



CHILD CARE & NURSERY

Making learning fun!

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

2nd January 2024

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1. Objective

Our mission at Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery is to provide an excellent childcare service focusing on the individual needs of each particular child and family, whilst also providing quality, reliable and safe childcare.

Our Commitment to You

Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery is here to offer your children the education, care, comfort, fun and safety they deserve. We strive to give parents the peace of mind that comes from knowing that the child is in best hands. Every day promises to be an exciting new adventure for children, and we ensure that each child experiences the joys of an exceptionally caring environment.

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery we are also committed towards transparency in our programmes and curriculum. We continuously self-assess and aim to find ways for further improvement, including by taking into consideration any valid suggestions from parents/guardians of the children.

2. Programme and Curriculum

Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery has been founded in 2018, primarily by Ms Deborah Enriquez who is the Managing Director and owner of the childcare centre and a mother of one young child.

Ms Deborah Enriquez has first-hand knowledge of the balance between raising children and having a fruitful working career. In fact, at Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery we provide work-life balance solutions through guaranteed flexible childcare. Our childcare centre's objective also includes improving some of the challenges that working parents have to deal with. Our drive, enthusiasm and innovative programmes, all make Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery the ideal place for your child to learn and grow.

The childcare centre is a brand-new nursery located in Haz-Zebbug in Hal Muxi area. We offer excellent and flexible opening hours. The centre caters for kids all under the professional care of licensed caregivers and offers a balance of education, play, physical activities as well as social development.

Moreover, we thoroughly believe that children need to have routines as knowing what comes next helps them feel safe and sets boundaries. Hence, each playroom has a daily routine, which is on display for parents/guardians to see. The childcares plan the whole day to ensure that your child's activities are varied. A weekly plan is created to ensure that the children's development needs and interests are catered for.

2.1 Infant and Baby Care Programme – new born to 1 year old

Our programme provides a loving and welcoming environment where your baby can grow from a bundle of joy to a bundle of interest and curiosity. Your baby's caregiver is a nurturing child development professional who is focused on creating experiences and opportunities that promote exploration and also support the important development that is occurring during the child's first year.

More than just day care, at Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery Early Learning Centre we are thoroughly focused on keeping your baby happy and secure. We offer personalised care for each infant based on his or her particular schedule, nutrition, and any other special attention he/she requires.

2.1.1 Curriculum for Infants

Our curriculum for babies at Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery creates a developmentally appropriate learning environment that encourages infants in our care to become confident and successful, lifelong learners.

Language – encouraging the development of language skills in babies

From their very first cries, coos and babbles, infants learn to use language in order to connect with their world, to develop relationships and to get what they need. Our infant caregiver encourages these skills through everyday experiences including, amongst others:

- Singing lullabies and songs;
- Naming objects;
- Engaging in daily conversations;
- Exploring picture books;
- Playing rhyming and word games.

Maths Counts - nurturing an infant's knowledge of early mathematical concepts

Although it is perhaps surprisingly, mathematical concepts are indeed a part of an infant's early learning stage, from staring at the geometric shapes of a toy to exploring the space around them. At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, our maths curriculum provides appropriate materials and activities that promote the development of early mathematical understanding.

Amongst others, your baby will have the opportunity to learn by:

- Recognizing words that describe positions such as 'up' or 'under';
- Becoming aware of space and variations in it;
- Understanding quantity concepts like 'more';
- Repeating an action to make the same thing happen again;
- Making choices from a group of items.

Science Rocks - promoting a baby's feeling of inquiry and curiosity

It is worth mentioning that science to infants is not found in experiments, but rather in real world and everyday moments as they move through their environment, manipulate objects, and explore with all their senses. Our carers will help curious babies begin the process of discovery by:

- Providing a sensory-rich environment that encourages exploration in a safe way;
- Experimenting with volume by filling and dumping buckets filled with toys;
- Using safe toys and materials with varied textures, smells, tastes and sounds;
- Playing peek-a-boo;
- Exploring nature in safe, outdoor environments.

Arts - promoting creativity and developing an appreciation of art

Through exposure to art babies are immersed in rich and diverse experiences that capture their interest, nurture their development and stimulate their senses. At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, our child carers guide children to explore their creativity and appreciate the beauty of art by:

- Painting with large brushes, sponges and fingers;
- Using rattles and musical instruments;
- Dancing and moving to varied beats and music;
- Playing with puppets and dolls;
- Reading vivid picture books.

Exploring our world - encouraging exploration of the world around us and awareness of self, as well as others

Although they are still young, infants can begin to understand the basic concepts that provide a foundation for becoming a happy, contributing member of society. Our carers encourage a baby's exploration of the world around us by:

- Looking at family albums made by parents and carers;
- Setting up safe spaces that encourage play near peers;
- Showing affection and compassion every day;
- Engaging in imaginative, caring play such as rocking a doll.

Wellness - Building a foundation for lifelong healthy habits, good nutrition and fitness

Our curriculum also focuses on health and fosters a positive attitude about wellness. Babies are exposed to healthy habits and routines to help them build a foundation for lifelong health. Your baby will thus have the opportunity to:

- Enjoy physical activities both indoors and outdoors, in safe environments designed specifically for infants;
- Identify and communicate his/her hunger needs;
- Become receptive to a variety of flavours and textures when he/she is ready for solid foods;
- Participate in routine health care when he/she is diapered and assisted with hand washing.

Social Emotional Development

Social-emotional development includes the child's experience, expression and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others. Infants experience, express, and perceive emotions before they fully understand them. In learning to recognize, label, manage, and communicate their emotions and to perceive and attempt to understand the emotions of others, children build skills that connect them with family, peers, teachers, and the community. These growing capacities help young children to become competent in negotiating increasingly complex social interactions, to participate effectively in relationships and group activities, and to reap the benefits of social support crucial to healthy human development and functioning.

