



Pre-School Montessori
After-School Care

HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

AFTERSCHOOL

2024

Club Ardagh is a non-profit company limited by guarantee started by a group of local women who came together in 2003 to apply for financing under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme to provide a childcare facility in the village. The application was finally approved in 2007 and construction commenced on a site in the grounds of St Mel's National School in the autumn of 2008. The facility is a bright, modern building that can accommodate up to 22 Senior Montessori Preschoolers, 11 Junior Montessori Preschoolers and 30 after school children. It is fitted out and equipped to the highest standard, with a dedicated playground and sensorial garden for the preschool and afterschool children. Club Ardagh CLG is operated as a company limited by guarantee by a voluntary board of management, employing qualified childcare staff to deliver childcare services.

We opened a 'Junior Preschool Room' in September 2016 to accommodate the second ECCE Free Preschool Year. From September 2018, our Junior Preschool Room is located upstairs in our building.

Club Ardagh operates under the legislation of Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Aged Services) Regulations 2018 (a copy of these regulations can be found in the office). We work alongside and in cooperation with TUSLA (The Child & Family Agency), Department of Education, DCYA, HSE, Pobal and Longford County Childcare. Club Ardagh is inspected regularly by TUSLA & DOE and inspection reports are public and available for viewing online.

Club Ardagh's Mission Statement

To provide excellent care and an inclusive experience for preschool and afterschool children in a safe, happy and stimulating environment.

We will endeavour to provide all children in our care with the opportunity to develop physically, intellectually and socially while incorporating the principles of Síolta & Aistear into our everyday practices and curriculum. We will encourage active learning, the use of imagination and freedom of expression while promoting self-discipline, good manners and tolerance of others. We see the children's parents or guardians as partners in this endeavour and welcome their views and contributions while retaining ultimate responsibility for the management and operation of the service.

This handbook is intended as a guide to services and an outline of Club Ardagh's general policies and procedures. The handbook will be updated regularly as required. Club Ardagh's official policy and procedures document is available in the manager's office for any parent or guardian who wishes to read it in full.

Contacting Club Ardagh

Manager: Melissa Eager
Address: Ardagh, Longford, N39 FH68
Telephone: 043 66 75797
Mobile: 086 125 0549
Email: clubardagh@gmail.com
Website: www.clubardagh.com

Chairperson: Aine McHugh

Charity number: 15791 / RCN: 20055448

Club Ardagh's **Afterschool Service** will commence on Monday, 2nd of September 2024 until Wednesday, 25th of June 2025.

Days and hours of operation

2.10pm to 3.10pm *or* 2.10pm to 6.00pm *or* 3.10pm to 6.00pm

The Afterschool service will be open from Monday to Friday all year round except for Bank Holidays, brief closures during October midterm, Christmas and Easter, three weeks during the summer when the facility will close for staff holidays, in service training and essential maintenance.

You will be notified via text message or telephone if Club Ardagh Childcare facility is being closed for any unforeseen circumstances such as adverse weather conditions, water or electricity outage etc.

Staff Names & Qualifications

Club Ardagh CLG Manager: Melissa Eager (Level 8 – BA / Level 5 - Special Needs Assisting)

Afterschool Childcare Leader: Joan Dempsey (Level 6 – Supervision in Childcare)

Afterschool Childcare Educator: Fiona Keane (Level 6 – Early Childhood Care & Education)

Afterschool Childcare Educator: Jade Connolly (Level 6 – Childcare)

Garda Vetting

All staff, Board of Management and outside consultants have been properly recruited, screened and Garda vetted. Original copies of Garda vetting documents are kept on file in the Club Ardagh facility.

Child Protection

Club Ardagh is committed to practice which protects children from harm and to full compliance with the Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and our Duty to Care. We recognise the rights of children to be protected from harm, treated with respect, listened to and to have their views taken into consideration in matters that affect them. A full copy of our Child Protection Policy & Procedures is available for viewing in the office.

Child Protection Liaison is: Melissa Eager

Afterschool Deputy Child Protection Liaison is: Joan Dempsey

Fee Policy Afterschool

Five days	Three days	Per Day
2.00 – 3.10: €30	2.00 – 3.10: €18	2.00 – 3.10: €6
2.00 – 6.00: €70	2.00 – 6.00: €42	2.00 – 6.00: €14
3.10 – 6.00: €60	3.10 – 6.00: €36	3.10 – 6.00: €12

Optional Charges

Camp Days (9:30 – 3:00pm): €13

Afterschool Half Days (12:00pm – 6:00pm): €15

Fees are payable **every four weeks in advance** preferably by Bank Transfer. Cash is allowed if bank transfer is not an option. Cheques are no longer accepted. Please contact the manager for Bank details if choosing bank transfer. Failure to pay the due amount on time may result in immediate termination of the service.

