



# PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

SHERPA KIDS | IRELAND | ENGAGING OUR SCHOOLS

Last updated April 2025



## CONTENTS

01.	Site Contacts	3
02.	Statement of Purpose & Function ( <i>What we do &amp; why</i> )	4
03.	Our Core Values	5
04.	This Handbook ( <i>What it's for</i> )	6
05.	Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct	6
06.	Privacy Statement ( <i>Your personal data</i> )	7
07.	Confidentiality - Works both ways	8
08.	What Matters Most to Us	8
09.	Cultural Diversity	9
10.	Our Programme	10
11.	A Typical Day at Sherpa Kids ( <i>Timetable</i> )	11
12.	Homework Policy	11
13.	Children with Additional/Complex Needs	12
14.	Children attending ASD units at School	13
15.	Working in Partnership with You	13
16.	Register your Place	14
17.	Bookings & Fees	16
18.	Your NCS ( <i>Where to send your CHICK</i> )	18
19.	Sample Times/Fees ( <i>Before &amp; After NCS</i> )	19
20.	Invoices & Making Payments	20
21.	Your Holidays, Child Illness & School/Service Closures	21
22.	Changing and/or Cancelling your Booking	22
23.	Non-Payment of Fees and Withdrawal of Children	25
24.	Health, Safety and Wellbeing of Children	27
25.	Snack Sample Menu	28
26.	Drop off and Collection Policy	29
27.	Child Attendance Policy	30
28.	Early Collection & Late Drop Off	31
29.	Separated or Divorced Parents	32
30.	Fire Safety	33
31.	Medication and Consent	33
32.	Emergency Medication	34
33.	Sun Cream Policy	35
34.	Child Behaviour Management	35
35.	Missing Child Policy	37
36.	Unwell or Distraught Children	38
37.	Infectious Conditions and Exclusion Policy	39
38.	First Aid and Critical Incidents	40
39.	Child Safeguarding Policy	41
40.	Sherpa Kids Charity Initiatives	41
41.	Our Commitment	42
42.	Other Forms of Communication	43
43.	Lost or Damaged Property	43
44.	Complaints & Compliments	44
45.	Appendices	45

# HELLO and WELCOME

## Sherpa Kids Portlaoise Educate Together NS

### SITE CONTACTS

**Phone** 083 420 5566

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**Email** [petns@sherpakids.ie](mailto:petns@sherpakids.ie)

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**Programme Manager** Joice Campari

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**Programme Assistant** Tammy Wright

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Please contact this number or send an email for enquiries during **Operating Hours**:

**After School Care - 1:10pm – 6:00pm\***

**Holiday Care - 9am – 2pm**

We will also aim to open on school closure days. We are closed on all public holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year, and the week of the August bank holiday.

\*Note: times may vary depending on school hours

### EMERGENCY CONTACT

In the event of an emergency, outside of the normal Sherpa Kids hours stated above, please contact: Amy Grange - 087 937 2346 or Sarah Grange - 086 355 0532

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

## WHAT WE DO & WHY

Sherpa Kids Ireland's overriding purpose is to support Ireland's families by providing enriching programmes (in child-centred play, mindfulness, active games, adventure categories, nutrition, and relaxation) for school aged children onsite at National Schools nationwide.

We provide a safe and secure quality environment for National School aged children through a structured well-balanced child-centered service. We achieve this by thinking ahead, listening to what children want to do to keep them safe, stimulated, and happy. We do this by providing planned activities and providing supervised child-directed play in an enriching tailored environment.



We provide a safe and secure environment for school aged children through a structured well-balanced service. Our services meet all standards, legislation and guidelines as recommended and reflected by Sherpa Kids philosophy and values.

Sherpa Kids services will also:

- ✓ Ensure children's learning and development is facilitated, their needs are met, and their individual interests and abilities are actively encouraged.
- ✓ Provide challenging and interesting age-appropriate activities using a variety of resources and suitable equipment to engage and stimulate children's physical,

intellectual, social and creative abilities. These activities include arts and crafts, music and drama, sports, science and child-led free play activities.

- ✓ Plan for a range of daily indoor and outdoor activities taking into account the health and development guidelines for the age group.
- ✓ Enable children to participate in quiet/active activities, as well as group/small group or individual activities.
- ✓ Encourage children to feel part of the school and wider community. Be evaluated regularly by children, parents and staff using a variety of assessments and strategies.
- ✓ Provide full access to relevant support programmes such as the National Childcare scheme.

We achieve quality standards by thinking ahead, being flexible to children's needs and routines, anticipating what children might like, listening, training and supporting our staff, and giving you the peace-of-mind you need by keeping them safe and following our policies and procedures at all costs. We abide by our seven core values in everything we do at Sherpa Kids, and this includes in all areas of our School Aged Programmes to provide quality learning outcomes for children. We are also committed fully to incorporating the school's values and ethos into our service.

# OUR CORE

# VALUES

**WE CARE**

for our **COMMUNITIES**, the **CHILDREN** we are entrusted with, our **FELLOW BUSINESS OWNERS** and **EACH OTHER**.

**WE BELIEVE**

in **CREATING** opportunities, **GROWING** relationships, and **GIVING** back.

**WE TRUST**

the **SHERPA SYSTEM**, our **COLLEAGUES** and **OURSELVES**.

**WE LEAD**

by **EXAMPLE** and as **PIONEERS**.

**WE PROMISE**

to look for **SOLUTIONS**, to uphold Sherpa Kids **STANDARDS** and be **HONEST** in all our dealings.

**WE SEEK**

opportunities for **GROWTH** and **DEVELOPMENT** for our **STAKEHOLDERS**.

## THIS HANDBOOK:

## WHAT IT'S FOR

This handbook is for families who wish to avail of our Rise then Shine (Before school), and/or Stay and Play (Afterschool) programmes at Sherpa Kids. It is designed to give you a greater understanding of what we offer children, what to expect from us and what we expect from you. We have a separate Holiday Programme Handbook which you will also receive should you be interested in using our exciting non-term time programmes when schools are closed. We are also committed to providing consistent 'wrap around' care on the days that schools close early and are flexible to adapt to different early closure times. You will be notified separately and in more detail about these services, however, information is provided in this handbook on Early School Closures and relevant fees/policy for additional hours used.

Your signed Registration Form (incorporating parent/guardian contract and enrolment) confirms you understand and accept our onsite service policies and procedures and the terms and conditions set out in this Handbook. Should you have any questions about any of the content contained, we welcome you to get in touch or speak to your Programme Coordinator (the Person in Charge in each service). We encourage you to read this Handbook in full and carefully before you commence use of our programmes. You can also request our Childcare Policies and Procedures Manual which is available for viewing at our service (the school).

## PARENT/GUARDIAN

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Sherpa Kids is all about providing a quality, child-centred, safe and caring environment for your child and setting a good example of respect and trust. We greatly value our staff teams and their experience working with us matters. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination amongst children or adults associated with the service. Equally, we have a zero-tolerance approach to any communication from families towards staff, other parents or towards children that are aggressive, threatening or disrespectful in any way. We expect that parents/guardians work with us and cooperate with our company policies and procedures and around our shared objectives for each individual child. We take a zero-tolerance approach to any behaviours from parents/guardians (such as raising one's voice, shouting, undermining staff, threatening staff, aggressive body language or any other form of abuse) towards our Sherpa Kids teams. Severe

or recurring incidents may result in the request for you to withdraw from our services with immediate effect.

We recognise fully that trust and effective communication between adults is at the heart of every child's best interests. Should we or you ever feel that the trust and communication we strive to uphold fully is damaged in any way, we will take action immediately to repair or reconcile it in the best interests of the children. This may mean requesting a facilitated meeting with you to discuss how trust and communication can be repaired as quickly as possible, or, failing this outcome, asking you to withdraw your child from our programmes in the best interests of all parties.

## PRIVACY

## STATEMENT

Sherpa Kids Ireland is known as the 'Data Controller' of the personal data you provide. We take your privacy seriously and will only use the personal information about you and your child to provide the programmes and services you have requested from us and administer your account. Most of this data is captured on a Registration Form or the information you provide to obtain government subsidised fees.

We may also request information from you if we believe it to be an important factor to the appropriate support and care of your child. This can include information regarding nationality, language, religion, ethnic origin, personal preferences and medical, intellectual and/or emotional/social challenges.

The Registration Form collects information regarding emergency contact details and phone numbers of your child's emergency contacts and authorised collectors. You are required to ensure these listed persons agree to their information being stored for this purpose.

We will collect, use, disclose and hold information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Sherpa Kids will not collect any data from you that it does not need to provide and oversee the services to you. We process data:

- In order to market the services of our Company
- To provide you with updates and newsletters to which may you have subscribed.
- In order to hold and use information necessary for or appropriate to the provision of these services including (though not limited to) child registration forms, booking details, medical and health management records, permission forms, photographs, correspondence, and emergency contact and authorised collector details.

