

# Parent Handbook



Sherpa Kids



## Welcome to Sherpa Kids Gaelscoil Mhuscraí Out of School Care

Sherpa Kids is independently owned and operated by:

Site Contacts	Owner: Anne Marie Hegarty  Phone: 086 4685167 Email: <a href="mailto:gaelscoilmhuscraí@sherpakids.ie">gaelscoilmhuscraí@sherpakids.ie</a>  Please contact this number or send an email for cancellations and enquiries during operating hours

### Services Available and Hours of Operation:

After School Care: 1.30pm – 6.30pm\* (Senior and Junior Infants)  
Monday to Friday: 2.30pm – 6.30pm\* (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class)

We may also open on School Closure days.

We are closed on all public holidays and the week between Xmas and New Year.

\*Note: times may vary depending on school hours

### Bookings:

Permanent and casual bookings are available for every child we have a completed enrolment for.

### Emergency Contact:

In the event of an emergency, outside of the normal Sherpa Kids Out of School Care hours stated above, please contact:

Sherpa Kids Ireland Clonakilty: Anne Marie Hegarty, Director of Operations  
Phone Number: 087 7527229



# Philosophy

We provide a safe and secure environment for the quality care of school aged children through a structured well balanced programme. We achieve this by thinking ahead, anticipating what children might like to do to keep them safe and happy. We do this by providing planned activities, and supervised free play. We abide by eight values which represent all areas of our Out of School Care programmes in order to provide quality learning outcomes for happy children and also incorporate the school's values and ethos into our programme.

	<b>Commitment</b>	We are committed to the vision, mission and goals of Sherpa Kids, our team and our clients at all times
	<b>Integrity</b>	We will always speak the truth and will only ever make agreements that we intend to keep
	<b>Excellence</b>	We will always look for ways to improve and add value to our programmes
	<b>Communication</b>	We will always speak positively of our team members, both in public and in private. We will never use sarcasm, profanity or listen to gossip
	<b>Education</b>	We are always willing to learn from our mistakes. We will look for practical knowledge and solutions rather than just theory
	<b>Team Work</b>	We will focus on co-operation seeking resolution as opposed to compromise
	<b>Systems</b>	We work to our system for solutions if a problem arises. We always follow the system and strive for continuous improvement
	<b>Consistency</b>	We are consistent in all our actions so that our customers can feel comfortable when dealing with us at all times



# General Overview

## Orientation

Welcome to our Sherpa Kids service. We hope your orientation of our service and the following information gives you a greater understanding of the operations of our Sherpa Kids programmes and sessions of care.

Your signed Enrolment Form confirms you understand and accept our onsite centre policies and procedures.

Please read this handbook carefully and refer to the centres policy and procedure manual which is always available for viewing at our service (the school) if you have any questions.

## Code of Conduct

Sherpa Kids is about providing a safe and caring environment for your children. We wish to encourage a similar attitude amongst the children. We do not condone any form of discrimination amongst the children or adults associated with the programme. Our code of conduct is designed to help us, as individuals, children and our staff team, make appropriate decisions about behaviour choices and to demonstrate the core values of integrity and respect, performance, professionalism and privacy. Any issues or information should be discussed in the first instance with the Programme Manager or myself, the owner of the service. Our 'code of conduct' is kept in the centre policies and procedures manual.

## Privacy Policy

Sherpa Kids will collect, use, disclose and hold information in accordance with the *Data Protection Act (1988 and 2003)*. We will only disclose personal information to other organisations and government departments who require this information by law. These may include but are not limited to:

- Department of Education
- Insurance Agencies
- Sherpa Kids Professional Advisors such as Lawyers
- Office of the Revenue Commissioners



# Sherpa Kids Programme

Our programmes meet all standards and guidelines as recommended and reflected by Sherpa Kids philosophy and values.

Sherpa Kids programmes will also:

- ensure children’s learning and development is facilitated and their individual interests and abilities are encouraged and needs are met
- 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
- 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

## Daily Routine

In order to ensure our service is a happy and safe environment which runs smoothly for the children who attend our programme, Sherpa Kids follows a structured routine. A ‘typical’ After School Care day is as follows:

1.30pm – 2.30pm*	Roll Call, and free play
2.50pm – 3.15pm**	Children arrive at designated area, put away school bags, roll call, wash hands and have afternoon tea
3.15pm - 4.00pm*	Children begin homework, reading or other education focus activity
4.00pm – 5.15pm*	Special activity time
5.15pm – 5.45pm*	Free playtime indoors/outdoors –weather permitting
5.45pm - 6.30pm*	Finishing projects, pack up time, quiet activities until home time

\*\*Note: times may vary depending on school times





## Daily Programme

Weekly themes or a variety of activities are incorporated into the daily programme. The daily programme is an indication, only, of the types of activities the children will be involved with at any given time. However, depending on the children's enthusiasm and interest, it may be varied at the discretion of the staff.