There are no refunds for days missed due to illness, holidays taken during term time, other personal reasons, or for Bank Holidays.

Fees are not charged for afterschool service for periods when the centre is closed for Christmas, Easter, Mid-term Breaks, summer.

National Childcare Scheme (NCS)

From October 2019, the National Childcare Scheme will replace all previous targeted childcare programmes (e.g. CCSP/ASCC/TEC) with a single, streamlined and user-friendly Scheme to help parents meet the cost of quality childcare. The National Childcare Scheme will support families with children aged between 24 weeks and 15 years who are attending any participating Tusla registered childcare service, including any Tusla registered childminder.

Applications for the National Childcare Scheme can be made online at www.ncs.gov.ie/apply using your verified MyGovID. A paper-based application can also be submitted by post. The Scheme is targeted to open to applications in October 2019, with the first payments flowing from November 2019. A range of information resources can be found at www.ncs.gov.ie

Admissions

Club Ardagh's objective is to provide services for any child aged 4 to 12 who lives in the locality irrespective of their ethnic or religious background. Club Ardagh's afterschool service can accommodate up to 30 children on any one day.

Delivery and collection of children

For space reasons, parking within the school grounds is reserved for school staff and Club Ardagh staff only. There is limited roadside parking. We would kindly ask parents to please be diligent and do not park in the bus lane or at the double yellow line as it obstructs the line of site when children and parents are crossing the road.

3 Point turns at the church gate and parking on the Pedestrian crossing are illegal. Please do not park on the avenue leading down to the Church.

Pedestrians can gain access to Club Ardagh via the gates at either end of the school grounds or to the right of the main gate at the school entrance.

Afterschool children in Junior and Senior Infants will be collected from their classrooms by a Club Ardagh staff member and taken to the Club Ardagh building each afternoon. Children from First Class upwards should be advised by their parents to go directly to the Club Ardagh building in the afternoons. In all cases, the school principal and child's teacher should be notified that the children are attending Club Ardagh's service.

Children should be collected promptly at the end of their session. The Afterschool Service closes at 6.00pm.

Food, clothing and personal belongings

We follow a 'Healthy Eating Policy' as recommended by the TUSLA (The Child & Family Agency) for both our Preschool and Afterschool Services. Afterschool children attending from 2.00 or 3.10 until 6.00 will receive a warm meal and a drink (water and on occasion milk) in the winter months, and a hot or cold meal with drink (water and on occasion milk) in warmer weather. **Fizzy drinks, popcorn and chewing gum are not allowed.**

Club Ardagh is committed to providing children, including those with additional needs and special dietary requirements, with high quality, nutritious meals prepared in a safe and healthy environment. All dinners are home-made and made fresh on the day. All afterschool dinners consist

of a meat/fish (protein), potato/pasta/rice (carbohydrate) and vegetable and all servings are in proportion with HSE recommendations for children's portion sizes.

We practice and promote family style eating. Children are encouraged to eat and to try new things at dinner but no one is forced to eat anything. If a child chooses not to eat a particular dinner a staff member will inform the parent upon collection.

One meal from our afterschool menu will be prepared and cooked fresh daily for all the children. We do take into consideration children's likes and dislikes as well as catering for children with allergies and special dietary requirements but we are not able to provide more than one meal option at dinner time.

A sample week's menu could include the following dinners: Monday - Sausage, Potato & Veg, Tuesday - Chicken Curry & Rice, Wednesday - Beef Lasagne & Home-made chips, Thursday - Beef casserole & Mash, Friday – Wraps, Chicken Goujons & Wedges.

Should a parent choose not to avail of the food on offer at the facility, it is a policy of Club Ardagh that a discounted or reduced fee is not offered, as it is the choice of the parents not to avail of the food aspect of the service. Parents may choose to provide a pre-prepared snack of their own choosing for their child. Please note we cannot re-heat meals prepared outside of Club Ardagh for health and safety reasons. Parents and children will be asked to comment and offer menu suggestions at certain times during the year. All reasonable requests will be considered.

