

Tir Na Nog

OPERATIONAL POLICY



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Location

**Kolbe Pre-School
Tír Na Nóg
48 Glenbarrow
Ballyfin Road
Portlaoise
Co. Laois**

Phone: 057 8662708

Geographical Directions

- Kolbe Pre-school is located in Portlaoise, at 48 Glenbarrow on the Ballyfin Road.
- From the Monasterevin direction, leave the motorway at the Abbeyleix/Cork roundabout.
- Follow the signs for Mountmellick / Tullamore. Go under Railway Bridge; pass old Dunnes Stores on your right hand side.
- Next left – Ballyfin Road.
- Glenbarrow housing estate is on the right hand side.
- Take the first right in the estate, continue on to the end of the road and Kolbe Pre-school is the last house on the right hand side.

Tír Na Nóg Philosophy

The Philosophy of the Tír Na Nóg group is to ensure respect and dignity for each child availing of the sessions and also to persons working within the group.

To provide a secure and caring environment for all the children attending the play group, where each child can develop to their highest potential through play.

The programme is aimed to support and empower parents, to help and guide their child's development and encourage improved parent / child interactions.

To acknowledge each child's individuality and foster an environment which embraces cultural and religious diversity.

Mission Statement

Support each child by creating a stimulating environment through play, which will maximise each child's opportunity for growth.

Advocate on behalf of the children in a positive manner by listening to the children and their families.

By promoting the inclusion of parents in each play group we strive to live our mission statement everyday

The History of the Service

The Laois Association of Parents & Friends of the Mentally Handicapped established the service in 1978. The original premises was situated in Portlaoise Town and moved to Ballyroan, Co Laois.

In 1983 the services moved from Ballyroan to a purpose built building on the Block Road, Portlaoise where it was given the name "Kolbe Centre"

The name Kolbe is derived from a Roman Catholic Priest, Fr Maximilian Kolbe a polish priest who gave his life in Auschwitz to save the life of another.

The Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary Services became responsible for the Management of Kolbe Centre in 1992 from the Parents and Friends.

Since 2000 the Department of Education and Science became responsible for the education of children with severe/profound intellectual disabilities between the ages of five and eighteen within Kolbe Centre. This then became known as Kolbe Special School.

Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary continued to manage Kolbe Pre-school. In 2004 Kolbe Pre-school relocated to its present location at 48 Glenbarrow, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

In 2012 the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary services changed to the Muiriosa Foundation. In October 2012 the Tír Na Nóg group was founded by the staff and management of Kolbe Pre-School. The Tír Na Nóg group operates under the management of Kolbe Pre-School / Muiriosa Foundation.

Structure

Kolbe Pre-school consists of:

- One class room
- PE/Physiotherapy Room
- Art Craft & Music Room
- Kitchen
- Utility Room
- Bathroom
- Changing Room
- Office
- Fully equipment playground

Service Type

Interactive Play Group

The service is provided from Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, excluding holiday periods.

The programme will operate over twelve consecutive weeks excluding holiday's, from 1.15pm-2.45pm. *(These details are subject to change)*. Every session follows a similar format but explores different interactive experiences through play for example:

- Communication
- Sharing
- Turn Taking

The group will consist of up to six children, between the ages of 2 and 3 years of age with an intellectual disabilities and/or difficulties identified by the Early Intervention Team (H.S.E) and their families.

Each individual child will be reviewed with their parents on completion of their play observation. Their programme will be agreed and carried out in the pre-school and at home.

Parental participation will be a requirement for these sessions. Parents attending must also adhere to the policy and procedures of the Muiriosa Foundation.

The Tír Na Nóg play programme is designed for children to explore their environment, experience peer relations and social interactions, in a fun

way. Through the use of play, music, art, sand and water play, messy play, puppetry and story telling.

Play helps children achieve optimal growth and development and assist in overcoming a range of developmental difficulties.

The children will benefit from a programme specifically devised to support children's development and facilitate them to engage and interact with their peers. Enable them to participate in activities and play interactively with other children.