Monday	Art & Craft
Tuesday	Music & Drama
Wednesday	Games & Sports
Thursday	Cooking & Technology
Friday	Fun Day

## Cultural Diversity

Sherpa Kids programmes will be mindful of cultural differences and the 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 families input by contributing their knowledge about their own culture into the service programmes, activities, policies and procedures to ensure children's needs are being met and to enhance the overall quality of our service.

## Children with Additional Needs

Every effort will be made to include children with additional needs in our programmes and a full assessment with the assistance of the child's parent, will be made to determine the child's needs and if they can be catered for, prior to the child commencing care. Detailed information about the child's requirements and specific behaviour or medical management plans must be obtained from the parents and included with the child's enrolment form. Parents must arrange a time with the Programme Manager to discuss their child's needs to ensure appropriate care can be provided.

## Family & Community Involvement

Families are welcome to spend time at our service with their children and this will also increase communication between Sherpa Kids staff and families and help us to meet you and your child's needs. 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. 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.



# Administration

## Bookings

All families need to complete an **Enrolment Form for each child** in order to use our service. These need to be completed at commencement of each school year or when care starts.

Permanent bookings are made for each term. These bookings will continue each week until cancelled. Casual Bookings are available only if the child has a completed enrolment form registered with the onsite service.

Cancellations require two weeks' notice in writing by completing a Change of Booking form. Please ask our Programme Co-ordinator for this form.

It is important that any additional bookings are made with plenty of notice. If you require a change to your arrangements on the same day please notify the Programme Manager before 12 noon. We will not be held responsible for changes to bookings after 12 noon on the same day.

An absence will be recorded when a booked attendance does not occur.

**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.**

## Signing Out

The adults authorised to collect your child/children must complete the daily booking sheet by signing the child/children out at the time of collection for each type of service. This requirement is for the safety of the children, and for payment records. Only authorised persons will be able to sign out a child as notified on the Enrolment form or as advised by parents and guardians on a specific day. If the collector is not you, then your authorised person will need to provide photo ID.

## Late Pick Up

Our service is open until 6pm daily. Children must be collected by this time. We have a **late pick up fee of €10.00 per 15 minutes per child.**

Where a child has not been collected by closing time and staff have not been notified they will proceed to contact parents/emergency contacts as detailed on the Enrolment Form. **At no time will a child be left unattended** however, the Programme Manager is authorised to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and well-being of the child as outlined in the Centres Policies and Procedures Manual.

**We would strongly recommend that every child should complete an enrolment form in order that a child may be taken to the Sherpa Kids Service in the event of an emergency or unforeseen delay caused to the person collecting their child.**



# Accounts and Fees

## Payment of Fees

Fees must be paid weekly. Parents will be charged if their child is a no show on the day of booking.

We understand that every family has different requirements concerning the payment of fees and in that respect, we try to offer a flexible approach to the collection of fees.

A child is enrolled into a Sherpa Kids Programme for the school term and we require a 2-week notice period of cancellation of this.

You may pay the fees via a number of options for the after-school programme:

- weekly
- one off payment for the term
- If you commit to the whole school year then a direct debit payment structured over 12 months is available to ease the monthly cost

Late payments will result in children not being permitted to attend any sessions until the overdue fees are paid.

Any queries regarding your account or payment of fees must be made to the Sherpa Kids Programme Co-ordinator, not the school. If there are difficulties in meeting payment of fees, please contact the Programme Co-ordinator.

## Fee Structure – After school care

### Permanent Bookings:

After School Care Session €5.00P/H6.00 per hour or part of

### Casual Bookings:

Will be charged at a rate of €6.00 per hour or part of.

## Cancellation Policy

Parents/guardian must give Sherpa Kids, two weeks' notice, in writing by completing a Change of Booking form. This completed form must be provided to the Sherpa Kids Programme Manager if a child is to be withdrawn from a permanent or casual booking. Please advise as soon as possible if there is a change to a booking or there is a change required to the days of care, otherwise a 2-week fee is payable based on the previous booking.