2.2 Young Toddlers Development Programme – 1 to 2 year old

Young toddler care can contribute to early childhood development. In fact, our programme is focused on using hands-on exploration and social interaction in a safe and engaging environment in order to assist toddlers learn about his or her expanding world. In addition, with the guidance of our professionals, toddlers enjoy learning experiences that promote their independence and social skills, as well as foster their self-confidence.

2.2.1 Curriculum for Young Toddlers

Our curriculum for toddlers is designed to adapt to each individual child's age and stage in life. Experienced child carers will promote emotional, physical, social and intellectual

development in an enjoyable and safe environment.

Additionally, our curriculum establishes a developmentally appropriate learning environment that allows young toddlers to be confident, successful and lifelong learners.

Language – developing language and the foundation for pre-reading skills in young toddlers

Language is starting to flourish at this stage since young toddlers expand their vocabulary from single into multiple-word phrases. Our child carers will continually model language and engage young toddlers in rich conversations. By providing a language-rich environment that

encourages your child's progress towards achievement of two-way communication, your toddler will have the opportunity to, amongst others:

- Participate in conversations with carers and peers;
- Follow one-step directions;
- Develop an appreciation of books through stories and read aloud;
- Increase short-term memory and recall;
- Use writing tools and make purposeful marks such as scribbles on paper.

Maths Counts – guiding young toddlers' first steps to mathematical understanding

A young toddler classroom is full of maths activities ranging from figures for sorting, to shaping boxes for matching, to cups to stack by size, to sensory tables in order to learn comparison of quantity and volume. Through our toddler's curriculum, our carers will assist young toddlers to take their first steps towards understanding maths by:

- Using 'number talk' such as more or less, under or over, inside or outside, full or empty;
- Counting to two or three during activities such as snack time;
- Talking about time in daily conversations such as 'now.....then.....last';
- Playing sorting and matching games;

Science Rocks – supporting young toddlers in developing scientific thinking through investigation

Young toddlers have a strong sense of curiosity about how things work and a desire to make sense of the world around them. From stamping in puddles to investigating a sandbox, our curriculum nurtures and builds on these natural instincts, offering young toddlers meaningful learning experiences that continually foster and develop their scientific thinking and skills. Our carers will promote scientific learning into all aspects of a toddler's day by offering opportunities to, amongst others:

- Explore multiple solutions during story telling;
- Play with puzzles and boxes;
- Manipulate playdough with tools such as cookie cutters and rolling pins;
- Experiment with volume through sand, water and rice play at the sensory table;
- Formulate why, what and how? questions in daily interactions.

Arts - promoting creativity and innovation in young toddlers

Meaningful engagement in arts allows young toddlers to generate creative solutions, and enhances development in other areas including literacy, maths, as well as science. Our carers encourage creativity and innovation by engaging children in artistic experiences that allow them to explore art with all their senses. Your toddler will therefore have the opportunity to:

- Explore sensory materials, such as soft clay, textured sponges and scented paint;
- Experiment with and explore colours;
- Play, shake and strum instruments from rain sticks to xylophones;
- Dance with scarves to varied types of music;
- Participate in pretend play;
- Play with puppets.

Exploring our world – nurturing positive attitudes in young toddlers towards the world

Young toddlers will be involved in daily activities such as watering flowers, viewing various family photos, as well as playing with different models, which will help them to start stepping outside their own boundaries and to embrace concepts such as acceptance, diversity and personal responsibility. Our carers will encourage children to reflect on themselves, their peers and the world they live in by:

- Talking about feelings;
- Having 'show and share' times;
- Encouraging play between peers;
- Expressing compassion and empathy in books and daily interactions;

- Connecting actions (that is, taking a friend's toy) to an effect (crying from a friend).

Wellness – assisting young toddlers developing healthy habits

The connection between a child's physical health and his/her social, emotional and cognitive development makes it crucial to ensure he/she feels strong, healthy and well-nourished every day. Our wellness programme focuses on child nutrition and safety and lays the groundwork for a lifetime of healthy habits. Our carers enable children to understand how their bodies work and what they need by helping children:

- Practice small muscle skills like drawing;
- Spend time in the natural world;
- Practice proper hygiene;
- Follow simple safety rules.

Social Emotional Development

Toddlers tend to have rapid mood swings and while their emotions can be very intense, these feelings also tend to be quite short-lived. Children at this age can be very possessive and have difficulty sharing and at Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery we ensure to help them learning to get along with other children which is an essential skill. Paying attention to adult figures, transitioning easily from one activity to the next and cooperating with other kids are examples of such abilities.

2.3 Toddlers Programme – 2 to 3 year old

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery our preschool programme helps children to achieve school readiness in all areas of academic and social learning. Indeed our programme is filled with investigation, exploration and discovery, where active and enthusiastic children can expand their skills and knowledge. Our professionals ensure toddlers have joyful and meaningful learning experiences that will lead to success in school and in life.

2.3.1 Curriculum for Toddlers

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, our curriculum aligns toddler programme goals with families' expectations of educational excellence, helping young learners grow into confident students.

Language – nurturing and Challenge toddlers’ language and literacy development

At this stage, vocabulary expands from multiple-word phrases to a few hundred words that takes off during the toddler years. Our toddler programmes provide children with opportunities to integrate listening and speaking into daily activities such as:

- Discriminating between sounds;
- Answering open-ended questions such as ‘What do you think?’;
- Participating in projects that have multiple steps;
- Playing language and rhyming games.

Maths Counts – building mathematical skills to help toddlers solve everyday problems

Our curriculum involves toddlers to constantly use and experiment with mathematical concepts. The carers will create learning experiences that build maths skills and reasoning so children can solve problems and use mathematics in real and meaningful ways, such as:

- Sorting items by size, colour or shape during clean-up;
- Stringing beads in a pattern;
- Counting out small groups of items;
- Playing estimation games such as ‘Which jar has more pebbles?’;
- Experimenting with measuring cups in the sand or water table.

