

Parent Statement for Partner Services

1. Welcome to our Partner Service

The Buddy Club, St Ciaran's National School Baylin Athlone Westmeath N37AH98, is a Partner Service, working together with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and parents/guardians to deliver high quality, affordable, inclusive Early Learning and Care (ELC) and/or School Age Childcare (SAC) services for children under Together for Better.

Together for Better is the funding model for early learning and childcare that brings together four major programmes, the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme - including the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), the National Childcare Scheme (NCS), Core Funding, and the Equal Start.

As a Partner Service, we offer subsidy schemes to parents/guardians and receive Core Funding. Core Funding, which began in September 2022, is the new supply side funding stream to start the partnership for the public good between the State and providers. Its primary purpose is to improve pay and conditions in the sector as a whole and improve affordability for parents as well as ensuring a stable income to providers.

This Parent Statement outlines some of the important things you can expect from us, as a Partner Service. This Parent Statement is provided as a condition of the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement, the NCS, ECCE and CCSP Saver Funding agreements and informs the agreement in place between us The Buddy Club and the parents/guardians that use our service. The Minister of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is not a party to this agreement which is solely between the service and parent/guardian.

1.1 About Us

Here are some of the basic things to know about us:

A typical week for us is 08:15 to 18:00 Monday to Friday for 44 weeks per year.

At The Buddy Club we offer the following services to children and their families:

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sessional Care for Early Learning & Care (ELC) excluding ECCE provision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sessional pre-school under ECCE (Free Pre-school) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Full day care/part time care for Early Learning & Care (ELC) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Term time School Age Childcare |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Out of term School Age Childcare |

2. Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE), Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), National Childcare Scheme (NCS) and Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP) Saver Programme.

This Childcare Service is in contract to deliver the:

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | National Childcare Scheme (NCS) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP) Saver Programme |

National Childcare Scheme (NCS)

NCS provides subsidies to parents and families to offset the costs of Early Learning and Care (ELC) and/or School Age Childcare (SAC). There are two types of subsidies available to apply for under the NCS - the Universal or Income Assessed subsidy. Both subsidies are available to families with children between 24 weeks and 15 years of age.

This service welcomes children who wish to avail of the National Childcare Scheme, including children referred under the sponsorship programme. Further information about the NCS, including how to apply for a subsidy, is available here - <https://www.ncs.gov.ie/en/> or contact the NCS Parent Support Centre on 01 906 8530 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm).

Your NCS award includes a unique CHICK (Childcare Identifier Code Key) and information on the maximum number of hours you can claim. To use your award, you must:

- 1) Receive a CHICK by applying to <https://www.ncs.gov.ie/en/> or contacting the NCS Parent Support Centre.
- 2) Bring the CHICK to The Buddy Club and register your NCS subsidised hours of care. The hours that you will agree should be based on the hours you need and what The Buddy Club can offer you.
- 3) After The Buddy Club has registered your hours, **you must confirm** that these details are correct. These details must be confirmed at <https://www.ncs.gov.ie/en/> or in writing to National Childcare Scheme, PO Box 13105, Southside Delivery Office, Cork, depending on whether you originally applied online or by post to receive you award.
- 4) **Your NCS subsidy can only be paid once your CHICK has been registered by The Buddy Club and you have confirmed on the system that all details are correct.**

The amount that you must pay to The Buddy Club is called the 'co-payment'. The co-payment is The Buddy Club's fee for your child minus the NCS subsidy paid by the Department to The Buddy Club for your child.

The Buddy Club must provide you with details of how your co-payment amount is calculated (our fee less your NCS subsidy). We will always notify you within 20 working days if and when your co-payment amount changes, including details on how it has been calculated.

Calendars

The Buddy Club will provide you with a separate letter indicating the days our service is closed over the programme year. We will provide you with a minimum of 20 working days written notice period of our intention to change this.

3. Fees Policies

As a Partner Service, we operate a Fees Policy that is transparent and understandable to our parents/guardians and is compliant with the requirements under the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement. Please do not hesitate to contact Deirre Healy Owner / Mary Nagle Manager who will provide additional clarification as required.