The play programme contributes to a child's development through:

Social Skills-engaging and communication:

Participation in group work enables children to observe and interact with their peers. Friendships can be established and social skills reinforced.

Sharing/Turn Taking:

When it comes to turn taking, sharing and waiting, many children have difficulties in these areas. The programme offers a fun positive way to learn some of these skills.

Self Esteem/Self Awareness:

Learning new skills and developing friendships will enable children become more confident and improve self esteem.

Team Structure

The Tír Na Nóg group is facilitated by experienced, trained staff in a positive, safe and caring environment. Staff consists of:

- Manager/Nurse
- Care Staff
- Community Employment Scheme Staff
- Student Placements (Nurse, Colleges)
- All staff is Garda vetted.

Kolbe Preschool is inspected annually by the Health Service Executive services inspection team.

Admission Process

Tír Na Nóg adheres to the Muiriosa Foundation admission/discharge policy

Referrals to Tír Na Nóg are initially made through the Muiriosa Foundation Psychologist on the Early Intervention Team within the Mid Leinster Health Service Executive, Health Centre, Dublin Road, Portlaoise (Tel 057/8623115) and the Regional Disability Office, Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

The Early Intervention Team may also suggest the Tír Na Nóg group to interested families.

The Early Intervention Team consists of the following professionals:

- Community Health Nurse
- Psychologist
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Dietician
- Social Worker

Criteria for admission:

The child will:

- Be aged between 2 and 3 years
- The child must be on the Early Intervention Team case load.
- Have a moderate, severe or profound intellectual disability.

Phil Dowling Manager of Kolbe Pre-school, 48 Glenbarrow, Portlaoise, Co. Laois or Mairead Sheedy Co-ordinator of Day Services, Triest House, Lea Road, Portarlinton, Tel 087 3804855 will liaise with the Psychologist on the Early Intervention Team by end of April of each year to prioritise children for the Tír Na Nóg group. Arrangements will be made by the manager for the child and family to visit the Kolbe Pre-school.

The Admission Application form (yellow) is then completed with the parents / guardians by the Manager of Tír Na Nóg group during their visit to Kolbe Pre-School.

The Manager of the Tír Na Nóg play group will then schedule an admission meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to prioritise children for admission to the play group for the block sessions throughout the Preschool calendar year.

The Admission Team generally consists of the following persons:

- Co-ordinator of Day Services
- Manager of Kolbe Pre-school
- Member from the Early Intervention Team.
- Other persons may be invited to attend the Admission meeting, if they have relevant information about the child.

The Admission Team will review referrals and prioritise each child based on the following:

- Does the child meet the admission criteria?
- Does Tír Na Nóg group provide an appropriate service for the child?
- Is there a place available within Tír Na Nóg group?
- What resources are required to support the child and are these resources currently available for the child within the play group?
- Parental agreement to participate in the sessions.
- Does the child/family need additional supports to enhance the child's development?

The manager will then make contact with the family to inform them of the outcome of the admissions meeting and will then complete the "Getting to know you" booklet form with the parents / guardians.

Guidelines regarding referrals for Tír Na Nóg September admissions:

- In March the Manager of the play group, Coordinator of Services (Muiriosa Foundation) and early intervention team (H.S.E) Psychologist will meet to review referrals to the play group.

- All relative information will be forwarded to the Manager of the Tír Na Nóg group at Kolbe Preschool by the end of April.
- Admission meeting will be scheduled for May.
- Families and children will visit the Tír Na Nóg setting at times suitable to Preschool and the families.

- Outcome of admission meeting will be reported to each family by the manager.
- A written report will be submitted by the Muiriosa Foundation Co-ordinator of Day Services to the Regional Disability Office, informing the Co-ordinator of Disability Services of the outcome of the admission meeting.
- In some cases admission may take place at other times throughout the year if places are available.

Review Process and Documentation

Each Child's progress/development/programme plan is reviewed on an ongoing basis between the Tír Na Nóg staff and parent's.