Science Rocks – Encouraging toddlers’ Curiosity and inquisitive approach to science

Toddlers are constantly engaged in research and experimentation, through exploring, making important discoveries and learning how things work. Through our toddler science curriculum, child carers cautiously plan experiences that develop scientific skills and also nurture children’s natural curiosity, such as:

- Investigating objects on a light box or light table;
- Predicting daily weather;

- Problem solving with the guidance of teacher prompts.

Arts – developing toddlers’ appreciation of arts

Artistic exploration encourages important skills such as creative thinking, adaptation, problem-solving and innovation. Our child carers nurture childrens own artistic abilities and help them appreciate art in the broader world by engaging in diverse creative experiences, such as, amongst others,

- Singing songs;
- Making instruments;
- Painting to the beat of music;
- Creating dramatic play areas such as a greenhouse or grocery store.

Exploring our world – enhancing toddlers’ sense of responsibility and compassion

During this stage, toddlers are actively developing their sense of self and who they are in the world around them. Consequently, our child carers will create respectful and diverse learning environments, helping children understand the world in which they live. Our programme also offers experiences for children, enhancing a toddler's sense of responsibility and compassion for people, such as:

- Experiencing the comforting words and gestures of carers and peers;
- Exploring photos of children and adults who are similar or different from us;
- Playing collaboratively with peers;
- Caring for classroom plants.

Wellness – developing knowledge and skills to practice healthy habits

It is very important to expose children to experiences that foster their ability to develop a positive self-image, make healthy nutrition choices and show respect for their bodies. In

effect, our child carers provide children with varied opportunities geared towards developing healthy lifelong habits, including amongst others:

- Identifying nutritious foods and how they help our bodies grow;
- Growing vegetables from seeds;
- Taking responsibility for his/her own basic hygiene such as proper hand washing and covering his/her coughs;
- Engaging in physical activities - hopping, climbing etc.

Social Emotional Development

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, staff teaches the toddlers self-regulation which is the ability to manage behavior and reactions to feelings and situations. At such age, they tend to start using words to express when they feel sad, happy, excited or angry, realise that they should apologise when they have done wrong and feel like sharing things with people around them, although not all the time. However, staff help them to understand rules and expectations of a given situation, set clear expectations for behavior and praises the child when he or she show self-control and self-regulate.

3. Infant, Young Toddler and Toddlers Information

The following information is specific to the infant, young toddler and toddlers programme:

- Parents must supply diapers, wipes, diaper cream, bottles, formula, baby food, extra clothing, pacifiers, blankets and sleep toys for rest time. All items must be labelled with the Child's Name.
- Children may use pacifiers during rest time only. To reduce the likelihood of spreading illness, pacifiers must be kept in a Child's Case during all other times of the day.
- If a mother is breastfeeding, she is required to discuss with the centre when she would like to come in personally to the centre to breastfeed.
- Breast milk must be brought in ready-to-use containers. For health reasons, the centre is not able to store bags of frozen milk for extended periods of time.
- We recommend that all new foods be tried at home first, since a child could have an allergic reaction to foods they have not tried before.

4. Internal Review Process

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, the primary goal of the internal program review process is to enhance the alignment and quality of the centre programs with community and state needs. To achieve this purpose, these internal program review procedures encourage self-study and planning within programs and serve to strengthen the connections.

The internal review process at Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery is based on a cycle of self-inquiry, review, and continuous improvement. Every year, we send out surveys to parents including questions related to our services as well as any suggestions they might have for us to improve our services. Any suggestions or recommendation by parents are discussed between the LRP and centre managers upon which childcare educators are then informed to address such issues.

5. Assessment Practices

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, there are two types of assessment that childcare educators use in regular practice which can be categorized as formal and informal.

Formal assessments are those that are discrete and planned in advance and this is usually held twice a year during parent's meeting.

Informal assessments happen in the classroom every day, as teachers review children's work or observe them in action. Parents are immediately informed when there is something alarming.

5.1. Settling in process

We aim to ensure your child's induction to our childcare facility is as stress free as possible. To this end, once a place has been allocated, we aim to invite you and your child to visit the

childcare centre prior to your child's official commencement date. This will help to familiarise your child with the childcare setting, staff and other children.

It is vital that parents/carers and staff work together to help the child feel confident and secure within the centre. This might take longer for some children and parents/guardians should not feel worried if their child takes a while to settle. We recommend that staying with your child and then leaving him/her for short periods of time eases the separation anxieties. Furthermore, we believe that the more your child comes and experiences the activities with us and sees you interacting with the staff, the more settled she/he will feel. In the unlikely event that your child does not seem to settle at the childcare setting we will review the situation with you and discuss any other possible options.

Typically, an example of a settling in process would be as follows:

Day 1	9:00 am – 10:00 am	We recommend that you stay with your child and spend an hour together in the childcare setting. This will normally be enough for your child's first day.
Day 2	9:00 am – 10.30 am	You will be invited to accompany your child for one and a half hour. All being well, you will be encouraged to leave your child for half an hour during this time to see how well he/she will manage on his/her own.
Day 3	9:00 am – 12:30 pm	During this day your child may be ready to stay by him/herself for the whole of the morning session and be collected after lunch at 12.30 hours. Do not be concerned if this is not the case, since some children will take a little longer to settle in.
Day 4	8:00 am – 3:00 pm	During day 4, we recommend that your child stays by him/herself until after sleep time at around 3:00 pm.
Day 5	8:00 am – 4:00 pm	During day 5, we recommend that your child stays by him/herself until around 4:00 pm.

6. Equal Opportunities Policy and Children with Special Needs

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery we are committed to encourage children and adults of any gender, social class, religion, race, culture and ability to achieve his/her full potential. We are fully aware of the importance of introducing an awareness of diversity and anti-discriminatory practice during the early years of education.

We truly believe in providing learning opportunities for children to explore their own identity and build his/her self-esteem free from attitudes which would limit their development. We aim to protect children from stereotyping, sexism, racism and disability discrimination. Moreover, our aim is to include all members of any group without prejudice and ensure that all staff have an understanding to differential needs in a diverse society.

Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery Early Learning Centre promotes equal opportunities through a wide range of policies and procedures which are reflected in this manual and practice of our early years setting, as listed hereunder:

- ✓ Positive attitude to diversity and promoting equality of opportunity, encourage children to respect the personality, rights and differences of others.
- ✓ Endeavour to provide a variety of activities and materials, which accurately reflect cultural and racial diversity.
- ✓ Endeavour to select books, stories, rhymes, posters and jigsaws that convey positive images of men, women and children, from all cultural and racial backgrounds.
- ✓ Discrimination is totally unacceptable at our childcare centre and will be challenged by offering support and helping those responsible to understand and overcome their biases.
- ✓ Boys and girls will have equal opportunity and be actively encouraged to use all activities.

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery children with special needs will be given extra assistance in areas of their development such as communication, physical skills, learning or behavior.

Early identification is essential in order to support children with special needs. In effect, we aim to adapt our routine, activities and environment to allow all children to participate and reach their full potential. Through our detailed curriculum, we aim to make all activities available to all children throughout the childcare centre at a level appropriate to their developmental needs. Furthermore, the centre is well designed to cater for persons with physical disabilities and also wheelchair users.

7. Admission and Enrolment to Childcare

Our waiting list for childcare admission is based on a first come, first served basis. Priority *(subject to availability)* will be given to children who will attend for at least six hours a day, as per our recommended curriculum plan.

Prior to a Child's admission at our centre, parent/s or legal guardian, must complete, duly sign and return to us a registration form. This form will include the following key information:

- Name/s, date of birth and home address of each child;
- Name/s, home address and contact details of parent/s/ or guardian/s ;
- Emergency contact details;
- Commencement date and number of sessions per week;
- Pick-up authorisations (and copy of the relevant ID cards);
- Special dietary requirements;
- Health records;
- Details of any allergies.

Furthermore, all children must be age-appropriately immunised on enrolment at our childcare centre. Parents/guardians must provide proof of the child's immunization status and a copy of the child's immunization record sheet must be kept on file.

For more detailed information regarding the process of application, you are kindly requested to contact Ms Deborah Enriquez directly.

8. Working in Partnership with Parents

Good parenting and high quality early learning provide the foundation children require in order to develop most of their abilities as they grow up. At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery we recognise that working together in partnership with parents can have long-lasting and beneficial effects on children's learning and well-being. To this end, we aim to form good relationships with parents so that information regarding their children can be easily exchanged by both staff and parents.

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, we will endeavor to achieve a sound working partnership with parents, as listed hereunder:

- The centre's Managing Director and/or Manager are always available to listen to parents and/or guardians in order to learn about the child's feelings and identify any concerns. We ensure that there is a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between the Managing Director and/or Manager and the parents.
- Parental meetings are held on a regular basis by appointment. Parents may at any time request an appointment with the Managing Director and/or Manager if they have specific queries.
- Make policies and procedures available to all parents and/or guardians.
- Keep you regularly informed about the type of activities held at the centre through daily reports and verbal communication.
- Informing parents and/or guardians about their child's progress and development on a daily basis.
- Involve parents and/or guardians in the observation, assessment and planning of their child's next steps.
- Parents are invited to Open Days held at the centre, where children will be encouraged to show their activities to parents/guardians.
- Seeking parental feedback.
- If we have any particular concerns about the child's well-being every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians immediately.

- Parents/guardians are kindly requested to keep us informed at all times of any changes to their personal circumstances which could have an effect on the child, including, bereavement, separation, illness etc.

9. Working in partnership with Early Years Professionals

At Team Tickle Child Care & Nursery we recognise that working together in partnership with early years professionals can have long-lasting and beneficial effects on the centre. To this end, we aim to form good relationships with early years professionals so that information regarding centre can be easily exchanged by both staff and the managing director.

At Team Tickle Child Care & Nursery, we will endeavor to achieve a sound working partnership with Early Years Professionals, as listed hereunder:

- The centre's Managing Director and/or Manager are always available to listen to Early Years Professionals in order to learn about their feelings and identify any concerns. We ensure that there is a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between the Managing Director and/or Manager and the Early Years Professionals.
- A meeting is held once a year through appraisal where the manager and the managing director meets one to one with the early years professional to address achievements and any ways for improvement. Early Years Professionals may at any time request an appointment with the Managing Director and/or Manager if they have specific queries.
- Make policies and procedures available to all Early Years Professionals.
- Keep them regularly informed about the type of activities to be held at the centre through weekly meetings and verbal communication.
- Informing them on any specific issues which requires immediate attention.

10. Open-Door Policy

At Team Ticks Child Care & Nursery we are proud to operate an Open-Door Policy. Through such a policy parents are allowed to visit their children in our centre any time they wish. We will ask that visits are respectful of the other children in our care in order to avoid disturbing classroom schedules. In effect, this means that the parents/guardians can observe their child without disturbing other children. Moreover, Team Ticks Child Care & Nursery often holds special classroom activities and we will encourage parent's participation and involvement.

10.1. Emergency and Fire Evacuation

The centre is equipped with a fire alarm system. In the event of fire, our first priority is to get all children, parents/child carer(s) and visitors out of the building as quickly as possible.

Hereunder, are the procedures we will calmly adopt should the need arise:

- If the childcarer detects a fire, she/he will pull the nearest fire alarm signal (small red box mounted on the wall near the fire exit).
- If it is a small fire, the childcarer is required to attempt to extinguish the fire using the nearest fire extinguisher. The children has to be evacuated first.
- All children and staff have to Exit the building and proceed to the designated meeting place.

- Call 112 as soon as they have reached the meeting place.
- Provide the centre's name and location: Team Tickle's Child Care & Nursery, 24, Triq Tumas Dingli, Haz-Zebbug.
- Describe the location of the fire.

If the fire alarm sounds:

- The childcare worker will assist in the evacuation of the children from the classroom.
- Collect the classroom First Aid kit and the Weekly Attendance Sheet form.
- Staff member closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place. Every classroom must stay together as a group.
- Staff member farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring everyone has evacuated the classroom.
- The last staff member to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close all doors.
- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the childcare worker is responsible for using the Weekly Attendance Sheet form to ensure all children are accounted for.
- The Managing Director and/or Manager will verify, as soon as possible, that all children are accounted for.