3.1 Fee Management – As a Partner Service, we operate our Fees Policy in accordance with the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement, which in programme year 2024/2025 involves no increases of fees on those charged to parents/guardians on 30 of September 2021, called an effective 'fee freeze'. There may be some exceptions to this rule, which can be found in <https://earlyyearshive.ncs.gov.ie/downloads/download-corefunding/>. In order that you can understand what this fee freeze means for you, we have outlined our fees and associated fees policy below.

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | a) Our service was in existence on or before 30 September 2021 |
|-------------------------------------|---|

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|--------------------------|--|
| | As a Partner Service, we are committed to operating the effective 'fee freeze' for Programme Year 2024/2025. This means that we will not charge our parents/guardians more for the same service than what we were charging in September 2021. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | b) Our service was established after 30 September 2021 As a Partner Service, we are committed to operating the effective 'fee freeze' for Programme Year 2024/2025. This means that we will not charge our parents/ guardians more for the same service than what we were charging when we first became a Partner Service. |

3.2 Donations - We will not request or accept any donations, voluntary or otherwise from parents/guardians, in respect of the ELC/SAC services being provided.

3.3 Deposits - We will not charge any non-refundable deposits¹ to parents/guardians in the respect of their ELC/SAC service where the parent/guardian takes up the service for which the deposit was paid. Additionally, we will return all deposits which have been taken relating to the 2024/2025 programme year once your child's registration is approved on the Hive or within four weeks of the child taking up the place, whichever is sooner.

3.4 Discounts – We will keep all discounts that were available on 30 September 2021 in place, provided that they are available to all children in our service. Any discount relevant to you will be applied to your normal fee.

3.5 Optional Extras – The term 'Optional Extra' is only applicable to any extra services or activities we offer under the ECCE/CCSP Saver Programmes which are not funded by the Programmes but which are voluntary with optional charges to you. These optional extras are very limited in nature and there is a copy of the DCEDIY-approved optional extras list available in Appendix 1 of the [ECCE programme rules](#), which are also available on the Early Years Hive.

3.6 Additional Service - Is when something additional to a service type/fee option is offered to parents/guardians. Take up of the additional service must be entirely optional to parents/guardians. For example a service provider may offer school collection services in addition to their SAC Service Types, or a service providing ECCE only may offer 2 weeks of camp during Easter, these would be entirely optional to parents/guardians and charged for additionally.

3.7 Fee Review Process - As a Partner Service, we must uphold our contractual obligations regarding our fees charged to parents/guardians as laid out in the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement.

Where a parent/guardian identifies a potential breach of Core Funding fee rules by a Partner Service, they may seek to have this examined and a conclusion reached through the [Core Funding Fee Review process](#).

A parent/guardian who has identified a change to a Partner Service's fee policy potentially breaching the Core Funding Partner Service Funding Agreement, may address the issue in the first instance by using the Partner Service's complaints policy. In certain cases, this step may allow for the quick resolution of the case between the Partner Service and the parent/guardian without engagement with the CCC. This pre-fee review stage is optional and where a parent/guardian does not wish to engage with the service with their concerns or questions around Fee Management, a parent/guardian can raise the case directly with the relevant CCC.

3.8 Fee Policy

A. The fee policy we are going to implement for year 2024/2025 is the same as the fee policy that we had in place on 30 September 2021.

¹ Non-refundable deposits include administration/registration fees or other such charges.

3.9 Fee Tables

3.9.1 - Section A: Fee Tables

Programme Year: 2024/2025

| Fee Type Name | Age Range | School Age / Early Years | ECCE Available ? | Session Start Time | Session Finish Time | Second Session Start Time | Second Session Finish Time | Incorporated Services? | Choose Incorporated Service | Additional Information | Hrs per Day | Days per Week | Hrs per Week | Full Fee | Fee (with ECCE deduction for 3 free hours) | Effective From | Effective To |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------|--|----------------|--------------|
| Buddy Club | 4y 1m - 15y 1m | SAC | No | 08:15 | 09:15 | 14:00 | 18:00 | Yes | Meal | | 5 | 5 | 25 | €137.5 | €0 | 02/09/2024 | 20/07/2025 |
| Buddy Club Camp Easter | 4y 1m - 15y 1m | SAC | No | 09:00 | 14:00 | | | Yes | Other | Snack/Drink Provided | 5 | 4 | 20 | €60 | € | 14/04/2025 | 20/04/2025 |
| Buddy Club Summer Camps | 4y 1m - 15y 1m | SAC | No | 09:00 | 14:00 | | | Yes | Other | Snack Provided | 5 | 5 | 25 | €75 | €0 | 23/06/2025 | 20/07/2025 |