To deliver our services effectively and compliantly, we may need to exchange your details with the relevant funding bodies such as Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Pobal, and Childcare Committees, inspectors such as TUSLA and/or the Revenue Commissioners.

Please go to our website to view our privacy notice in full: [www.sherpakids.ie](http://www.sherpakids.ie)

## CONFIDENTIALITY

## WORKS BOTH WAYS

We acknowledge the right for all information, records, and observations to be treated with respect and due attention to confidentiality and privacy. Information we collect will not be shared with third parties, unless required under law or Child Protection/Safeguarding Guidelines. Equally, we uphold our staff and individual children's own rights to confidentiality. This means that while we will always share relevant information with you about your own child, we have a right to protect the confidentiality of other children (who are recognised in Irish law as minors) by withholding information about them from you. We will uphold our family's rights to confidentiality and expect that parents/guardians refrain from sharing any information with staff, other families or with children pertaining to another family, staff or child that may constitute a breach of confidentiality or the sharing of sensitive or personal information.

## WHAT MATTERS

## MOST TO US

Our Sherpa Kids Staff recognize that **play** is a crucial component of childhood development and that children are hardwired to express themselves, foster relationships and learn through indoor and outdoor play. The link between play and children's long-term social, emotional and academic capabilities is an exciting and celebrated one that we feel passionate about. Sherpa Kids services offer an environment free from a prescribed curriculum, meaning it is an ideal one to balance child-initiated and adult-supported learning through the medium of play and through providing enriching, playful opportunities. We achieve this through our Sherpa Kids Adventure Programme, which is a carefully designed programme of age-appropriate play-based activities within 7 different categories with Sherpa-provided resources in both physical and digital form. It is during these playful interactions that children increase their vocabulary, develop critical thinking skills, learn self-regulation skills, hone problem solving skills and build self-confidence. Our staff know this. The Child's Voice is central to the continuous developing life cycle of these adventure programmes and children have a say each week in what they do and how we can continue to keep them feeling safe and secure. Our services offer those first-hand play-based experiences that allow children to lead in the exploration of their environment, to use

all their senses, to negotiate with their peers, to test their knowledge and theories through play, to express their thoughts and emotions and learn to improvise and compromise.

This is the essence of the environment Sherpa Kids provides and the playful, balanced Programmes of learning opportunities it offers. All the resources and materials provided, as well as the daily Programmes and planning, are closely linked with the children's own interests and promote child-initiated, adult-supported play.

Our outdoor play opportunities are deemed a central part of our best practices at Sherpa Kids. We believe that every child has the right to access the fresh air, natural materials and some safe risky play in the best interests of their sensory learning, exploration, and overall wellbeing.

We aim to deliver a fresh and vibrant approach to School Aged Children and to "give them such a great time that they do not want to go home!"

**CULTURAL**

**DIVERSITY**

Sherpa Kids services will always be mindful of and sensitive towards cultural differences and the individual needs of the children in our care. Where possible service information and community information will be translated or provided in various languages and support provided to ensure the successful inclusion of children.

We will encourage staff and family input by contributing their knowledge about their own culture into the service activities, policies, and procedures to ensure children's needs are being met and to enhance the overall quality of our service.

OUR

PROGRAMME

**RISE THEN SHINE**

**STAY AND PLAY**

Our Adventure Programme has 7 categories giving children the opportunity to develop life skills, explore their interests through specially designed experiences and a variety of activities. Based on our key development pillars, children are empowered to drive their learning journey and to actively participate in the development of activities; through sharing their own feedback and ideas in our before and after school programme.

### Adventure Categories



#### Super Sports



Super fun and sporty sessions designed to develop essential skills for a lifetime of active living.



#### Power Teams



Join in fun games, thrilling challenges, and exciting group activities to build team skills for life.



#### Wellbeing Warriors



Discover a range of activities specially designed to help you feel good by boosting happiness, mindfulness, and wellbeing.



#### Creative Inventors



Let your imagination soar as we engage in creative activities that combine expressive arts, materials and crafts to fuel your inner inventor and unlock your hidden talents!



#### Flavour Fest



Explore the tasty world of food and nutrition through fun and interactive experiences created to develop healthy habits.



#### Brain Boosters



Crack codes, solve puzzles, and engage in captivating games and science experiments. Explore the wonders of the world with hands-on STEM activities.



#### Global Kids



Embark on a journey to become a better global citizen and protect our planet through developing essential life skills and exploring the world around us.

## A Typical Day at Sherpa Kids

In order to ensure our service is a happy, enriching and child-centred environment, Sherpa Kids follows a daily routine. A 'typical' day at Sherpa Kids might look something like this:

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1:10pm Junior Hour	Junior Infants Arrive	Junior Infants Arrive	Junior Infants Arrive	Junior Infants Arrive	Junior Infants Arrive
1:10pm - 2:10pm	Junior Hour Sports & Games	Junior Hour Sports & Games	Junior Hour Sports & Games	Junior Hour Sports & Games	Junior Hour Sports & Games
2:10pm - 2:45pm Juniors Collections & Seniors Arrival	Set bags & rooms. Mindfulness Check-in. Lounge Wind-Down. Board Games	Set bags & rooms. Mindfulness Check-in. Lounge Wind-Down. Board Games	Set bags & rooms. Mindfulness Check-in. Lounge Wind-Down. Board Games	Set bags & rooms. Mindfulness Check-in. Lounge Wind-Down. Board Games	Set bags & rooms. Mindfulness Check-in. Lounge Wind-Down. Board Games
2:10pm - 3:15pm Wash Hands & Snack					
3:15pm - 3:45pm	Quiet Time Home Work Time.	Quiet Time Home Work Time.	Quiet Time Home Work Time.	Quiet Time Home Work Time.	Quiet Time Home Work Time.
3:45pm - 5:30pm Adventure Programme					
5:30pm - 6pm	Finish Up Projects & Home Time!	Finish Up Projects & Home Time!	Finish Up Projects & Home Time!	Finish Up Projects & Home Time!	Finish Up Projects & Home Time!

\*Please note, times vary from school to school. This is just a sample.

## HOMEWORK

## POLICY

At Sherpa Kids we believe that a **CHILD'S WELLBEING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT** of a child's development that we can embrace and help nurture. We recognise that children need to relax and play after a busy day at school, and yet, that homework still needs to get done. We therefore encourage children to allocate quiet time for their homework with our best support. We strive to strike a healthy balance by allocating some but not all of the time a child spends at Sherpa Kids on their homework. We respect if parents/guardians prefer their children to complete their homework at home instead, however, we expect you to communicate this clearly to us as we do have an 'opt out' for homework time inclusion.

We allow approximately 30/40 minutes for homework per day, depending on the child's educational stage. We will always be flexible according to a child's age, stage and pace and will encourage focussed, quiet time in a supportive and supervised environment. If a child has no homework or finishes prior to the time allowed, they will be able to choose other suitable activities, for example from our Sherpa Kids adventure box.

Our staff are not expected to enforce that children complete their homework, or that their homework is 100% accurate. They are also not teaching staff and are not expected to fully understand or interpret school curriculum. Staff will, however, provide support to children in order for them to complete homework tasks as best they can in the time allocated and to encourage each child to have a positive, calm attitude towards school and homework. We do not tolerate any form of criticism towards our staff regarding the quantity or quality of homework completed by children during their time at Sherpa Kids. We always strive to support children in any way we can with their homework tasks, most importantly in their emotional wellbeing during the homework period.

If there are any issues regarding homework or your child has any specific or additional needs, please make sure you communicate this to the Person in Charge (Programme Coordinator) and include this information on the Registration form.

Sherpa Kids recognises the importance of the parent/guardian's role in homework support and encourages them to check work completed and play an active role in the homework supervision and support of their child.

## CHILDREN WITH

## ADDITIONAL/COMPLEX NEEDS

Every effort will be made to include children with additional or complex needs in our services and a full assessment with the assistance of the child's parent/guardian, will be made to determine the child's needs and if they can be fully catered for, prior to the child commencing care. We do expect as much collaboration and relevant information as possible from parents/guardian's during this process, and throughout the child's time with us, in the best interests in the child's care plan and experience at Sherpa Kids.

If your child has any additional needs, including communication/speech or behaviour issues or triggers, please include this in the information when registering to ensure that we will be able to facilitate all of your child's needs as best as possible. Parents/guardians need to be forthcoming with information about the extent of your child's needs for the health, safety and wellbeing of your child.