****FIRE DRILLS SIMULATION EXERCISES WILL BE PRACTICED MONTHLY****

The Managing Director and/or Manager will initiate all drills and maintain records of all drills.

11. Government Free Childcare Scheme: Service Users Terms and Conditions

- a. Children whose parents are in work or in education can benefit from the free childcare scheme. Parents in work is defined as both parents/guardians who are in work, or single mother/father/guardian who are in work and paying social security contributions. Parents in education is defined as both parents/guardians who are in education leading to a recognised diploma or degree or single mother/father/guardian who are in education. Parent/s is/are entitled to free childcare for all children of childcare-age, at a rate which is pro-rata to the mother's (or single father) employment hours.
- b. Parent/s is/are to inform the provider of any changes in the number of hours and days of service one month in advance according to the Government deadline.
- c. Parent/s is/are urged not to over-book more hours of childcare than what is necessary. In case of overtime or unforeseen circumstances, an additional allowance of 10% over the booked hours will be paid by the government if utilised.
- d. Parent/s can consume more hours than they are entitled to with the free childcare scheme. These hours will be recorded as extra hours and parent/s must pay the provider's rate directly. Providers must inform parents of the chargeable rate prior to registration.
- e. Parent/s has/have to present a medical certificate when a child is sick for more than 3 days, in order to be allowed to re-attend child care.
- f. Parent/s are entitled to a monthly absence allowance of 10% under the booked hours. For example, for a 100 hour monthly pack, a child can attend a minimum of 90 hours. Thus, if attendance is less than 90 hours, the remaining balance will be deducted from the absence entitlement. These absence days will apply pro-rata on a calendar basis and will be equivalent to 15% of the booked hours. This provision includes the

allowance for absence for medical reasons. Parents are to pay for absence days in excess of the above.

- g. The uniform rate being paid covers staff costs and consumables including stationary. It will not cover costs that relate to individual child needs, such as food, diapers and wipes. Cost of outings is not included.
- h. Free Childcare is terminated once the child is eligible to enroll into Kindergarten 1.
- i. Government will continue to pay for free Childcare while the mother is availing herself of maternity leave. Free Childcare is not extended to parental leave.
- j. Parent/s will be able to opt either for free Childcare or the tax rebate scheme.

Available at:

<https://education.gov.mt/en/resources/News/Documents/FCS%20Service%20Users%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%202015.PDF>

12. Fee Policy

Parents or guardians enrolling for private child care are requested to pay the monthly fee in advance and discuss with the center's Managing Director, the best package that meets their requirements. Monthly packages are provided as follows:

- Up to 60 hours/month - €5.60 per hour
- 80 hours/month - €5.30 per hour
- 100 hours/month - €5.00 per hour
- Anything above 120 hours/month - €4.90 per hour

Additional hours for the government scheme will be charged at the current rate of €5.00 per hour for children between 0 to 12 months and €4.85 per hour for children between 1 year and 2 years.

A 30-day notice period is required should you decide to discontinue sending the child to the centre, otherwise parents will still be charged for the following month.

Hours cannot be transferred for the following months but only within the same month.

Fees are non-refundable.

13. Safety of Children

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, we thoroughly believe that education and development are very important, yet nothing matters more than the safety, security and health of your child. In fact, it is our policy to provide a healthy and safe environment for your child, as explained in further detail hereunder:

- The Managing Director and/or Manager are responsible for health and safety matters concerning the childcare centre.
- All staff are aware of potential hazards within the childcare centre and the surrounding environment and actively protect children from any potential hazards.
- At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery we aim to provide all staff with first aid training.
- All accidents and any incidents are recorded in a Child Care Accident/Incident Report' form. All accidents are accurately notified to the parent/guardians as soon as possible.
- Hygiene rules relating to bodily fluids are followed with particular care and all staff are aware of how infections can be transmitted.

Accessories and Hair Accessories

Any small or tiny accessories and hair accessories such as:

- Hair Pins
- Small clips
- Bracelets
- Necklaces

Are not accepted at the centre.

Fabric head bands and rubber bands are accepted.

Earrings are to be stud pins **ONLY** and no loops are accepted.

Parents and/or guardians are to keep in mind that there are other children in the centre and can't be at risk because of others.

14. Sick Child and Accident Management

- It is our policy not to accept sick children at the centre. Sick children will be sent home and a medical certificate needs to be presented to confirm when the child is fit to attend childcare.
- A child who is unwell is expected to be kept at home and should not be brought at the centre under any circumstances. Consequently, we expect parents to cooperate with us by not bringing children to the centre if they have any infectious or contagious illness. Moreover, staff will also be asked not to attend work under the same circumstances.
- If a child becomes ill, we will take every step possible to contact parents immediately. However, if this is not possible, we will take appropriate measures to care for the child.
- The sick child will be kept in a sick bay while being taken care by a carer until the parents collect their child.
- Parents need to call the centre 2 hours before the child is scheduled to start the day at the centre, in order to notify us that the child will not be attending. We require a medical certificate in order for the child to attend childcare.

The following procedure should be followed in case of an accident:

- If a child or a member of staff is involved in an accident at the centre, they will receive immediate first aid by a member of staff.
- Gloves will be worn when dealing with blood or any other bodily fluids.
- The wound will be cleaned with sterile cloths or a cold compress applied. No ointments or plasters can be used.

- In the event of an accident to a child and the child will require medical assistance, parents will be informed immediately by the Managing Director and/or Manager.
- If hospital intervention is required, the Managing Director and/or Manager will take the decision to make the necessary arrangements accordingly and call 112 for an ambulance.
- Any accident will be recorded in the 'Child Care Accident/Incident Report' form. It will state the time of the accident, date, how it happened, first aid given and will be signed by the staff and parent/guardian.

