & SERVICES:**

* Secure outdoor playground
* Fully Insured
* Security Systems in place
* Professional qualified staff
* Registered and regulated by the Health Service Executive.

1. **AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE**

Donna’s Montessori offers a wide range of Childcare supports to parents / guardians who meet set criteria. Please speak to us if you think you may be eligible for any of the following supports / schemes:

* **Free ECCE Preschool places**
* **Community Childcare Subvention Programme / Affordable Childcare**
* **After-School Child Care Scheme including Transport to / from local Schools**
* **Childcare Education and Training Support Programme (CETS)**
* **Community Employment Childcare (CEC) Programme**

1. **ADULT : CHILD RATIO**

At Donna’s Montessori our Adult : Child Ratio is 1:5 for children from 1 to 2.5 years and 1:10 for children from 2.5 to 6 years. ECCE Scheme room ratio is 1:11.

1. **OPENING HOURS**

Our Montessori is open from 7.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday throughout the school year. Please see your Calendar (which you will receive on enrolment) for our out of term opening days.

1. **FEE PAYMENT POLICY**

All fees must be paid weekly.

There is no refund for illness or holidays. In the event of the closure of the service in exceptional circumstances, that is beyond the control of the Management i.e. adverse weather conditions, fees will apply.

Children participating in the Government ECCE scheme are entitled to free preschool education five mornings per week from 9am to 12pm.

Optional Extra – ECCE scheme Children can attend for an additional 30 minutes (until 12.30pm) 5 days a week for €10 per week payable on the first day of each week.

Any additional hour, or part thereof, is charged at €4.00 per child.

Our non ECCE scheme children will pay a fee of €15 per morning (9am – 12pm) and €4 for any additional hour or part thereof.

Fees will be discussed and agreed on an individual basis for all children eligible for Government Childcare schemes listed previously.

**10. NON PAYMENT OF FEES PROCEDURE:**

Parents / guardians will receive a verbal reminder followed by a written reminder stating the period of time required to produce any outstanding fees due. If this time frame is not adhered to without communication with manager, your child’s place may be terminated. Appeals will be allowed to the Manager in the event of dispute. The decision of the Manager is final.

**11. ITEMS TO BE PROVIDED BY PARENTS**

* Food – see our healthy eating policy
* Nappies
* Wipes
* Change of clothes
* Outdoor clothes – rainproof coat / clothing and wellies
* Medication – see our medication policy
* Suncream and Hat – see our Sun protection policy

**12. DROPPING OFF / COLLECTING YOUR CHILD**

Parents/guardians should note that due to legislative requirements under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and *Children First* – Child Protection Guidelines two members of staff are required to be with the child/children.

* You are required to drop your child at the Service at the time their session begins
* You are required to collect your child promptly when the session ends
* If you are late collecting your child the following additional charges apply:
  + More than 5 minutes to 30 minutes late - €2.00
  + Over 30 minutes to one hour late - €4.00 (per hour)

**13. WITHDRAWAL OF CHILDREN**

Parents/Guardians sign up to agree in the Parents/Guardians Fee Agreement Form that they will:

* Give notice, in writing that the child/children are leaving the service
* Give one months’ notice or pay one month of fees
* Management also reserve the right to request that the Parent/Guardian withdraw their child/children from the service if they are not ‘settling in’ or adapting to the environment. The Management agrees to give two weeks’ notice of this to the Parent/Guardian so that they can make alternative arrangements.
* Any delays in payments must be discussed in advance and agreed with management.

**14. ILLNESS & EXCLUSION**

**Principle:**

The service has been entrusted by parents/guardians to care for their children. The service aims to provide as healthy an environment as possible for children and staff. We will endeavour to minimise your child’s exposure to infection by excluding sick children/adults. We will encourage parent’s uptake of vaccinations. We will inform parents/guardians and the Health Service Executive where necessary of any infections in the service.

**Statement of Intent:**

It is the policy at the service that our children’s welfare is the first and most important consideration. In the event of sudden illness, we will contact our parents/guardians immediately about our concerns regarding their child’s health and well-being.

**Policy and Procedure:**

* Parents/guardians will be informed of our concerns and procedures we are taking.
* If a parent cannot be reached the next name on the emergency list will be contacted.
* The child’s temperature will be monitored and recorded.
* If staff feel that a child needs medical attention, the parents/guardians will be notified and with their permission, we will contact the doctor on call. Parents/guardians will be responsible for the doctor’s fees.
* If a child requires “one to one” attention and we cannot facilitate this at the time, parents/guardians will be asked to collect their child.
* Parents/guardians will be required to take their child home immediately in the case of vomiting or diarrhoea.
* We request that parents/guardians inform the service if their child is unable to attend due to illness, stating details.
* We advise that sick children must be kept at home (see exclusions list).
* Children attending the service suffering from any contagious infections must have a doctor’s clearance certificate before returning to the service.
* In the event of an outbreak of any infectious disease, all parents/guardians will be verbally informed. A dated notice informing all parents/guardians of any infectious disease outbreak will be displayed on the notice board. We advise all persons who enter the service to inform the manager if they have come in contact with an infectious or contagious disease.
* The HSE recommends that all children in preschool receive the appropriate vaccinations. This acts as a safeguard for your child as well as protecting other children in the service.

