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# St. Sheelan's Community Childcare Annual Review 2023

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**The Purpose of St. Sheelan's Community Childcare Service  
is to provide quality, affordable, accessible, early education to children  
from 8 months to 5 years, in the local community.**

**CRO:379588**

**CHY:15831**

**RCN:20055639**

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## WELCOME

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Welcome to our 2023 Annual Report!

2023 was a very productive and very busy year. It was the year when, as a regulated charity we became completely compliant with the Charity regulator, we engaged an external company to help us on our journey and as a result have gained existential knowledge and now have reinforced and robust documents and procedures moving forward.

As you are aware Tusla, the Child and Family Agency are the main regulator in this sector and are charged with monitoring standards as set out in the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. We are delighted to report that an inspection in 2023 had compliance in all areas of quality and service. With the exception of our Pre-School Roof area. Where we then secured a grant From Our Funding agency Pobal of 75,000 to repair the roof. These works began in October 2023 and finished in November 2023' the result being the expansion of the play area to the Pre-school Rooms that had previously being closed off.

Staff continue to upskill and have undertaken many courses during the year to ensure they are up to date with the latest developments and provide an enriched learning environment for the children in our community.

In June 2023- We had a confirmed cases of Sapo-Virus in the service- on the back of this the service closed for 1 day, while a deep clean was undertaken by educators and staff in the facility. We underwent an inspection from Environmental Health during this closure period, this inspection was deemed satisfactory with no recommendations required which is always a great achievement. Environmental Health were satisfied the source of Sapo-Virus was external and did not originate in the creche.

This year we welcomed two new board members to join our team Ashling Sheehan Boyle and Tomas Barrett, both have been essential asset to our growing Board. (If you wish to join the board of management to be a part of supporting top quality services in your community, please contact Simone Ryan Manager for More information.)

Quality is always top of our agenda, and I am happy to report that quality improvement plans have been implemented in all rooms during 2023. One being the weekend book in which the children take home a book at the weekend and fill it with all the things they do at home. It then returns to creche, and the child gets the opportunity to talk about it with their peers. Parents are their child's first teachers, and this activity extends on our partnership with parents. Links with the community are always important for the creche and children who attend, Due to covid visits and trips were postponed. This year saw us reinstate these and have visits from the library, trips to the park and playground. The preschool resumed their end of year school trip to Castle view Open Farm in Laois this year. The first one since Covid began. We look forward to extending these visits and trips in 2024.



The board continue to work hard on financial sustainability which is always a challenge. We will work towards creating a Company where we thrive and not just survive.

We are very grateful to the Educator and Staff team, parents and children who all contribute to our future.

*Simone Ryan*

*Manager*

## **MISSION, PURPOSE AND ETHOS: A REMINDER**

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It is always useful to reflect on what we do, why we do it and who we do it for!

### **Mission:**

The mission of St Sheelan's Community Childcare Service is a non-profit organization that aims to provide affordable, high quality and safe childcare for the immediate and surrounding areas of Templemore. We endeavour to support children to see equality and diversity as a natural part of our setting and world.

St Sheelan's Community Childcare Centre endeavours to value the ability, individuality and cultural backgrounds of all children by providing each child with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential as active learners within an inclusive ethos/culture.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of St Sheelan's Community Childcare Centre is to provide quality, affordable early education to children from 6 months of age, until they transition to National School. It is a community service and is classified as a full-day care, sessional and part time service under the Childcare Act 1991 [Early Years Services] Regulations 2016.

St Sheelan's Community Childcare Centre first opened its doors in 2007. It is open from 8am – 6pm daily, for 50 weeks per year, from September to September, and can cater for a maximum of 60 children at any one time. The service implements a play-based and child-emergent interest curriculum underpinned by Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, and Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

There are a total of five care rooms, catering for the following groups:



- Wobbler Honey Pot Room (catering for a maximum of 10 children 1-2yrs)
- Wobbler room Bumble Bees (catering for a maximum of 10 1-2yrs)
- Toddler room Caterpillars (catering for a maximum of 12 children)
- Preschool Junior room Cocoon Room (catering for a maximum of 11 ECCE sessional children)
- Preschool Senior room Butterfly Room (catering for a maximum of 22 ECCE sessional children, and 16 post-ECCE session)

### **Core Values and Underpinning Principles:**

- St Sheelan's Community Centre adopts a child-focussed approach in all its work, care practices, and policies.
- Responsive to the needs of the community, including providing support, where possible, to the vulnerable.
- Positive partnerships with parents, families, children, staff, relevant inter-agencies, community services and other child-care providers.
- Respect for all children, their parents, guardians and families, for staff, colleagues, other associated agencies, community services, and childcare providers.
- Professionalism and non-judgemental approach in our work, interactions and practices.
- Continued commitment to implementing, maintaining and improvement of quality standards.
- Providing equal opportunity and inclusivity for all children, their families, and staff.
- Welcoming, embracing and celebrating diversity.