A resource pack for parents will be circulated after the observation period to include the play programme. This resource pack will be updated on an ongoing basis. This pack will consist of a copy of the individual record session sheets and information on play activities.

Information records on each child are stored confidentially and safely in Kolbe pre-school. Documentation may include:

- "Getting to know you" booklet.
- Medication Kardex.
- Consent forms.
- Individual sessions record sheets.
- Additional documents as required.

Communication Systems

- Operational Policy for Tír Na Nóg group.
- Information pack.
- Progress report from Tír Na Nóg group to families and early intervention group.
- Memos

Policy and Procedures

The Tír Na Nóg group (parents and staff) is guided by the Policies and Procedures of the Muiriosa Foundation.

Medication

- Medication is provided by the child's parents/guardians. All the children who are prescribed medication must have a completed medication Prescription Form (yellow). The medication is obtained through their community pharmacist and labelled accordingly. The Muiriosa Foundation Medication Form must state the date, name of medication, and times of administration and be signed by the G.P.

- Medication will be given to the registered nurse or SAM Trained staff member (Safe Administration of Medications) upon arrival.

- The registered nurse or SAM trained staff member will check, record and sign for the supply of the medication for each child.

- Medication will be stored in a locked medication cupboard in the office.

- The registered nurse or SAM trained staff member (in the absence of a registered nurse) administers all medications.

- The medication records are kept up to date by the registered nurse and SAM trained staff member.

- The Policy and Procedures in the Medication Policy must be adhered to.

Complaints Procedures

The Manager of the Tír Na Nóg values all feedback from families. This feedback assists in evaluating and improving the service.

A copy of the “Comments and Complaints” form will be circulated to all parents / guardians prior to commencement of the play sessions.

We actively encourage families through our open door policy to express concerns or address general comments/queries directly to the Manager of the Tír Na Nóg group, in person, by phone or in writing.

The Manager will make every effort to ensure concerns are addressed and responded to in an appropriate, confidential and prompt manner.

In relation to the complaints/concerns, we aim to address all issues in a professional and supportive manner.

If you have a complaint or concern the following procedure should be implemented and is available to all:

1. Contact the Manager and inform her of your concern.
2. The Manager will implement an appropriate investigation, (either formal or informal, depending on the concern) in line with the organisational policy documents e.g. Trust in Care, Comments and Complaints policy, Children’s first policy.
3. The family will be kept informed in relation to all stages of the investigation and findings.
4. The Manager will inform the family of the final outcome in writing.
5. If the family is unhappy with the management and /or the outcome of the complaint the family may address their concerns to the Co-ordinator of Day Services (087 3804855).
6. The co-ordinator of Day Services will then meet with the family to address their concerns.

Play programmes

Play is vital to every child's social, emotional, cognitive, physical, creative, and language development. It helps to make learning concrete for all children including those for whom verbal communication may be difficult.

Sensory Development Play Program

Sensory play is one of the earliest forms of play which enables children to interact more fully with the world around them. The exploration and interaction inherent in sensory play enables children to make social and emotional connections necessary for brain development.

Messy play

Messy play promotes relaxation of muscles, development of fine and gross motor skills, development of self-help skills, social play, turn taking and sharing, concentration and observation skills, development of bonding, body awareness and communication skills. Messy play can offer the exploration of wet and messy materials example; sand and water play.

Interactive play Skills

In these sessions the parent/staff member will become a partner in the play. The session is led by the child's interest, introduces characters, materials, ideas, problems to be solved, possible solutions etc., to the play.

Aims of the play programmes:

- To encourage child/parent interactions; parental participation is essential.
- Extend the circles of communication; improved family and peer interactions.
- Children may also learn to manage relationships and improve relations with family and friends.
- Broaden the child's range of interaction and curiosity experiences.
- For the staff / parents to tailor their interactions to the children's individual differences within each play group session and at home.
- Join in at the child's developmental level and build on his/her natural interests and there by improving their attention, engagement and communication skills.
- Through sensory exploration and interactive experiences we help children to incorporate these experiences into reaching their developmental milestones.