All children should bring sun hats and sun block in warm, sunny weather. All children's clothing, lunch bags and belongings should be clearly marked with their name.

We recommend and prefer that the afterschool children not bring their own toys, games, books, e-Book Readers, iPads, phones etc as these can be lost or damaged. Club Ardagh and staff cannot be responsible for personal items that may become lost or damaged.

Afterschool Homework Policy

Afterschool children will have the opportunity to complete some or all of their homework here at Club Ardagh Afterschool depending on the amount of homework and the timeframe available. Staff members will be present with the children in the afterschool room to assist with the homework if necessary. Our staff cannot make corrections to children's homework. Staff will offer to check children's homework upon completion. Some children may not complete all their homework at Club Ardagh and will need to finish some work at home. We would ask all parents to please check their children's homework in the evenings. Also, please note that Senior Infant dictation must be done at home as it is ineffective if done here in a group setting (at the request of the Senior Infants teacher).

Photographs

From time to time the staff may take photographs of the children, for example on occasions when they are involved in a project, game, birthdays, or at the end of year as a memento of the groups in that year. Photography will be confined to these activities and photographs will not be released to anyone outside Club Ardagh other than parents/guardians.

Illness and medication

Children who are ill or have an infection which might be contagious should not attend the afterschool service and should only return when they are no longer contagious.

Parents should contact Club Ardagh via telephone (043 66 75797) or text message (086 125 0549) on the morning of the absence to confirm that their child will not be present on that day for afterschool.

Parents are required to keep children at home if they are suffering from any of the following -

- Fever, shortness of breath, cough or any other symptoms of Covid-19
- Contagious or infectious conditions such as measles, chickenpox, rubella, mumps, impetigo, conjunctivitis, ringworm, scabies and meningitis
- A temperature of 38 degrees C (100 F) or higher
- Severe earache
- Food poisoning/gastroenteritis
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Persistent, hacking cough
- Any unexplained rash
- Untreated head lice

Children should return only when they have completely recovered and are able to participate in indoor and outdoor activities. Parents notified of a child's illness during afterschool should make arrangements to collect the child as quickly as possible.

Staff are not permitted to administer any medicines without a parent's consent. If a child suffers from a long-term condition such as asthma or diabetes, and needs injections or treatment of any kind, Club Ardagh will need a written indemnity from the child's parent or guardian, **along with clear instructions for administration from the child's doctor.**

Covid -19

Please refer to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs website www.first5.gov.ie and the HSE <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/> to keep up to date with relevant guidelines and resources.

Behaviour

Children are encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential in an environment where they know what is expected of them and where clear limits are set appropriate to their age and any special needs they may have. Children will be corrected when any form of unacceptable behaviour is taking place. Unacceptable behaviour is categorised as punching, slapping, kicking, biting, pulling hair, hitting, scratching, bullying, using bad language or any other actions deemed to be unsocial, including purposeful damage to equipment, fixtures or fittings. Termination is seen as a last resort and would be preceded by efforts to reverse the behaviour while maintaining the child's dignity and self-respect.

Equal Opportunities

It is our policy to respect the individuality of all children and adults involved at Club Ardagh CLG and to promote positive attitudes to differences of culture, race, gender, language and financial circumstances; to children with special or additional needs; and to minority groups. Equal opportunity for children to learn and grow is a fundamental aspect of our service. Equality means open access for child and family to participate in the service's activities. Club Ardagh is committed to promoting equality of opportunity to all.

Complaints

We will endeavour to deal quickly and effectively with complaints pertaining to services, staff or other children. All complaints should be addressed in the first instance to the manager of the service. If the manager is unable to address the matter at hand, the complaint should be raised to the Board of Management in writing as per our formal complaints policy & procedure.

Confidentiality

Information about the health and family/personal circumstances of each child will be treated as confidential at all times other than in the fulfilment of legal obligations, for example in relation to child protection legislation or in a medical emergency.

Termination by parents/guardians

Parents are requested to give six weeks' notice of termination if it takes place before the end of the booked period.

Agreement

Accompanying this handbook is an agreement form indicating that you accept the principles and arrangements and fee policies outlined here and that you agree to emergency medical treatment being administered to your child by a doctor or a hospital in the unlikely event that you cannot be contacted.

This form should be signed by you to confirm your agreement with this handbook

Club Ardagh CLG – September 2024