***Your child is in great hands***



**Management**

Manager- Simone Ryan

Deputy Manager- Maria Cull

**Board of Management**

Linda Nesbitt- Chairperson

Michéal Lenihan- Secretary

Eoin Wolohan- Director

Tomas Barrett-Director

Ashling Sheehan Boyle- Director

**PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

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During 2023 we focused on ensuring new developed meaningful relationships with parents. These included the Weekend book and inviting Parents in to see their children within their environments, encouraging communication through our Little Vista Family app. Thankfully COVID restrictions have lifted. We continue to ask parents to hand children over to staff at the door but parents are welcome to drop into the service at any time.

Please talk to management if you wish to visit.

**At St. Sheelan's we are committed to the following:**

- Ensure parents/guardians views and are incorporated, parents/guardians rights respected, in regard to all cultural and religious differences.
- Ensure we adhere to respect confidentiality at all times.
- Welcome comments and feedback. Parents/guardians are encouraged to follow our complaints/compliments procedure in relation to any issues they may have regarding the services provided.
- Ensure parents/guardians are given weekly information about their child's progress through informal and formal feedback –verbal and written.
- Ensure that all parents/guardians are informed about meetings and any other activities being organised.
- Ensure all parents/guardians are aware of the policies and procedures.
- Encourage parents/guardians to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests through curriculum activities.

- If parents/guardians are separated, we may contact both parents/guardians to discuss a child's progress.
- We ask that parents/guardians let us know if you will be picking up your child early so that we can have the child ready for you and to minimise disrupting the rest of the group.

#### **Where English is not the first language of the Parent/Guardian:**

- Staff will make every effort to communicate with the parent/guardian using verbal/non-verbal methods.
- Staff will undertake to learn key phrases in the parent/guardian/child's language.
- Parents/guardians will be invited to become involved in the service and share with staff and children the culture/history of the country of origin.

#### **An Open Welcome:**

It is our policy to offer a bright, warm, welcoming environment. We understand the importance of consultation and building relationships with our children, parents/guardians and staff.



#### **How we Work Together with Parents/Guardians:**

- Encourage families to share their knowledge of their child with the staff members and staff reciprocate by sharing the knowledge of the children in general with parents/guardians so that there is a mutual growth and understanding in ways that benefit the child.
- Strive to develop positive relationships with families that are based on mutual trust and open communication. Engage in shared decision making.
- Acknowledge families existing strengths and competence as a basis for supporting them in the task of nurturing their child.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each family and the significance of its culture, customs, language and beliefs.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect the right of the family to privacy.
- Consider situations from each family's perspective, especially if differences or tensions arise.



- Assist each family to develop a sense of belonging to the services, in which their child participates.
- Acknowledge that each family is affected by the community context in which it operates.

### **~ Our Ethos ~**

St. Sheelan's Community Childcare is a non-profit charitable service, aiming to provide affordable, accessible, high quality and safe childcare for the immediate and surrounding areas of Templemore. We believe all children are unique and endeavour to support children to see equality and diversity as a natural part of our setting and world. We strive to value ability, individuality and the cultural background of all children by providing each child with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential as active learners within an inclusive ethos/culture.

### **Specific Developments during 2023:**

- Sharing courses with parents/guardians, throughout the year, that may be available to help them further support their child's development and needs.
- Asking parents/guardians to review our Service in line with our new website <https://www.stsheelanscommunitychildcareclg.com/>
- Arranging a Graduation Ceremony for Pre-school Leavers (Over the Rainbow Theme) and it was a roaring success for children and parents.
- Opportunities for formal and informal meetings with staff to discuss children and where they are at in terms of development and progress in the Service.
- We were nominated to take part in the Best of Tipp awards under the Best Creche category along with 5 other services, votes took place and we won the Bronze award. This was a fantastic achievement, and we were ecstatic to place so well. We wish to express our sincere thanks to the parents/ guardians and beyond who voted for us.
- Weekend book in the Pre-school rooms toddler and wobbler rooms which allows families to share experiences and routines at home in which the child can talk about the next week.
- Consultation between Educators and parents/guardians when transitioning to new rooms with welcome letters, settling in periods and support to the child and parent/guardian.