**Infectious Disease Control:**

* Children/adults with infectious diseases should not attend the service.
* Employees suffering from a contagious illness should not work with children, i.e. gastro-enteritis, etc. and must inform the Management immediately.
* All children must provide up to date record of immunisations (see immunisation programme).
* Head lice are a contagious condition and if a case is noticed it should be brought to the attention of Parents/guardians immediately. A child is not permitted to attend the service until the condition has been successfully treated.
* Observation of children following immunisation is essential; parents/guardians should inform staff of immunisation. It is good practice to encourage two-way communication on all health issues.
* Staff in the service will be immunised against infectious diseases.

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| Antibiotics Prescribed: | First 48 hours at home: |
| Conjunctivitis: | Kept at home for two days; thereafter until eyes are no longer weeping. |
| Diarrhoea: | 48 hours from last episode. |
| Chickenpox: | 7 days from appearance of the rash. |
| Gastroenteritis,  Food poisoning,  Salmonellas and  Dysentery: | Until authorised by GP |
| Hand, Foot and Mouth  Infective hepatitis: | Until child is well / seek managers’ advice 7 days from onset of jaundice. |
| Measles: | 7 days from appearance of the rash |
| Meningococcal  Infection Mumps: | Until recovered from illness. Exclude child for five days after onset of swelling. |
| Pertussis  (Whooping cough) | 21 days from the onset of paroxysmal cough or 5 days from the commencement of antibiotics |
| Poliomyelitis: | Until declared free from infection by GP |
| Rubella  (German measles): | 7 days from appearance of the rash |
| Streptococcal infection  of the throat: | Until appropriate - following medical treatment |
| Scarlet fever: | Child can return 48 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment. |
| Impetigo: | 3 days from the start of treatment - Until the skin is healed |
| Pediculosis (lice): | Until appropriate treatment has been given |
| Temperature: | Over 38 degrees |
| Vomiting: | 48 hours from last episode of vomiting |

**15. WHAT DONNA’S MONTESSORI ASKS FROM PARENTS / GUARDIANS**

* When reporting your child as absent from the service **call the Manager on 086 601 7280.**
* Liaise with childcare staff in a discreet manner regarding any issues that may arise with your child. If you feel it would be easier to discuss any matters away from your child’s room please feel free to pre-arrange a meeting with your child’s room leader and/or management.
* Work with childcare staff if your child requires guidance/support regarding inappropriate behaviour.
* Provide what is needed for your child at all times e.g. spare clothes, nappies etc.
* Ensure that your childcare fees are up to date at all times.
* **Provide 2 weeks-notice** if your child is leaving the service. If this is not provided the service reserves the right to either a) retain your deposit and/or b) charge for that period.
* **Provide 2 weeks-notice** of any change in hours or days for your child. We will endeavour to accommodate any changes you may need but please note this will not always be possible if we are at full capacity.
* Provide any feedback that you feel may be important with regard to how the service is operated. Please understand that although some procedures may seem irrelevant to parents there is usually an explanation with regard to the smooth running of the service; so always ask if you are unsure of our reasoning.

**Please ensure your child always has enough of the following:**

|  |  |
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| * At least 2 changes of clothes * Disposable nappies and wipes (if relevant) * Suitable outdoor clothing & wellies * Sun Screen and Sun Hat | * Prescribed medicine with written directions for administering it in its original container. * Soothers (if relevant) * **PLEASE** do not send your child to the Service in their best clothes as we have lots of messy and outdoor play and encourage children to be as independent as possible which often leads to mess. |

**16. WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Where to find further information** | **Source** | **Type** |
| Policies & Procedures Including:   * Admissions & Enrolment Policy * Settling in Policy * Fee Payment Policy * Collection of Children Policy * Record Keeping Policy * Confidentiality Policy * Compliments / Complaints Policy * Health & Safety Policy * Child Protection Policy * Medication Policy * No Nut Policy * Sun Protection Policy * Healthy Eating Policy * Food Safety Policy * Infection Control Policy * Fire Safety Policy * Safe Sleep Policy * Accident & Incident Policy * Social Media Policy * Hygiene Policy * Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Policy * Supporting Positive Behaviour Policy | Manager | PDF file/hard copy |
| Curriculum Planning | Childcare Settings | Leaflets  Notice Boards |
| Fees Structure | Manager | PDF file/hard copy |
| Activities for Children | Childcare Settings | Leaflets  Notice Boards |
| Service News | Facebook / Website | Online |
| Centre Information | Manager / Staff / Facebook / Website | Verbal / Hardcopy / Online |
| Childhood Illness | Childcare Settings | Leaflets  Notice Boards |

**Website –** [**www.donnasmontessori.com**](http://www.donnasmontessori.com) **Facebook –** Donnas Montessori

**Service Testimonials**

If you feel that your child receives a good service why not say so by providing a written testimonial? Hearing when we are doing well is important for staff morale and indicates that we are doing a good job. If you want to provide positive feedback please speak with the Manager or drop a written testimonial into the service

**If Things are not going to plan**

If you are not satisfied with the level of service at Donnas Montessori you can raise the issue (verbally) by making an appointment to meet with the Manager. If you prefer you may put your complaint in writing, **addressing it to Donna Cullen, Manager** at the childcare service address and marking it *‘private & confidential’*.