Please Note: No refunds are given for absences that are not cancelled; absentees are charged the full fee.





# Wellbeing, Health and Safety

We aim to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children in our programme. We are in contact with a variety of organisations to advise and assist us in these areas. Where applicable, parents must provide the Programme Manager with a Medical or Health Management Plan. We will at all times comply with all relevant health and safety in employment legislation.

## **Unwell & Distraught Children**

If a child attending the programme becomes unwell or upset we will contact the authorised people listed on the Enrolment form for them to pick up the child as soon as possible. Please keep children who are unwell at home until recovered, as we do not have the facilities to look after sick children.

If a child has been booked into the programme but does not attend due to sickness, please inform the Programme Co-ordinator before 12 noon that day. We also welcome parents to visit and stay at our service before a child's first session 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.

## **Medical Conditions & Requirements**

At the time of enrolment, the parent/guardian must advise the Programme Co-ordinator of any medical conditions, such as any allergies, anaphylaxis, diabetes and asthma that the child has been diagnosed with. Parents and guardians also need to indicate if any medication (whether prescription or homeopathic) is to be administered to a child during any session of care. Parents need to discuss the specifics with the Programme Co-ordinator or the qualified staff member. In some instances, specific Medical Management Plans, risk management and minimisation plans, equipment and other resources may also need to be provided before the child can attend the service. Parents will also need to supply all prescription medication in its original bottle with the child's name, appropriate dosage and frequency, date of dispensing and use by date.

## **Infectious Diseases**

Measures will be taken by management and programme staff to control 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 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 exclusions periods and/or need for a medical practitioner certificate to allow the child to attend the service again.

Exclusion periods may apply for certain symptoms or diseases:



<b>Disease</b>	<b>Exclusion Period</b>
Chicken Pox	At least two (2) weeks after the first spots appear or when blisters have all crusted
Conjunctivitis	Until discharge from eyes has stopped
Diarrhoea	Up until diarrhoea has stopped
Diphtheria	Until a medical officer has certified recovery
German Measles	Until your child has fully recovered and for at least five (5) days after the rash appears
Glandular Fever	Not necessary to keep children at home but some children will be too sick to attend school
Hand, Foot and Mouth	Until blisters have dried
Head Lice	Until hair has been treated. Everyone living in the same house (as well as linen) should be treated at the same time as the affected person
Hepatitis A	Until your child has recovered which is usually seven (7) days from the first signs of jaundice
Hepatitis B and C	It is not necessary to keep your child at home
HIV	It is not necessary to keep your child at home
Impetigo	Until appropriate treatment has commenced and visible sores are covered
Influenza	For five (5) days after the appearance of the first symptoms
Measles	For at least five (5) days after the appearance of the rash
Meningitis	Until the child is well
Meningococcal	Until the child is well
Mumps	Until the child has completely recovered and at least ten (10) days after the appearance of swelling
Ringworm and Scabies	Until the day after fungal treatment has begun
Scarlet Fever	At least 24 hours after treatment has begun
Streptococcal Infection	At least a day after commencing treatment and the child is well
Tuberculosis	Until a medical practitioner believes the child is well
Whooping Cough	Child should be kept at home for at least five (5) days from the start of antibiotic treatment.

## **First Aid**

At all times 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 session of care.



## **Incidents, Injury, Trauma & Illness**

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 Sherpa Kids Head Office.

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 transport children to doctors, hospitals or homes.

## **Emergency Procedures**

The safety of staff, children and visitors to our service is vital in the event of an emergency. Emergencies include events as fires, hurricanes, 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.

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

## **Behaviour Management**

We will ensure our environment is a safe and happy place for everyone. We maintain an emphasis on being polite, considerate and co-operative, respecting each other and the property and equipment onsite.

Our behaviour management procedures are in line with the behaviour management procedures in place at the school. We will consult with the school community, staff families and children so that our policy and procedures reflect the specific and cultural needs of children attending our service. Children will be encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour through offering choices and implementing natural and logical consequences, including if necessary the involvement of parents. If we experience behavioural problems with a child, the parent will be contacted and consulted in regard to the behaviour.

## **Child Protection**

Our service is committed to the recognition and prevention of abuse of children and young people with the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the children always the prime consideration. In addition to general safety policies already outlined, our service will ensure that volunteers or students working at the programme, have current Garda Vetting checks. All volunteers, students and visitors to our service will be supervised and visible to staff when interacting with the children. In addition, we are in regular contact with the school's Child protection Officer.