A meeting will be arranged with you to do a full assessment of what is required for your child. There may also be a need for a phased settling in period to ensure that your child is adequately able to cope with his/her surroundings as it is a naturally very busy environment. If our programmes and resources are not capable of fully meeting your child's physical and emotional needs, we will discuss this with you. We will always keep the best interests of the child at the centre of all our actions and decisions. We have a legal ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at any given time and are not funded to provide SNA or one-to-one support to children. The availability of additional staff members to cater for the individual additional or complex needs of a child is circumstantial and not always guaranteed. We will work in partnership with you to assess fully the individual needs of your child and decide how they can best be met.

## CHILDREN ATTENDING

### ASD UNITS AT SCHOOL

We are mindful that the adult-to-child ratios may be significantly lower while children attend ASD units, either on a full or part time basis at school, and that our ratios differ as per TUSLA, at 1:12. We are also mindful that a setting with a higher number of children (example 24+) is not always an easy environment for children with additional needs or sensitivity to certain stimulus. Where we are unable to recruit additional staff to reduce the ratio, to a more suitable one, we will assess the environment in accordance to the individual child's needs. Please note we do not receive government funding for SNA, lower ratios or additional resources to replicate an ASD unit. We will always assess whether the Sherpa Kids environment is best suited to an individual child's needs and communicate with you accordingly on how best to support the child.

## WORKING IN

### PARTNERSHIP WITH YOU

We recognise and value the importance of working in partnership with you and that you play the central role in your child's life. We have an 'open door' policy where families are always welcome, but the needs of the children are always put first. If you wish to discuss a concern in private with a member of our team, please book a meeting in advance so that we ensure additional staff are available to cover and supervise children during this time.

We will give you daily feedback on how your child has got on at Sherpa Kids, and we expect that relevant information regarding your child is communicated to use also in a regular and timely fashion. Please share information with us in the best interests of your child's wellbeing. This might include any difficulties your child might be experiencing at home, such as bereavement, illness, relationship breakdown, new baby – all of these things can impact a child's behaviour and we want to help as best we can. All information will be treated with strict confidentiality.

If we need to contact you about your child's behaviour, we will do so in a helpful and solution-focussed manner. We will work together to resolve any issues and expect that your engagement with us is equally solution-focussed and supportive of the situation.

We recognise that all children have challenging behaviours from time to time, and that a busy peer-to-peer environment may trigger certain behaviours in children that they do not exhibit regularly at home. We expect you to understand when we report challenging behaviours to you that we always have solutions in mind and might require your support and consistency.

Regular effective communication with parents/guardians is vital. Please inform us of any changes of personal details (contact numbers, address) as well as any updates regarding your child's medical or developmental needs.

Our staff are not permitted to use social networking sites to befriend parents/guardians or accept 'friend requests' from parents/guardians who use Sherpa Kids. Our staff teams are not permitted to exchange any information about our programmes/services, their colleagues or children attending the service via social network platforms. We ask that you, as parents/guardians, support our position.

Community and school involvement is also encouraged at our service as we feel the information and experiences this can provide can add to a child's development and learning experience.

If your family or child has a special day or significant event you would like us to celebrate or share, please discuss this with staff.

**REGISTER**

**YOUR PLACE**

Places for the new school year are open in June each year. Bookings reopen for existing families in March and new families once re-enrolment is completed, places will be filled in order of requirement (example full-time, 5 days, 4 days).

Our enrolment policy is underpinned by our NCS contract and based on giving priority to families requiring our services fulltime, for 5 days in each week. We aim to provide

quality affordable childcare to those who need it most (i.e. in fulltime education or employment). Thereafter, places will be allocated for 4 days, 3 days, and so on, and on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Please note that we must ensure, in adherence with the regulations and with our insurance schedule, that there is suitable staffing for the number of children due to attend at any given time. Equally, we must ensure full compliance with the Government funding department offering subsidies for fees (NCS). Therefore, **significant or repeated changes to your original booking after your confirmation email has been received may result in losing your child's place.**

We recognise the need for consistency when schools are closed. We offer our Holiday/mid-term programmes to children aged 4-12 years enrolled in a national school. Our Holiday Programmes operate on a needs-must (demand based) basis. If the school your child is enrolled in does not offer Sherpa Kids Holiday Programmes, a National School nearby may do so. Information regarding our Sherpa Kids Holiday Programmes (including the Terms and Conditions for these programmes) are published ahead of the school closure periods.

**Please Note: You must pay for holiday care in advance. If payment is not received in advance your child will not be permitted to attend the Holiday Programme.**

You will be asked to complete a Registration Form on behalf of your child to book a place. This form includes all relevant permissions (consent) and a signing page to agree to our Terms and Conditions. This form must be returned by email to us (the email address included on the form) on/before the deadline indicated on the form. This is normally 7 days after the date you receive the form.

## REGISTERING YOUR CHILD

All families need to complete an enrolment form for each child to use our service.

**Please remember it is your responsibility as the parent/guardian to advise us immediately should any information provided on the original Enrolment form changes e.g. contact details, custody arrangements etc.**

It is also required that the families inform the staff of any allergies/dietary requirements or additional needs. Please read page 12 for more information.

**Please Note:** Your child does not have a confirmed place in the service unless you receive a **confirmation email**. Your child cannot start in the service until all of the paperwork sent is signed and returned to the service and the first month's fee has been paid.

Should the information you use to register your child change (such as your contact number, child's medical care information etc) you will need to fill in a **Change of Details Slip**, found at the end of this Handbook, and submit it directly to you the Area Manager.

## BOOKINGS

## AND FEES

### BOOKINGS

We ask that you book your childcare requirements per school year. The school year is outlined below. You will receive a link to the booking form with this Handbook. Please complete and submit this form at the earliest possible moment and no later than the deadline below. For new child registrations, we will follow up with a hard copy registration form which must be filled out and returned to us via email to [pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie](mailto:pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie) as early as possible – your booking request will not be processed until this is received.

School year 2025/26: 28<sup>th</sup> August – 26<sup>th</sup> June

- booking form due by 25<sup>th</sup> April for current attendees 24/25
- booking form due by 30<sup>th</sup> May for new registration 25/26

Please note:

- The booking requirements that you specify on your enrolment forms will be your designated booking for the school year.
- We have a minimum booking of 5hrs/every week
- For planned school closures(as per school calendar at the start of the school year) such as mid-term breaks, bank holidays etc no charges will apply to your term fees.
- For planned short-term absence e.g. holidays/hospital appointments we require a minimum of 1 months' notice in writing via email in order to temporarily reduce your booking and the relevant charges. This can only be applied for no more than 10 consecutive days once between September-December and once between January-June
- For early school closures(1/2 days) where you are booked as normal to attend , there will be an additional hours charge added to your invoice . If you do not intend for your child to attend on these dates, you must notify us at your earliest convenience – once the invoice has been issued there will be no reversal of charges

## Booking Types & Fees

Junior and Senior Infants
Breakfast Club: 7:30am – 8:45pm €6 per day
Junior Hour: 1:10pm – 2:10pm €30.00 per week
Junior Early Pick up: 1:10pm – 4:10pm €18.00 per day
Junior Full Day : 1:10pm - 6:00pm €25.00 per day *
<b>*Where Junior Full Day is booking Monday – Friday, you can avail of breakfast club for free where requested.</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Class to 6 <sup>th</sup> Class
Breakfast Club: 7:30am – 8:45pm €6 per day
Senior Early Pick Up : 2:10pm- 4:10pm €60 per week
Senior Full Afternoon: 2:10pm – 6:00pm €20 per day

## Short Term Booking

This is a booking required on a short-term basis. These bookings are subject to availability. The cost per hour is €7.00 and payment must be made before attendance. There are no half hour bookings available.

## BOOKING TERMS & CONDITIONS

**Minimum bookings:** At Sherpa Kids our minimum booking in order to secure a place is 5hours/week every week. It is not possible to offer a week on/week off booking as we are holding the space for your child.

**Short Term Cancellation:** To help accommodate family time, any family may request a short-term pause to their booking during the school year for a maximum of 10 consecutive days. This may be done once between September and December and once between January and June. We require a minimum of 1 month notice of the change including start and finish date of the period in writing via email to [pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie](mailto:pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie). If your invoice for the period requested has already been issued – no credit will be applied for the invoiced period. It is the responsibility of the

parent to ensure that you notify us before any invoice is issued. Any credit that maybe incurred for this period will be applied to the future billing periods, there will be no refunds

**Booking Reductions:** Please take note that the booking that you request on your booking request form can only be reduced after the midterm break at the end of October.



All families can apply for a subsidy (discount) under the National Childcare Scheme towards their Sherpa Kids fees, since we are a TUSLA-registered provider of services.