### **STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

St Sheelan's is committed to ensuring the staff team are up to date with mandatory training. Four staff members completed F.A.R training to ensure that there is always a First Aid Responder available in the service. We have 2 staff members trained in the LINC programme which supports inclusion in the early years environment.

Other training that took place in 2023 was as follows.

- How to support Neurodiverse children in the Ecce Environment.
- Free Play and Risky play in the creche environment
- Aistear Outdoor play in Autumn
- How to be an effective room leader.
- Understanding and responding to biting.
- LINC programme

### Our Rooms



## COMPLIANCE AND QUALITY

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Early Years services in Ireland are inspected under the Childcare Act (Registration of Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. We are delighted to report that our inspection in 2023 was fully compliant. This is a significant achievement, considering the range of standards evaluated. We are also happy to report that we were fully compliant with 1 Environmental Health Inspection that took place in 2023. It is something our team are very proud of. Other quality and compliance that took place in 2023 include:

- All rooms have introduced floor books and reflection books to help each member of staff identify areas that can be developed further based on Aistear and Siolta Framework and Guidelines.
- Quality Improvement Plans are in place for all rooms.

## FINANCIAL AND FUNDING

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We receive funding through ECCE and NCS in Partnership with Pobal. (Pobal works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion and development).

This year we were lucky enough to receive a grant of 75,000 from Pobal to repair a historical roof leak in the service.

Core funding has allowed us to provide CPD to educators and staff and improve quality care throughout the service.

We took part in fundraising for Laura Lynn Children's Hospice with a Superhero themed day in May and Trick or Treat for temple street in October raising 1,000e in total for such great causes, thank you all for your generous donations.



## **BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT**

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The learning environment (inside and outside) influences what and how children learn. An inviting environment encourages and helps children to explore and to take advantage of opportunities for fun, choice, freedom, adventure, and challenge.

Research tells us preschool-age children learn best in environments where they can have secure relationships with caring and responsive adults, where they feel safe, and where they feel free to explore and learn. A well-arranged environment can help you meet preschool-age children's needs during play and routines.

At St Sheelan's we evaluate each room layout and learning space every 3-6 months. Changes are made to meet the needs of children in the room and their emerging interests. Resources are rotated. Our educators record the rationale of the changes.

**Some Building Developments:**

- Grant Application successful on appeal.
- Repairing of a leaking roof in the pre-school area, new paint, felt and slabs replaced.
- In 2024 we hope to replace the current play mats in the downstairs area for the children of the service.

## CURRICULUM AND ACTIVITIES

As you are aware we operate a play-based curriculum. A play-based approach involves both child-initiated and educator-supported learning. Our educators encourage children's learning and inquiry through interactions that aim to stretch their thinking and respond to their own emerging interests.

The use of tuff trays was a big part of our play in 2023. Tuff trays are a popular learning tool in the early years. They are often used as an invitation to play to extend children's learning interests and to provide our children with a variety of learning and development opportunities. They are a versatile resource in which children can engage in different types of play, such as social play, creative play, sensory play, bookish play, role play and more. They can be easily extended based on the direction of learning children take or cleaned and changed into a new invitation or activity.

Every tuff tray set up should have the possibilities for learning and development, whether it be intended outcomes or outcomes that may arise during play. Here are some examples of our tuff trays in action.





Our curriculum is underpinned by Aistear, the National Curriculum Framework. All rooms engage in long term, medium term and short-term planning.

Our curriculum follows the emerging interest of each child.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

St. Sheelan's Childcare would like to thank all those we collaborated with during 2023. We are delighted to have a positive relationship with all of the following:

- Tusla
- Pobal
- Tipperary Childcare Committee
- Social Workers
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Access Inclusion Model (A.I.M.S)

We also ensure links within the local community, e.g. Local Library, Garda Station, Fire Station, Ambulance Service.