# Sherpa Kids Staff

## Sherpa Kids staff when interacting with your children 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 and so that children see themselves as a valuable member of the community
- use praise and reinforcement with children to boost self-esteem and encourage and motivate good practice and celebrate children's efforts and achievements
- anticipate conflict and assisting children and families to resolve any issues or instances of bullying and harassment
- ensure staff are 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

## Staff Recruitment

All Sherpa Kids staff undergo a recruitment and training process that may involve First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis training and any other training as required by national guidelines. Staff will also participate in training which introduces Sherpa Kids systems and performance reviews. Depending on their position in the service, staff members must also hold valid children services qualifications, be currently studying acceptable children services qualifications or enrol to study in appropriate children services qualifications within six (6) months of commencing employment with Sherpa Kids. A notice of assessment (Garda Vetting check) must be undertaken for all employees and volunteers.

If there are any questions or comments regarding Sherpa Kids staff, please contact your Programme Co-ordinator or the Sherpa Kids owner.

## Staff Ratios

At all times staff ratios will comply with all requirements set by the national guidelines. Approved off-site excursions may also require a lesser ratio of children to staff dependent on the nature of the excursion. Parents will be kept fully informed when such events occur.



# Services

## Homework

Time is allocated for each child to complete homework activities. This is particularly important time as it allows children to focus on tasks in a supervised environment. If a child has no homework or finishes prior to the time allowed, they will be able to choose other suitable activities which have an education focus.

Our staff are not able to enforce children to complete homework. They are also not teaching staff and are not expected to understand or interpret school curriculum. However, staff will provide support to children in order for them to complete homework tasks and to encourage each child to have a positive attitude towards school and homework

If there are any issues regarding homework or your child has specific needs please make sure the Programme Co-ordinator is aware of this and the information is included on the Enrolment form.

## Meals & Snacks

Afternoon tea is provided in our After School Care and Vacation Care sessions and is included in the fee structure. A variety of healthy food choices will be on offer as well as **fresh fruit and water**. Food is prepared using the food and safety guidelines from the Food Standards Authority. 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 please include this on the Enrolment Form and advise the Programme Co-ordinator who will discuss this with you to ensure your child receives appropriate food at each session of care. At times, we may have children with specific food allergies or needs attend our centre thus we will notify all families of the foods that will not be able to be used or provided to children. In Vacation Care programmes families will need to supply their child with morning tea and lunch every day unless indicated otherwise on the programme.

## Excursions

We believe excursions offer variety and are an important part of a child's learning experience. Parents and guardians will be notified of all details prior to the excursion date and for children to be able to leave the Sherpa Kids service site, parents/guardians must sign a permission slip in order for their children to be allowed to attend. A risk assessment will be compiled for each excursion and this will also help in determining the staff ratio for the activity. There will always be at least 2 staff for every 10 children on any excursion. An Excursion Permission Form or the Vacation Care booking form which will need to be signed and returned prior to all excursions. If staff feel that children may be put at risk, the outing will be postponed or cancelled and children will remain at the programme and alternative activities will be organised.

## Communication

Our Sherpa Kids newsletter will be emailed to our families and community so up to date information about our staff, policies, fees, upcoming programme activities and special events is communicated. We also will reflect on the fun that we have had in our programme 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 & programme information, the weekly menu and examples of children's activities, so please take the time to check these regularly.

## **Personal Belongings**

We recommend children do not bring mobile phones, iPods, electronic games, toys or money to Sherpa Kids. Sherpa Kids staff cannot take responsibility if these items are lost, stolen or damaged.

## **Lost Property**

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 centre and if necessary may also be handed into the school to add to their lost property at the end of each week.

## **Damage to Property**

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.

## **Compliments & Complaints Procedure**

We welcome the feedback of any parent, guardian or member of the Sherpa Kids community or host of our programme. It is our intention to deliver the best service and customer satisfaction within the standards and guidelines of our service provision. Please notify the Programme Co-ordinator that there is something you wish to discuss with them or bring to their attention. This can be done verbally or in written form. All compliments and complaints should be put in writing – a form is available onsite to do this. With a complaint situation, a resolution will be sought as quickly as possible.

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction or it is inappropriate to raise it with the Programme Co-ordinator in the first instance it should be escalated to the Owner.

## **No Smoking**

Staff, parents and visitors to our service are not permitted to smoke at any time at our service site or anywhere on the school grounds.

WHAT  
IS A  
SHERPA  
KID?



SHERPA  
KIDS

Sherpa  
Kids