In order to register for the NCS please visit: <https://www.ncs.gov.ie/en/>

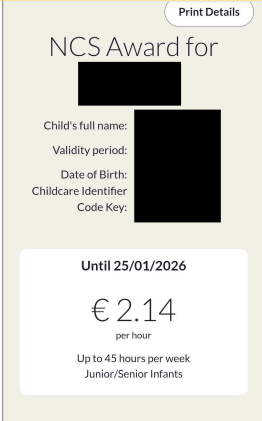
Please note that if you are in receipt of NCS you must adhere to the contract requirements as per the government contract. This means your child must attend the service for the stated time applied for on the NCS, except in legitimate short-term circumstances where a child might be absent due to illness. Longer term patterns of absence can result in you losing your funding and becoming liable for any remaining charges.

If you are in receipt of the NCS please send a screenshot of your valid CHICK code to: **pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie** Your Registration Form can be sent to the email address included in your information email and on your Enrolment form. We request that screenshots of CHICK codes are received with your enrolment with our services. CHICK codes received late will not guarantee subsidised fees and you will be required to pay fees in full for hours attended before the CHICK code was submitted. Please note that subsidy claims cannot be backdated, so the sooner your CHICK code is sent to **pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie** the more financially beneficial it will be for you.

We always require no less than 4 week's written notice of changes to service use hours and/or cancellations in order to remain compliant with government funding and to ensure our other legal and regulatory requirements remain fully compliant (for example, adult-child ratios and insurance).

**REMEMBER:**  
 send a SCREENSHOT of  
 your CHICK CODE to:  
 pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie

**A SCREENSHOT looks like this:**



**Sample Times/ Fees - Before & After NCS**

Junior Infants & Senior Infants			1st - 6th Class		
Booking Option	Price	Cost After NCS (minimum of €2.14 per hour)	Booking Option	Price	Cost After NCS (minimum of €2.14 per hour)
Before School N/A	-	-	Before School N/A	-	-
Junior Hour (1:30-2:30pm)	€30 per week	€19.30 per week	Senior Hour (5pm-6pm)	€30 per week	€19.30 per week
Early Pick up 4:30pm	€18 per day	€11.58 per day	Early Pick up 4:30pm	€60 per week	€38.60 per week
Full afternoon 6pm	€25 per day	€14.30 per day	Full afternoon 6pm	€20 per day	€9.30 per day
Full afternoon: M - F 1:30pm - 6pm	€125 per week	€71.50 per week	Full afternoon: M - F 1:30pm - 6pm	€100 per week	€57.20 per week

\*Should you not be in a financial position to afford the discounted fees, please speak in confidence to us or to your local principal

**INVOICES &**

**MAKING PAYMENTS**

Invoices are sent monthly in advance. You have 14 days to query your invoice after receiving it, however, payments are due to be made by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Payment reminders are sent to you as this deadline approaches.

Unfortunately, fees cannot be refunded for absences, this includes unexpected school closures (outside of the school calendar issued at the start of the school year) .



Once your invoice has been issued , it is not possible to reduce the booking for the invoiced period. All fees charged on the invoice will be due in full and no charges will be reduced unless of course an error has been made.

**Payment must be made in full in advance each month, No refunds available for days not attended.**

**Early collections will be charged for the time booked not the time attended.**

The reference code PETNS and child's name must be used to reference all payments made. Payments are required to secure each new school year booking.

Fees are charged monthly and must be paid in advance of any child attending Sherpa Kids. As detailed above, bookings are made per school year. Please confirm your childcare requirements (days and hours) for the year ahead using the booking form provided. We cannot deduct days and hours once booked until the term starts and with minimum one month's notice however once your invoice has been issued we will not reduce the booking for the charged period.

Please note the fees per month will vary based on different school closure dates/weeks per month etc.

All fees are to be paid by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the previous month.

Payments are made via bank transfer, our banking details are as follows. Please state your child's name and school as reference. E.G PETNS Mary Smith . For holiday care payments the reference should state your child's name and CAMP as reference e.g. CAMP Mary Smith.

Account Name	Primary Creative Ltd
IBAN	IE20REVO 990360 29186221
BIC	REVOIE23
Reference to use	PETNS Child's name

If fees are not paid, children will not be permitted to attend any sessions until the overdue fees are paid. Outstanding fees will be handed to our collection agency that will actively seek all monies owed, including seeking legal redress.

Any queries regarding your account or payment of fees must be made to our accounts staff member, not the school. If there are difficulties in meeting payment of fees, please contact [pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie](mailto:pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie).



# YOUR HOLIDAYS, CHILD ILLNESS

## & SCHOOL/SERVICE CLOSURES

### **Sick Policy**

Where a child does not attend due to sickness, charges will be made based on the original booking for that day and no charges will be applied for subsequent days **after notice has been received**. If no notice is given the full charges will apply as normal.

### **Early School Closures**

Where schools close early (for example before holiday periods) we will provide Sherpa Kids services directly following early school closure. This means that if the school closes earlier than normal, at (for example) 11am on a Friday, we will provide Sherpa Kids from 11am onwards to normal collection times to accommodate families. There will be an extra charge for those additional hours provided. You will be charged up to your regular booking (collection time) on this day, regardless of whether you collect your child at an early time than normal on this day, and regardless of the school closure times. Should you not wish to avail of Sherpa Kids services on an early closure day, you must notify us as soon as possible and before the invoice has been issued – once the invoice is issued the charges are not reversible. Please refer to our Cancellation Policy for the Terms and Conditions of Cancellation (Changing and/or Cancelling a Booking).

### **Service Closure for exceptional circumstances.**

If our services must close due to circumstances outside of our control, your fees will remain chargeable in full. However, in the case of long-term mandated closures due to public health warnings, such as a pandemic, fees will not be charged.

### **National/Public Holiday Closures**

No fees are charged when Sherpa Kids is routinely closed for National and Public Holidays (example Christmas and all other Public Holidays).

These dates will be circulated directly to parents/guardians and posted on the parent's notice board well in advance of these closure periods.

### **Long-Term Certified absence due to illness**

In the case of a long term, medically certified illness of a child, parents/guardians are advised to keep in contact with us via the Person in Charge (Programme Coordinator) on a regular basis. Further arrangements will be discussed with you privately in these cases.

### **Adverse Weather Conditions**

Please note that during adverse weather conditions, every effort will be made to minimise risk to our families. For example, applying salt where ice is likely to form, or clearing snow from entrance and exit routes. If our services are open during adverse weather and your child does not attend, the full fee for this period will be charged. We will always risk assess the situation. Should we close our services you will still be charged as this is outside of our control.

### **Additional school activities**

Charges are applicable where the child attends an extra school activity and is using Sherpa Kids. If your child leaves and re-joins or arrives late/leaves early, the time missed will be charged as per their normal booking. This is because we are holding their place for their return.

**CHANGING AND/OR**

**CANCELLING A BOOKING**

We facilitate a growing number of families in a high volume of services. Most of our families now avail of the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) and we are therefore required to meet full compliance on inspection of our receipt of funding to apply subsidies to our fees.

### **Minimum 4 week's written notice**

If you wish to change or permanently cancel your booking, you must provide at least **four weeks' written notice**. This allows us sufficient time to process the amendments. To avoid being charged for the following month, your notice **must be received before the invoice is issued mid-month** (eg before mid-September to avoid charges in October). Once the invoice has been issued, the notice period can no longer be changed and charges for that month will apply in full. Please send notice including start and finish date of changes to [pcaccounts@shepapakids.ie](mailto:pcaccounts@shepapakids.ie).

**Short Term Cancellation:** To help accommodate family time, families may request a short-term pause to their booking during the school year. We require at least 1 month notice of the change including start and finish date of the period in writing via email to [pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie](mailto:pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie). This can only be applied for no more than 10 consecutive days once between September-December and once between January-June. Any credit that maybe incurred for this period will be applied to the future billing periods only, there will be no refunds. As above, if the invoice for your holiday period has been issued already – no changes can be made to it.

**Sick Policy:** Where a child does not attend due to sickness, charges will be made based on the original booking for that day and no charges will be applied for subsequent days **after notice has been received**. If no notice is given the full charges will apply as normal.

**Early pick up:** If a child is picked up earlier than the booked time, the fee will be charged based on the booked times.

**Late pick up:** All children must be collected promptly at the planned collection time, a strict 5 minute grace period is available. Where late collection happens, the full afternoon charge is applicable without NCS discount for the extra charge.

**Late pick up after 6:00pm:** A grace period of five minutes is applicable for collection after 6:00pm, to allow for minor delays to a child pickup. Where a child is signed out up to 6:05pm there is no late pick up charge. Where a child is signed out later than 06:05pm a charge of €15.00 per child will be applied per 15 minutes.

**Sibling discounts:** Where siblings attend the service together a sibling discount will be applied. This discount is applied where the oldest child receives no discount, the second child receives 10%, the 3<sup>rd</sup> child receives 15% the same 15% applies any additional children thereafter.

**Invoicing and payment terms:** Invoices are issued approx. 2 weeks before the end of the previous month.(e.g. October invoice will be issued Mid-September). Your invoice must be paid in full by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the previous month (e.g. October invoice payment date 20th September). Overdue accounts may be subject to suspension or debt recovery costs. Overdue means accounts where a payment is more than 14 days overdue.