14.1 Biting Policy

Biting is unfortunately not accepted behaviour for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behaviour. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff.

This biting policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind. As a day care, we understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of a day care setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with the other parent.

When biting does occur

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behaviour. We do not alarm, hurt, or frighten children; however we make it clear to the child that bites that this behaviour is unacceptable as it hurts other children.

For the child that was bitten:

- First aid is given to the bitten child and ice is put on the bitten area. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered.
- The 'Accident Report' form is filled out documenting the incident.

For the child that bit:

- The child carer will firmly tell the child 'No!' or 'No biting!' or 'Biting hurts!'
- The child will be placed in time out for no longer than the child's age (one year old, one minute).

- The parents are notified.
- The 'Accident Report' form is filled out documenting the incident and signed by the carer and manager.
- Parents of the bitten child and the child that bit are informed when children are picked up and not immediately. In extreme cases and at the discretion of the Manager, parents might be informed before.

When biting continues:

- The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
- The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.). The Manager may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.
- The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behaviour.

When biting becomes excessive:

When a child bites three times on a given day, the child's parents will be called and the child must be picked up from the Centre immediately. This is to prevent further incidents and to calm the biter.

If, at any time, child's biting behaviour becomes especially excessive or hazardous to the children or staff, the Manager will have the right to expel the child from the Child Care Centre.

A record of all biting incidents will be kept. This is especially useful in determining any patterns of biting behaviour and in anticipating incidents and preventing them. Once the parents collect the victim and the biter, they will both have separate reports to sign. The reports will be kept at the centre in the child's file. If you require a copy, advise the staff and will be glad to forward you one.

15. Sanitary

Our team at Team Tickle Child Care & Nursery do their utmost to teach children to wash their hands, cover coughs and sneezes (with a tissue or their elbows, not their hands), and keep hands out of their mouths and eyes to help prevent them from getting or spreading an infectious illness. However, unfortunately, these lessons cannot be taught to babies and very young toddlers.

Indeed, staff have the significant responsibility to appropriately clean, sanitize, and disinfect critical surfaces in the centre.

16. Medication

Occasionally, children will need to receive medication while at the centre. If your schedule permits, you may wish to come during the day and give the medication yourself. No medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, will be administered to a child without the parent or guardian being present at the centre. In case of parent or guardian being present,

- Prescription medication must be ordered by the pediatrician for the child to receive the relative medication and your child's name must be written on the prescription.
- All medication must be in the original pharmaceutical container

17. Behavioural Management

Our aim is to provide a happy, well organised childcare where all children, staff and parents understand the behavioural expectations and the behavioural strategies that are required to secure a positive childcare.

It is meaningful to state that adult's behaviour presents a role model to children. Thus, childcare workers must be caring, warm, courteous and respectful to all individuals within the childcare/pre-school environment. We will set realistic and age appropriate expectations of children's behaviour and guide them accordingly towards these expectations.

Most of child unacceptable behaviour is a reaction to an aspect of their environment. It is worth mentioning that stressed, worried, unhappy or bored children may behave inappropriately. For younger children poor behaviour may be trial and error, part of learning what is and what is not acceptable. Consequently, at Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery we will encourage children to, amongst others:

- Listen to each other;
- Care for themselves and each other;
- Share time, activities resources and toys;
- Eat healthy;
- Join physical activities; and
- Discuss and be involved in setting out pre-school rules.

It is important to highlight that parents will always be kept fully informed of any concerns regarding children's behaviour. If a child continually shows signs of unacceptable behaviour the child's carer will discuss any issues with the Managing Director/Manager and Child's parents. The Managing Director in charge, namely Ms Deborah Enriquez, has overall responsibility for supporting children's personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour. Responsibility includes: -

- Advising and supporting staff and parents in appropriate ways when dealing with challenging behaviour.
- Advising staff on appropriate training in relation to behavioural management.
- Monitoring and updating policies in line with current legislation, government initiatives and research on effective ways of managing behaviour.
- Recording all serious incidents.
- Liaise with parents/guardians when serious incidents occur.

17.1 Behavioural Management - Prohibited Discipline

A study presented to the UN General Assembly in 2006, asserts the right of all children to protection from all forms of violence. Prof. Paulo Pinheiro (June 2006) stated that, '*No violence against children is justifiable and all violence against children is preventable*'.

The following are some of the important legal provisions currently in force within the Maltese legislation with the aim of protecting children in Malta.

- *Children and Young persons (Care Orders) Act XVIII of 1980*: to make provision for the care of children and young persons.
- *Children and Young persons (Care Orders) Regulations*: to make provision for the care of children and young persons.
- *Domestic Violence Act XX of 2005*: to make special provision for domestic violence and to make consequential and other amendments to the Criminal and Civil Codes.

These policies and other relative legal provisions currently prohibit the following:

- Smacking and hitting;
- The use of any type of physical force;
- The threat of physical force as a deterrent;

- Shouting at a child;
- Bullying children as a form of discipline;
- Humiliating children as a form of discipline;
- Direct and hurtful criticism;
- Unnecessary criticism;
- Insulting a child;
- Cruelty to children;
- Withholding food/milk/drinks or force feeding;
- Leaving a child to cry themselves to sleep.

Physical intervention will only be used to manage a child's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult. Moreover, any occasion where physical intervention is used to manage a child's behaviour will be recorded and parents/legal guardians of the child will be informed about it on the same day.

17.2 Positive Behavioural Management Strategies

Effective behaviour strategies include positive guidance techniques, redirection to other positive behaviour, early intervention to prevent a dispute, removal of potential problems, positive anticipation of behaviour and occupying children at all times through appropriate activities.

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery all staff must follow the following principles, as listed hereunder:

- Present a positive role model behaviour;
- Positively reinforce good behaviour;
- Always praise children for their efforts;
- Always praise children for what they have done or achieved;
- Always support children;
- Always respect the child as an individual;
- Have regard at all times to our equal opportunities policy;
- Always try to understand any personal struggles or difficulty the child may be having;
- Offer children choices;
- Persuade reluctant children to conform to positive expectations; and
- Liaise fully with the responsible person for behavioural management, as well as with parents.