3.9.2 - Section B: Fee Extras: Deposit / Discount / Optional Extras* / Additional Services

| Type | Extras | Amount | Description | Additional Detail / Conditions | Effective From | Effective To |
|---------------------|--------|--------|---|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Discount | | €0.5 | Discount if attending 12 or more hours in a week off fees | | 02/09/2024 | |
| Additional Services | | €82.5 | Easter & Summer Camps Additional Hours 3hrs or thereof | | 02/09/2024 | 27/07/2025 |

3.9.3 - Section C – Other Additional Information

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* These are entirely optional to parents

3.10 The changes to our Fees Policy as applicable on September 30, 2021 (or when we first became a Partner Service, whichever is earlier), are as follows:

3.10 (a) The following new Service Types ARE available:

| Fee Type Name | SAC/ELC | Age Range | Min Age | Max Age | ECCE available for ECCE Eligible Children | Session Start time | Session finish time | Incorporated Services ? | Choose incorporated Service | Additional Information | No. hours per day | No days per week | No. hours per week | Fee (less ECCE 3 Free Hours (€)) | Full Fee |
|---------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | € | € |

3.10 (b) The following Service Types are NO LONGER available:

| Fee Type Name | SAC/ELC | Age Range | Min Age | Max Age | ECCE available for ECCE Eligible Children | Session Start time | Session finish time | Incorporated Services ? | Choose incorporated Service | Additional Information | No. hours per day | No days per week | No. hours per week | Fee (less ECCE 3 Free Hours (€)) | Full Fee |
|---------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | € | € |

4. Quality measures

As a Partner Service, we are committed to delivering quality for children and families. There are number of ways we can show this.

4.1 Our staff have the following qualifications:

| Room/Session | Qualification |
|----------------|---------------|
| Buddy Club | Level 6 |
| Little Buddies | Level 6 |

4.2

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | We are actively working to implement our Quality Action Plan and we will report on progress at the end of the year to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and our parents / guardians. |
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The Buddy Club will display the end of year QAP report in an area accessible to parents/guardians as well as on any online platform maintained by the The Buddy Club for the purpose of advertising its service or providing information to parents/guardians.

Queries -If you have any queries or wish to discuss any of the above, please contact **Deirdre Healy Owner / Mary Nagle Manager**. Alternatively, you could address queries to your local City/County Childcare Committee (CCC). A list of CCC contact details is available from www.myccc.ie

The Buddy Club will display this Parent Statement at all times in an area accessible to parents/guardians as well as on any online platform maintained by the The Buddy Club for the purpose of advertising its service or providing information to parents/guardians. The Buddy Club will print and co-sign a Parent Statement for each family. A copy signed by The Buddy Club and the parent/guardian will be retained on file. Any changes to Fee Policies will require that an updated Parent Statement is displayed and The Buddy Club will issue updated Parent Statements by email to our parents/guardians and retain proof of the associated email.

Include here a list of children enrolled at the service:

Use **BLOCK CAPITALS**:

| Child first name | Child family name |
|------------------|-------------------|
| | |
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This Parent Statement, which is an agreement solely between the parent/guardian and the provider, sets out what is on offer at The Buddy Club and the applicable fees. If these terms conflict with the terms of any other agreement between The Buddy Club and the parents/guardians then this takes priority, however any parts of any existing agreement that do not conflict remain in force and are not affected by this Parent Statement.

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|---|----------------|
| Programme Year: | 2024/2025 |
| Signed on behalf of: | The Buddy Club |
| | 24WH0198 |
| Signed – Parent/Guardian: | |
| Parent/Guardian name in BLOCK CAPITALS: | |
| Date: | |