**National Childcare Scheme:** Is done in line with the term booking. Any unplanned additional hours will be charged at the full fee rate. NCS cannot be claimed against the late collection fee. The full fee will apply.

**Struggling to manage costs:** If you as a Sherpa Kids family are struggling to meet the costs of your childcare, we strongly encourage you to engage with our Accounts Admin team at [pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie](mailto:pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie) as soon as possible. Our team may be able to advise how best to get more financial support via NCS or to change your booking to a more manageable fee. Our team are more than happy to assist you as soon as we can. The sooner you reach out, the sooner we can help.

**Discontinue Service:** If you are looking to discontinue using Sherpa Kids for your childcare needs we request a cancellation via email to [pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie](mailto:pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie) giving 1 months' notice. As above, if the invoice for your holiday period has been issued already – no changes can be made to it.

## NON-PAYMENT OF FEES &

## WITHDRAWAL OF CHILDREN

We understand that family circumstances can change. Should you need to remove your child from our service, you can do so at any time. We do, however, require no less than 4 week's written notice from you to avoid a charge incurring. This is also to ensure we can remain compliant with the NCS requirements and make other necessary arrangements to fully cancel your booking and allocate it to a family on the waiting list.

We encourage you to furnish a reason for the decision to leave our service as we value your feedback and/or suggestions on how we can continue to improve our quality and child experiences.

Please note that non-payment of fees, or repeated occasions of an account being in arrears, may result in the request by our management team to withdraw your child from our services.

Non-payment of Fees:

- May result in loss of child's place.
- May result in suspension or withdrawal of your child's place until the matter is resolved. Full payment of arrears will be required to reinstate your booking if a place is available.

- May result in an interest charge of 5% being applied to your subsequent bill.

### **Where delays in payment are expected**

Any expected delays in payments must be first discussed in advance and a payment plan agreed on a case-by-case basis with the accounts administrator Megan (pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie). We hold the right to refuse to enter into a payment plan should doing so be financially risky or detrimental to the business.

If fees are not paid, children will not be permitted to attend any sessions until the overdue fees are paid. Outstanding fees will be handed to our collection agency that will actively seek all monies owed, including seeking legal redress.

Any queries regarding your account or payment of fees must be made to our Accounts staff member, not the school. If there are difficulties in meeting payment of fees, please contact [pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie](mailto:pcaccounts@sherpakids.ie).

### **Late Payments and Interest Rate applicable**

Late payments will incur interest charges of 5% calculated daily and if fees are not paid, they may be handed to our collection agency that will actively seek all monies owed, including seeking legal redress where deemed necessary. Children will not be permitted to attend any sessions until the overdue fees are paid.

### **Distressed Child/not Settling after trial periods**

As a very last resort, Sherpa Kids also reserve the right to request that the Parent/Guardian withdraw their child/children from the service where a child is distressed for prolonged periods of time, or where they fail to 'settle in' or adapt to the environment after a period of time. A phased period of settling in may be requested to alleviate distress to a child who is struggling to settle, and we expect that parents/guardians will support this process in the best interests of the child.

In the scenario where a phased settling in period, reduced hours, or other accommodations made do not alleviate distress for a child, management hold the right give no less than two weeks' written notice of this decision to the Parent/Guardian so that they can make alternative arrangements in the best interest of the child.

Sherpa Kids is child central in its approach and will always prioritise the welfare and wellbeing of the individual child. Where a child is not coping well in the Sherpa Kids environment at any point (due to tiredness, over-stimulation, noise triggers etc) Sherpa Kids staff will contact the parent and request the child is collected in his/her best interests. We are not funded or obliged to provide long-term one-to-one care for children at Sherpa Kids. Sherpa Kids holds the right to reduce a child's hours of attendance temporarily where the child is at risk to themselves or to others due to their exposure to a busy setting of 1 adult to 12 children. During this time, a child-centred

well-being plan may be put in place and the parent/guardian will always be invited to collaborate with us.

## HEALTH, SAFETY &

## WELLBEING OF CHILDREN

The health, safety and well-being of children is central to everything we stand for and a priority defining all decisions we make. We aim to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children attending Sherpa Kids and we are in contact with a variety of organisations to advise and assist us in these areas.

Where applicable, parents must provide the Person in Charge or Programme Coordinator with a Medical or Health Management Plan to ensure we can meet all the medical and health needs of children.

We comply at all times with all relevant health and safety in employment legislation.

We promote healthy eating and the benefits of Nutritious foods to help fuel our busy bodies.

A range of snacks are provided to the children at Sherpa Kids and these include a variety of healthy food choices. There is a constant supply of fresh fruit (for those who may get hungry between snacks) and fresh drinking water. Food is prepared using the food and safety guidelines from the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. Our staff are HACCP trained. The menu will be displayed each week and we welcome suggestions from children and parents.

If your child has any allergies or any special food requirements or you do not want your child to participate in our Nutritious Programme, please include this on the Registration Form and advise the Person in Charge/ Programme Coordinator.

At times we may have children with specific food allergies or needs attend our service and therefore we adhere to a strict **NO NUT** policy.

A typical weeks menu at Sherpa Kids may look like this:

Weekly Sample Menu					
	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Dinner - 3pm	Bolognese Pasta + Garlic Bread	Omelete + toast	Ham + Mash potatoes + veggies	Chicken Supreme + Rice	Fish Fingers + beans
Snack - 5pm	Yoghurt	Crackers + butter	Brioches	Smoothies	Baked treat

Fresh fruit is served every day with dinner / Vegetarian alternative every day / Stricly Nut-free zone

## DROP OFF &

## COLLECTION POLICY

We always want your child to be safe that is why we have a strict policy on who can and cannot collect them.

Before any child starts with us the parent/guardian must give the names and contact details of all additional people authorised to collect them on their Registration Form. Should this ever change, a parent/guardian is fully responsible for communicating this to us in writing. Only authorised persons over 18 years of age are allowed to collect children. We will not allow any unauthorised person (or those without details on our file) to collect your child for safety reasons.

If a named person cannot collect your child, then you must give us consent in writing where possible of the person who will collect them along with their name, address and telephone number and a clear description of them. We hold the right to ask any collector for proof of ID. This is only in the best interests of child safety.

No child will ever be allowed to leave our service with an unauthorised person. Should an unauthorised person attempt to collect a child, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately. Parents/guardians must always give written consent in advance if someone other than a listed authorised person is to collect their child.

Children are not permitted to leave Sherpa Kids unaccompanied. Should a parent/guardian insist a child goes home independently, a risk assessment will be conducted by our team, and a waiver will be required to be signed by the parent/guardian first.

Parents/guardians are expected always to make brief verbal exchanges with our staff team on drop-off and collection. This is in the best interests of child safety, well-being, and to the line of communication and rapport between parent/guardian and our staff. We understand that you might be in a rush, but we ask that you do seek our attention

(if we are not in your direct proximity) when you drop your child off and/or collect your child.

Children are not, under any circumstances, permitted to be dropped early to our services or left unsupervised by parents/guardians at any time.

Authorised collectors of children are not permitted to enter a school premises unless they are invited to do so, or while under the influence of alcohol or drugs that inhibit them in any way.

Should a staff member feel that a parent/guardian or authorised collector is in an unfit state to collect a child (such as under the influence of drugs or alcohol) or should they be deemed a risk to the child, management hold the right not to allow the child be collected at that time but to seek out an alternative authorised collector, and/or to contact TUSLA, a social worker, or the Gardai. Child safety will come first in determining the course of action in the best interests of the child. We ask that all exchanges with our staff and in the presence of children are respectful and calm.

**CHILD**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

We understand that children can become ill suddenly or with little to no notice. We also understand that children may be collected from school on a day they are poorly or when circumstances change at short notice. In order to prevent the need to seek updates from the school on a regular basis, we ask that Parents/guardians inform us if their child is not attending our service on any given day and as soon as possible. This should be done by sending an email to the service no later than 10.30am on the relevant day, and to also let us know when your child will return.

Parents/guardians must make contact (even briefly) with a member of our staff team when dropping children off in the mornings if they attend Rise then Shine (Breakfast Club). Equally, we ask the same during pick up and collection. This is to ensure we are made aware of the child's presence so that we can sign them in/out using our devices. This is also to ensure that there is a brief opportunity to exchange any relevant information (such as where an incident report may need to be signed) and to minimise the risk of a child ever being left unattended.

In the case where our services are located a short walking distance from any given meeting point, all children are accompanied as a group by a known staff member. The safest most direct route is always taken. Young children are encouraged to hold hands when crossing roads, and staff walk behind children to ensure greatest visibility. The required staff/child ratios are always followed.