18. Child Protection

Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery is committed to the safety, wellbeing and support of all young people within our centre. The centre acknowledges that in order to maintain a safe environment a strong commitment must be made to the training and development of both management and staff. To this end we will ensure that we will continue enhancing our knowledge with regards to:

- Child abuse and protection.
- Access to support services.
- Risk management processes.
- The handling of complaints and disclosures of abuse/harm.
- The rights and expectations of parents/guardians and children.

When parents sign our registration form they are abiding to all our manual of policies and procedures. The Managing Director in charge will explain to the parents that if any staff member has any suspicion regarding any form of child abuse/harm, after first consulting with the Managing Director, it will be reported to the Child Protection Services Unit at Agenzija Appogg on 22 959 000 or email on appogg@gov.mt.

Furthermore, if a child arrives with any source of harm/injury the staff should:

- Consult with the parent/carer to obtain information as to how the injury has occurred.
- Accept all explanations given and accusations should not be made.
- Make a full and clear record, including illustrations of observations and explanations given. If possible, a witness shall also be present.
- If staff suspects that the injuries have been caused by assault or by failure to protect the child, the Managing Director will report immediately to Agenzija Appogg on 22 959 000 or email on appogg@gov.mt.
- Ensure that any documentation relating to the suspected abuse or neglect is kept in a secured locked area and released only to authorized persons as required by law.

19. Use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV)

Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery is securely monitored by a CCTV surveillance system. The Managing Director is responsible for the operation of the system for ensuring compliance with this policy. Appropriate signage will be prominently displayed to indicate that a CCTV monitoring system is operating. It is worth highlighting that every effort has been made to ensure maximum effectiveness of the system, however, it is not possible to guarantee that the system will detect every incident taking place within the area of coverage.

CCTV System

Cameras will be located both internally and externally in prominent positions across the centre, essentially:

- Inside and outside the main entrances;
- Within each play area/room, excluding bathrooms/toilets
- The external outdoor area; and
- Corridors.

Purpose of CCTV installation

CCTV has been installed to assist in ensuring a safe and secure environment for the benefit of children in our care, staff, parents/carers and visitors. The purposes of the installation of the CCTV are to:

- Assist in the overall security of employees, children, premises and equipment;
- Ensure high standards of care are maintained;
- Facilitate the identification of any incident which may necessitate disciplinary action being taken against a staff member and assist in providing evidence to management;
- Act as an effective deterrent against criminal activity, such as vandalism;
- Comply with legal and regulatory obligations, including amongst others, any requirements as issued by the relevant government authorities such as the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE).

Recording

Digital recordings are made using a digital video recorder operating in real mode, monitoring the site continuously. Surveillance storage is built for 24/7 always-on surveillance in high-definition security systems. Images will normally be retained for as long as is reasonable practicable.

The requirements and nature for monitoring

- The use of CCTV will be fair, reasonable and for a proper cause;
- Such monitoring activity or surveillance measures are taken in the best interest of the centre and staff members. These measures are not meant to cause any intrusion into the staff's privacy.

Protection to staff rights

- Collection and processing of personal data about employees including video footage recorded using CCTV cameras is regulated in terms of the Data Protection Act, Cap. 440 of the Laws of Malta.
- Access to recorded images will only be available to the centre's Managing Director and to those staff who require access in accordance with the above-mentioned purposes. In this regard, employees will be given the chance to explain or question any footage used as part of any disciplinary process.

Note: The Data Protection Commissioner will be notified accordingly of the above procedure.

20. Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy eating is a vital ingredient of quality childcare. It is not only important for growth but for learning and promoting life-long eating habits.

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, we recognise that parents/guardians have very busy schedules, lifestyles and other family commitments, and wherever possible use means to cut down on their workloads. Consequently, as carers of children we are committed to ensure that children are eating healthy nutritious food whilst in our care. The most important factor is to ensure that children are exposed to a variety of foods and that a balanced diet is provided. Our aim includes the following:

- To meet the nutritional needs of children whilst in our care.
- To maintain good hygiene standards.
- To ensure that mealtimes are pleasant and planned to meet the needs of the children.
- To incorporate nutrition education into the programme appropriate to the age of the children.
- To prohibit the use of food as a reward or punishment.
- To encourage independence and social skills at meal times.
- To communicate with parents/guardians about their child's food intake.
- To encourage parental involvement in the nutrition programme.
- To respect the cultural and religious wishes of parents/guardians.
- To record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his registration record and parents sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- To consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up-to-date.
- To ensure flexibility and encourage that every hour children have a snack. During those hours if a child is hungry he or she will be provided with food.
- To record current information about individual children's dietary needs on the day book so that all staff and students are fully informed about them.
- To implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink which is consistent with their dietary needs and their parents' wishes.

- To provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development.
- To provide fresh drinking water constantly for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day and during activities.
- To inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage and refrigeration facilities available in the centre.
- To give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.

We recommend that a child's diet will include fruit and vegetables, Cereals, bread, water etc. Remember that we are a nut and chocolate free childcare centre. Moreover, some food which is not recommended include sweets and chocolates, snacks (packets etc.), fizzy drinks and light food such as yoghurts. For instance, light yoghurts contain aspartame, which is a chemical additive used as sweetener instead of sugar. Such additive is dangerous to young children.

20.1 Food Policy

Meals should be readily cooked but which are then prepared and heated up to the appropriate temperature. Fruits must be cut, peeled and prepared in a bowl.

Moreover, it is our policy that any remaining food will be kept in the same bowl so that the parents would know how much the child ate for that day at the centre unless advised not to do so, in which case the bowl will be returned clean with no remaining food.

21. Hygiene Policy

At our centre staff will do everything possible to maintain a high level of cleanliness and remain vigilant for activities among children which could lead to cross infection. Our aim is to minimise the risk of infection through appropriate contagion prevention procedures and the application of effective cleaning schedules.