Staff will always meet children at the designated pre-arranged place within the school. A register is called to check all children are present. If a child is missing the staff member checks if the child was in school that day. The same safety rules apply when walking children from school to the service as above.

If a child is booked into our afterschool programme and does not arrive, we will:

1. Telephone the parent/emergency contact person.
2. If the parent cannot be contacted, we will report the child missing to the gardai.

If a parent is late and cannot be contacted by phone or text, management will contact the listed emergency contact persons. If the service is unable to make contact with the emergency people after trying for a maximum of 1 hour, then the service will contact TUSLA or the Gardai. Should parents/guardians fail to collect a child after the service has closed (6pm) and emergency contact persons are not successfully reached, management hold the right to contact TUSLA or the Gardai sooner.

## EARLY COLLECTION &

## LATE DROP OFF

If you or an authorised collector is going to be late collecting a child, we ask you to contact the service by phone as soon as you know this. Additional charges will incur where your child remains in the service after their assigned collection time. While we do allow for a 'grace period' of up to 5 minutes, late collections thereafter generate an additional fee.

**Late pick up after 6:00pm:** A grace period of five minutes is applicable for ASC after 6:00pm, to allow for minor delays to a child pickup. Where a child is signed out up to 6:05pm there is no late pick up charge. Where a child is signed out later than 06:05pm a charge of €15.00 per child will be applied per 15 minutes.

Sherpa Kids is open until 6:00pm daily and our staff deserve to finish at this time. Children must be collected by an authorised person no later than 6:00pm. Repeated late collections after service closure may result in the loss of your child's place. An additional charge of €15.00 will automatically apply for lateness after service closure. For each additional 15 minutes an additional €15.00 will be charged. For example, 30 minutes lateness after service closure will automatically incur an additional charge of €30.00.

We ask that parents/guardians do not drop their child late to our Rise then Shine (Before-school) services, as this can be disruptive to other children, and to our morning routines.

Once a child is dropped to one of our Programmes, a parent/guardian is not permitted to remove the child unnecessarily from that programme, even for a short period of time. This can be confusing and disruptive for the child and for others attending that Programme.

If you do need to collect your child early from our Stay and Play (After-school), we ask that you let us know in advance. This is so that we can communicate this to your child and ensure they are ready for early collection. Children can find it difficult to transition from certain activities, particularly before they have finished them, therefore, communicating with us around early collection helps us prepare your child appropriately for this change.

## SEPARATED OR

## DIVORCED PARENTS

We strive to approach all family units and family custody arrangements as sensitively as possible with the child's best interests and safety at heart. In Ireland, married parents are automatically joint guardians. We cannot refuse either parent to collect their child unless a written court order is in place and shared with us. We are not obliged to produce a collection time that is not one of the regular options at the service if our 1:12 adult-child ratio does not allow us to accommodate it. We ask that parents communicate the available collection times in the court hearing so that arrangements can be set out in accordance with the drop and collection times at the relevant service. We ask that parents give us the relevant information and supporting documentation regarding any persons with restricted or no access legally to a child. We will adhere strictly to the court order times/days for access/collection and will exercise no flexibility until an updated court order is provided. We refuse to participate in any domestic disputes and request that each relevant adult agree their own method of communicating and updating each other around their child. We are not obliged to duplicate communications in the case of separated or divorced parents. Please note that our Reduction/Swap Booking Changes Policy may not be exercised in the case where any requested change alters that which is set out in a Court Order/Legal Access document. We will require an updated court document to supersede any existing one in order to alter/lessen the hours attended by the relevant child.

Where custody of a child is granted to one parent/guardian only, we will require that you disclose this to us in the interests of child safety. Where any barring orders, custody order, or information on supervised access to children exist, we ask you to give us with a copy of the relevant documentation to keep securely on file. This information is kept strictly confidential.

A parent who has been denied access to a child through a court order will not be allowed on the premises. Sherpa Kids holds the right to contact the Gardai should a parent with denied access to a child enter the premises. If that parent becomes violent or aggressive or insists on removing the child from the premises, then the Gardai will be called immediately.

We do not tolerate any form of abuse or threats made against our staff. Incidents of unruly, aggressive or intimidating behaviour in the presence of staff, other families or children will be taken extremely seriously and not tolerated.

## FIRE

## SAFETY

All our staff are trained in fire prevention and evacuation. Your child will participate in monthly fire drills, so they know what to do in the event of a fire or on hearing a fire alarm. All fire equipment is readily accessible and serviced regularly in line with the fire regulations.

Fire notices and fire exits are clearly marked in our premises, please make note of these when you are in our premises. If you are in our premises and you hear the fire alarm sound, please make your way to the nearest fire exit and go directly to the fire assembly point as directed by staff. Do not remove your child from the service if you arrive to collect during a Fire Drill, unless authorised to do so by a member of staff. This is so that your child has an opportunity to participate in the Drill in the interests of their own safety and practice, but also to ensure we correctly account for your child's presence or absence during the Drill.

We have a strict No Smoking and No Vaping policy in place on school grounds for all staff, parents and visitors to our service.

## MEDICATION &

## CONSENT

We do not routinely administer non-prescription/prescription medications. We ask that medications such as antibiotics are administered before or after your child attends our services.

We only ever administer essential medicines with the correct signed permission from parents/guardians. Medicines must only be brought into our Breakfast Club or Afterschool Programmes for administration by the staff when it is absolutely essential. This means where it would negatively impact on a child's health if he/she were not to be given it. Medicine should be in its original container with the doctor's instructions. We cannot give medication without its original packaging. We cannot give medication not licensed for the age of your child or where the instructions are not written in English.

Our staff will always contact you first before administering non-prescription medication such as Calpol to seek permission. Should your child develop a fever or be in pain, we will contact you immediately and ask you to collect your child without delay. In certain circumstances, we will ask your permission to administer the correct dosage of anti-febrile medication (Calpol) to your child.

If we give your child any medicine, staff will sign a medical form confirming this and ask you to sign to confirm you were informed that your child was given medication.

## EMERGENCY

## MEDICATION

If your child has an allergy or a medical condition such as diabetes, epilepsy etc. you will be asked to complete a medical emergency care plan in full before your child commences in our service. Any updates to a child's medical needs or emergency medication are required to be communicated to us clearly and in a timely manner.

Our staff have received training on responding to anaphylaxis and administering an EpiPen.

Parents/guardians of children who have a prescribed EpiPen are required to provide us with an additional clearly labelled EpiPen to store appropriately and permanently for the time the child is registered to attend Sherpa Kids. This is to ensure there is minimal risk of an EpiPen being mislaid between the classroom and Sherpa Kids, or to avoid the risk of a child removing the EpiPen from another child's school bag.

Parents/Guardians are fully responsible for supplying an in-date clearly labelled EpiPen to us along with their medical emergency care plan. We will notify you of a pending expiration date, however, we ask that parents/guardians make note of when the emergency medication they have supplied us with is due to expire.

Asthma inhalers are regarded as "oral medication". Oral medications must be prescribed by a GP and have the manufacturer instructions clearly written on them.

Inhalers must be provided to the service clearly labelled with the child's name.

Medications, including emergency medications such as EpiPens and Ventolin inhalers should not be stored in your child's school bag. You must inform us in advance if you are sending your child in with medication, including topical medications such as skin creams. All medicines must be kept in a locked cabinet at our service to avoid accidental ingestion or overdosing by children.

In the event of a serious medical emergency arising for any child the service will contact emergency services first. Parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible. A staff member will accompany a child to hospital and stay with the child until the parent/guardian arrives.

All medical information about children is kept securely on the premises and kept for a period of 2 years.

## SUN CREAM

### POLICY

We ask that you apply suncream to your child (or ensure they have protection from the sun) before arriving at our services. We also ask that you, where possible, supply your child with additional sun cream (such as a travel sized bottle) to allow them to 'top up' accordingly.

We advise that Factor 50 suncream is used on all occasions to best protect a child's skin.

The permissions form within your Booking sets out whether you consent to us providing your child with hypo-allergenic Factor 50 sun cream protection on any necessary occasion where you have not provided some.

We will always encourage children to self-administer sun cream, however, it may be necessary to assist younger children to ensure adequate protection from the sun.

## CHILD BEHAVIOUR

### MANAGEMENT

Our Programmes aim to be equally enjoyable for all children, and we depend on parent/guardian cooperation and understanding while we strive to achieve that.

While we recognise that children will have disagreements from time to time, we also have some easy-to-follow rules that we will support the children to follow and remember. These are:

- Gentle hands
- Listening ears
- Kind words
- Calm selves
- Ask for & offer help
- Work together
- Share with & Include others
- Have fun!

The children will therefore know what is expected of them, and where clear limits are set, appropriate to their age and stage of development and any additional or complex needs they may have.

Children are not permitted to be physically or verbally abusive towards other children, and we take all matters that arise seriously, balancing them with our own knowledge and expertise around child development and behaviour. Should an incident occur, a child's parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible in order to discuss an outcome.

On very rare occasions and where, together with parents/guardians, we have worked to resolve a behavioural issue and the behaviour continues or escalates we move forward to our Escalated Behaviour Management process:

#### 1. Behaviour Report:

Before issuing a report, staff will discuss the situation with the child and only proceed if necessary. A behaviour report will be issued for disruptive or inappropriate behaviour such as

- Repeated bad language
- Violence towards a staff or child e.g. hitting, kicking, punching
- Consistent or repeated challenging behaviour e.g. not listening or refusing to work with the staff.

If a child has received a behaviour report it will be discussed with the parent/guardian at pick up time and a copy will be given to them.

Once a child has received 3 behaviour reports, we move to the next step in the process, which is the Behaviour Chart.

#### 2. Behaviour Chart:

A Behaviour Chart will be put in place for a period of 2 weeks.

- If successful: No further action is required.

- If unsuccessful: The child may be placed on reduced hours or days for a minimum 2 week period. Staff will maintain constant communication with parents/guardians to monitor the child's progress and ensure appropriate support.

### 3. Re-evaluation and Next Steps:

If we do not have success in changing the behaviour with reduced hours, we may have no alternative but to put the child on a break from the programme or terminate a child's place.

This is not a decision we take lightly as a team but there are situations where our environment and staff ratio do not suit all children. We would discuss with parents the extent of the break and work with you to re-introduce your child to the service at a different time of the year.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying at our services. Any bullying behaviour that should arise between children will be dealt with immediately by staff, and parents/guardians are always informed.

If you believe your child is being bullied or bullying, please bring it to the attention of your relevant Programme Coordinator. Together we can deal with it promptly and appropriately.

We have a comprehensive Behaviour Management Policy in place for all staff to adhere to. This is available to you on request, however, it is set out in summary below. We also have a child friendly version of our Behaviour Policy to ensure it is communicated appropriately for all children's ages and stages of development.

- ✓ We believe that children should be encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential in a suitably planned environment.
- ✓ We believe all children have a right to enjoy their time with us and be free from fear.
- ✓ We believe in children's ability to make good choices, ask for support and accept responsibility for their actions.
- ✓ We encourage children to come up with their own solutions to solving problems and support them by offering choices to resolve behavioural difficulties. We support children both individually and as a group in this way.
- ✓ We use a positive approach to behaviour management and encourage good behaviour through praise, encouragement and modelling what is expected.
- ✓ We recognise the importance of parents/guardians in their child's life and it is our policy to always work together with parents/guardians in supporting and achieving positive behaviour.
- ✓ We understand that challenging behaviours can be a result of a child being tired, overwhelmed, over-stimulated, or having more complex needs or sensitivity to environmental triggers. We will always approach behaviour management with the child's individual needs at the centre of all decisions and

outcomes. This can include reducing a child's hours of attendance, for example.

- ✓ We encourage children to respect themselves, each other and property. We aim to provide a happy, caring environment with challenging activities.
- ✓ We NEVER use any form of physical punishment, raise our voices, threaten or isolate children from other children, adults or from celebrations as a form of punishment.
- ✓ It is not the service policy to use any form of restraint when managing behaviour except in rare circumstances if we feel a child may cause serious injury to themselves or others. This is only done as a last resort and by fully trained staff.
- ✓ In the case of a particular incident or persistent unacceptable behaviour we always discuss ways forward with parents.
- ✓ On very rare occasions and where, together with parents, we have exhausted every reasonable lead to resolve a severe behavioural issue (or where behaviours can only be managed on an extended one-to-one basis), we may have no alternative but reduce a child's hours of attendance, or terminate the place. This is a last resort and such decisions will be made in the best interest of your child, general Health and Safety, and other children attending the setting.
- ✓ We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying in our service. Any bullying behaviour that should arise between children is dealt with immediately by staff and parents are always informed.
- ✓ If you believe your child is being bullied or bullying, please bring it to our attention so together we can deal with it.

## MISSING CHILD

## POLICY

We work hard to always keep children safe and to avoid a situation where a child is found to be missing. To ensure this we implement the following:

- Strict security measures are always in place in our services.
- The main door to the premises remains closed and secure from unauthorised access from the outside.
- Parents are requested not to admit anyone else into the service whilst entering or leaving unless they are knowledgeable that the person is an authorised collector of a child attending, and to check that all doors are securely closed behind them, at all times.
- Children are never left unattended without a staff member present and the necessary staff/child ratios are always adhered to.

- Head counting is done regularly, routinely and manually and checked against the number of children recorded as present in our software system.
- Head counting is done on arrival into and from the outdoor area and during Fire Drills to account for all children.

In the unlikely event that a staff member cannot locate a child on the premises the following procedure is put in place immediately:

- The premises will be searched thoroughly and immediately.
- The register will be called to determine which child(ren) are missing.
- The grounds surrounding the service will be searched.
- The child will be called out by name by a staff member to prompt a response.
- Blind spots will be checked.
- Staff will call the local Garda.
- Staff will inform the parents/guardians.
- A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be made if appropriate.
- An accident/incident form will be completed and appropriately signed.

**UNWELL or**

**DISTRAUGHT CHILDREN**

If a child attending the service becomes unwell or very upset, we will contact the authorised people listed on the Enrolment form for them to pick up the child as soon as possible. This is in the best interests of the child.

We ask that you please keep children who are unwell at home until they have recovered, as we do not have the facilities to look after sick children.

If a child has been booked into the service but does not attend due to sickness, please inform the Person in Charge (Programme Coordinator) as soon as possible. Should a child not attend school due to illness, we ask that you inform us before 10:30am on that day where possible.

We also welcome parents to visit our service before a child's first session where this is possible to help the child to adjust and feel comfortable with our staff and service. If a child does not settle in a reasonable amount of time, we will contact parents to discuss together how best to support the child.

A phased or staggered settling period may be required in the best interests of the child. We ask that parents support this process and are patient with it until the child develops confidence in attending.

## INFECTIOUS CONDITIONS &

## EXCLUSION POLICY

Appropriate measures will be taken by management and service staff to minimise the risk of the spread of infection. Appropriate processes and hygiene practices will be employed from recognised health authorities and put in place for children to observe and participate in a safe and healthy environment. We endeavour to work together with you to help avoid the spread of infection into our busy setting. When our staff become ill, it can prove difficult to replace them in accordance with the regulations on ratio balance and required vetting and training. The outbreak of an infectious condition can prove extremely disruptive to our setting as a whole.

We ask if an infectious disease becomes apparent at home that the parent/guardian contacts our service about the child's condition so appropriate action can take place. If this becomes apparent at our service, we will contact parents/guardians or emergency contacts about the child's symptoms and the immediate need to collect the child from our service. We will also remind parents of the necessary exclusion's periods and/or our right to request a medical practitioner certificate to allow the child to attend the service again. Exclusion periods may apply for certain symptoms or diseases. Please see list overleaf.

<b>COMMON RASHES AND SKIN INFECTIONS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED EXCLUSION PERIOD</b>
Chicken Pox	Until scabs are dry, usually 5-7 days from onset of rash
German Measles (rubella)	7 days from onset of rash
Hand, Foot and Mouth	None, once child is generally well
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted and healed, or 24hrs after commencing antibiotic treatment
Measles	Four days from onset of rash
Ringworm	Exclusion not usually required
Scabies	Children can return after first treatment
Scarlet Fever	Child can return 24hrs After commencing antibiotic treatment
Slapped Cheek/Fifth Disease/Parvovirus B19	None
Shingles	Exclude only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered
<b>DIARRHOEA AND VOMITING ILLNESS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED EXCLUSION PERIOD</b>
Diarrhoea and/or Vomiting	48hrs from last episode of Diarrhoea or vomiting
E. coli 0157/VTEC	Further exclusions required - cases excluded until 2 negative stool specimens taken at least 48hrs apart
Typhoid and Paratyphoid (enteric fever)	Further exclusions may be required for some children until they are no longer excreting
Shigella (dysentery)	Further exclusion may be required for certain types of Shigella infections
Cryptosporidiosis	Exclude for 48hrs from last episode of diarrhoea
<b>RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED EXCLUSION PERIOD</b>
Flu (Influenza)	Until recovered
Tuberculosis	Always consult your local DPH
Whooping Cough (Pertussis)	Five days from commencing antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment
COVID-19	Until symptoms subside
<b>OTHER INFECTIONS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED EXCLUSION PERIOD</b>
Conjunctivitis	None as long as child is generally well
Glandular Fever	None as long as child is well
Headlice	None once treatment applied
Hepatitis A	Exclude until 7 days after onset of jaundice (or 7days after symptom onset if no jaundice)
Hepatitis B, C HIV/Aids	None
Meningococcal Meningitis/ Septicaemia	Until recovered
Meningitis viral	None as long as child is generally well
MRSA	None as long as child is generally well
Mumps	Exclude child for 5 days after onset of swelling
Threadworms	None
Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis	None as long as child is generally well

## FIRST AID &

## CRITICAL INCIDENTS

There is an approved fully stocked first-aid kit and other supporting kits available and a staff member trained in first aid, anaphylaxis & asthma will be present onsite at each service. First Aid kits are checked and restocked monthly or as required. All documentation pertaining to the contents and replacement of items is retained by Sherpa Kids.

All incidents, injury, trauma and illness events including serious incidents are recorded and discussed with parents, staff and where necessary reported to the appropriate authority and Senior Management.

If a serious accident occurs our policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of the child first. This may mean an ambulance or other appropriate form of medical help is sought before the parent is called. We do not use our cars or public transport to escort children to hospitals, GP surgeries or to their homes.

The safety of staff, children and visitors to our service is vital in the event of an emergency. Emergencies include events as fires, floods, extreme weather conditions, other catastrophic events, the presence of dangerous persons and animals and any other situation or threat which requires a lockdown or evacuation of the premises. We have a critical incident plan in place in the event of an emergency, including a 'lock-in' procedure in the event of an external threat.

Staff and volunteers will initially be made aware of emergency procedures and drills at our service during their inductions and this information will be reinforced with the children during regular practice drills.

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Sherpa Kids is fully committed to the active safeguarding the children and to providing a safe environment in which they can play, learn and develop. We are committed to child centred practice in all our work with children and full compliance with Children First and Our Duty of Care as mandated persons. Our mandated obligations are understood to mean that we have a duty to minimise risk to children and to report on any potential or existing harm to children that reaches a threshold of concern.

We have a comprehensive "Child Protection and Welfare Policy" (also known as Child Safeguarding Policy and Statement) document onsite at this service which set out our full policies and procedures regarding the protection of our children.

All our staff are fully Garda Vetted and have Police Clearance Certification from abroad where necessary. All our staff are trained in Child Safeguarding and hold a Children First certificate.

We have a named Designated Liaison Person in each of our services and a Child Safeguarding Statement (Risk Assessment) on display.

Our Child Safeguarding Policy and Statement is updated at least annually, or as required should a new risk be identified.

In the interests of Child Safeguarding, we have a No Phones Policy for both Staff and Children.

Staff are only permitted to use service devices to make contact with parents, take authorised photos (with parental consent) and/or to record child attendance in real time.

No service phones are permitted to be taken home by Sherpa Kids staff members.

## SHERPA KIDS- CHARITY INITIATIVES

We feel passionate about local Irish registered charities who are doing positive things for school age children without the help of government funding. Our Charity of Choice for 2024 is A Lust For Life, an award winning Mental Health Charity with a panel of experts developing crucial programmes and resources that facilitate young people to be the effective guardians of their own mind. We are helping them achieve their goals by fundraising in various ways throughout the year, by accepting staff contributions, family contributions and by organising on-site events such as cake sales and pyjama parties. We have consulted with the Charities Regulator and sought guidance on our fundraising approaches. We make opting out at any time easy and are more than happy to make reimbursements to you should you change your mind

## OUR COMMITMENT

We recognise the importance of recruiting suitable staff members and training them accordingly. We provide all mandatory training to our staff members and cover the cost of it. We ensure that all staff are fully vetted and appropriately qualified for the position. Our selection and training of staff is carefully designed to ensure staff will:

- Take time to establish a rapport with your children and learn about their unique interests and abilities.

- Model appropriate language and communication skills, safe practices, behaviours, values, and attitudes.
- Be flexible and reactive to children's emerging interests and needs and encourage children to communicate, explore and be creative and spontaneous.
- Allow children to make decisions, problem-solve and express and share their thoughts and opinions.
- Provide opportunities to build upon children's previous experiences to extend their development and learning.
- Assist children in developing positive relationships with other children/staff, so that children see themselves as a valuable member of the community.
- Use praise and reinforcement with children to boost self-esteem, encourage and motivate good practice and celebrate children's efforts and achievements.
- Anticipate conflict and assist children and families to resolve any issues or instances of bullying and harassment.
- Be committed to improving their own professional development and continually challenge their own practices and decision making so as to provide an enriching learning environment for all.

All Sherpa Kids staff undergo a recruitment and training process that involves First Aid training, Fire Safety, Child Safeguarding and Manual Handling as well as any other training as required by national guidelines. Staff will also participate in training which introduces Sherpa Kids systems and performance reviews.

Staff ratios will comply with all requirements set by the national guidelines at all times. Approved off-site excursions may also require a greater ratio of staff to children dependent on the nature of the excursion. Parents will be kept fully informed when such events occur and prior consent for children to go on excursions will be sought.

It is the policy of this service to have adequate insurance by retaining a current certificate of insurance relevant to the type of service we operate at all times. Our insurance certificate is available and in date for inspection.

## OTHER FORMS

## OF COMMUNICATION

Our Sherpa Kids information will be emailed to our families and community so up to date information about our staff, policies, fees, upcoming service activities and special events is communicated.

We encourage open communication at all times with our families if you have any queries or concerns about the operations of our services, contact the Person in Charge at your service, or Senior Management. All concerns will be treated in confidence.

We also will reflect on the fun that we have had in our service and share any ideas and community information that you may find useful. We also have notice boards and display areas which also contain information you will find useful such as staff & service information, the weekly menu and examples of children's activities, so please take the time to check these regularly.

## LOST OR

## DAMAGED PROPERTY

Please note we do not allow children to use mobile phones, tablets, iPods or other devices while attending our services and we ask that you adhere to this policy. Children are not permitted to bring toys, electronic games or significant amounts of money to Sherpa Kids. We cannot take responsibility if these items are lost, stolen or damaged and will not be held liable for personal items.

Sherpa Kids staff endeavours to remind and assist children about their personal belongings. We encourage personal responsibility by the children and do not accept responsibility for any items of clothing or otherwise lost or left in the school grounds. Unnamed property left on site will be left in the Sherpa Kids Service and if necessary, may also be handed into the school to add to their lost property at the end of each week.

Staff will take due care and responsibility regarding the structural and non-structural property and its use. Parents or guardians may be liable for replacement costs of equipment or property damaged by their children.

## COMPLAINTS &

## COMPLIMENTS

We welcome the feedback of any parent, guardian or member of the Sherpa Kids community or host of our service. It is our intention to deliver the best service and customer satisfaction within the standards and guidelines of our service provision. Please notify the Person in Charge/ Programme Coordinator if there is something you wish to discuss with them or bring to their attention. This can be done verbally or in written form.

All complaints should be put in writing in order for us to deal with them thoroughly and appropriately. You have the option of using the enclosed form to do so.

In the instance of a complaint, a resolution will be sought as quickly as possible and within no less than 14 days. You may be required to attend a private and/or facilitated meeting to discuss the cause for concern or complaint in further detail with us. Depending on the circumstances of your complaint, an investigation may be invoked. A written outcome to your complaint will be furnished to you.

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction or it is inappropriate to raise it with the Programme Coordinator in the first instance it should be escalated to the Manager.

We ask that confidentiality is strictly maintained during and after the complaints process.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Sherpa Kids Compliments and Complaint Form**

<b>Sherpa Kids Service:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Relationship to child:</b>
<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email:</b>

**Details of Compliment:**

**Compliment -Testimonial Consent**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Name)

Acknowledge and approve that the testimonial written above can be used by Sherpa Kids International and Sherpa Kids Ireland for media and relevant publications and online, including all content and quotes or part thereof at Sherpa Kids International and Sherpa Kids Ireland's discretion.

I understand that Sherpa Kids International and Sherpa Kids Ireland is not responsible for any misprint or misrepresentation once the testimonial has been distributed.

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_





## APPENDIX 2

<b>CHANGE OF DETAILS SLIP</b> - print and complete this if your details change. Give it to your Programme Coordinator or email it back to them.	
<b>My Account Code is:</b>	
<b>My Child's name is:</b>	
<b>TELL US WHAT'S CHANGED:</b>	
My contact number has changed to:	
The emergency contact number has changed to:	
Authorised persons to collect my child include:	Name:  Contact:
Additional Medical Information:	
Other:	

& - - - - -

<b>CHANGE OF DETAILS SLIP</b> - print and complete this if your details change. Give it to your Programme Coordinator or email it back to them.	
<b>My Account Code is:</b>	
<b>My child's name is:</b>	
<b>TELL US WHAT'S CHANGED:</b>	
My contact number has changed to:	
The emergency contact number has changed to:	
Authorised persons to collect my child include:	Name:  Contact:
Additional Medical Information:	
Other:	