A list of cleaning duties is issued daily by the centre and the Managing Director will ensure that all duties on the list are seen to and signed off. Cleaning of the centre will be carried out before and/or after operating hours.

Staff will use disposable gloves during:

- First Aid procedures;
- Toileting;
- Nappy changing;
- Handling body fluids;
- Washing soiled clothing; and
- Nose wiping.

Additionally, we strictly do not allow the sharing of personal belongings such as beakers, dummies, jackets, hats, amongst others. All personal belongings must be clearly labelled. Especially pacifiers which are not labelled will be left in the child's bag.

22. Birthday Parties

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at the centre, you are kindly requested to discuss your plans with the Managing Director of the centre. You may provide party hats, napkins, plates and cups if you wish and you may discuss specific plans directly with the Managing Director for the best package.

Additionally, if you wish to celebrate your child's birthday away from the centre, our policy is that we cannot distribute any invitations in the classrooms unless the entire class is invited.

23. Child's Personal Records

At our centre, confidentiality is of paramount importance. Our policy relates to the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal information. During our staff induction, staff are made aware of the importance of confidentiality of information, which must be observed at all times.

Children's confidential personal records include, but are not limited to, registration/admission forms, signed consent forms, correspondence concerning the child or family, an ongoing record of relevant contact details with parents, as well as observations by our staff with regards to any confidential matters involving the child. These may include for instance; any developmental concerns or child protection matters. Moreover, staff will not discuss any personal information given by parents with any other members of staff, except in cases where it is in the best interest of the child.

23.1 Storage/Access of Child's Personal Records

- All confidential records mentioned above are stored in a lockable cabinet and are kept in a secure place by the Managing Director.
- Parents may view the personal file and records of their own children in the presence of the Managing Director, but do not have access to personal information belonging to other children.

24. Transition

Our aim is that all children will be happy and confident, and we therefore encourage parents to bring children at the centre and visit the room that their child will be in. As mentioned in section 5.1 '*Settling in process*', these visits are initially for a duration of 1 hour and each child can have as many visits as the child's parent/guardian feels necessary in order to settle their child.

On the first visit, the child's parent will be asked to stay with their child and also discuss their child's routine, likes and dislikes. As already stated in section 5.1 above, after the first initial visit, the parent/guardian will be encouraged to leave their child for a short period of time to see how they settle at the centre. The number and time of visits will be different for each child as all children adapt to different environments differently.

Children who will be moving to kindergarten

We will ensure that the children are informed about moving onto school through stories, pictures and circle time. In order to facilitate the children's transition to school, we recommend that the child's assessment portfolio is passed to the child's new teacher so that she/he will be informed about the child's activities and milestones.

Children with additional needs

We will ensure that the child's assessment portfolio and all other relevant information regarding the child's additional needs is passed on to the parents/guardians which is necessary to the child's new teacher/school.

The assessment portfolio will include information about the child's progress and routines. Moreover, where necessary, we are willing to have a transition meeting with the new teacher/s to pass on all relevant information, to ensure that the child's needs are still being met.

Additionally, at Team Tickle Child Care & Nursery, we will always endeavor to make any move for the children as smooth as possible and will also assist the child and their parents with any transition required, including, moving to a new school, another nursery or moving house.

25. Uncollected Child

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, we understand that due to unforeseen circumstances, there may be instances that will result in unavoidable delays in collecting your child. In this regard, in the event that a child is not collected at the appointed time the below procedures are followed:

- Reassure the child that parents/guardians are on their way in the event of a delay.
- The centre has an obligation to stay with the uncollected child until the child is collected.
- The centre must not release the child to an unauthorized person, even if the collection is late, unless an authorized person calls the Managing Director and/or Manager to state that because of an emergency a different person will pick up the child.
- The authorized person should give the name, address and ID card number of the unauthorized person and the Managing Director and/or Manager should check this description before permitting the child to leave the premises.
- A record will be kept in the register of all children who are not collected on time. The register will include the details of the date, the time at which the child was collected, who collected the child, and the reason given.
- In the event that a child is not collected by the appointed time on three occasions in any year, the Managing Director will send a written record to the parent, highlighting the difficulties caused to the childcare centre in view of the late collection, and either:
 - i. Informs the parent/guardian that the child will not be able to attend childcare any further in the event of re-occurrence; or
 - ii. Informs the parent/guardian that a charge of €10 will be charged for every hour that the child is left on the premises after the appointed collection time.
- In the event of a parent or authorised person failing to collect a child, every effort must be taken to contact that person as soon as possible. If all attempts to contact a parent/guardian, authorised person or emergency contact fail, the Managing Director and/or Manager will be required to contact the police in order to assist in tracing the parent/guardian of the particular child.

26. Staff Recruitment Policy

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, we are committed to provide the highest standard of service through committed, dedicated and skilled employees. To support the achievement of this objective we recognise the importance of employing the most suitable applicants for all vacant positions. Our centre supports the appointment of staff with diverse backgrounds in order to reflect our strategy and goals and most importantly generates an enthusiastic and secure environment for all children at the centre.

In this regard, when a suitable applicant with relevant childcare experience and/or qualifications applies for an advertised job, we will arrange for the applicant to come at our offices for an interview. At interviewing stage, we will go through the applicant's past work experience. We will also discuss in detail with the applicant his/her aims and objectives.

Furthermore, the applicant must satisfy the following criteria:

- Must have reached the legal age of majority (the age is currently 18).
- Have a minimum of 2 years of experience in childcare/preschool education.
- Provide original certificates relating to all necessary qualifications and certificates. *(Applicants must possess a childcare diploma level 4 and a current CPR and first aid course).*
- Provide a police conduct.
- Provide details of two different referees covering at least the past two years of experience – one of which must be a current or previous employer.

As part of the recruitment policy, in order for child carers to commence working at Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery, they shall receive 300 hours of training in order to familiarize themselves with the premises and children.

27. Staff Training and Development

It is our policy that all staff at Team Tickers Child Care & Nursery will have access to ongoing training programmes, in order to keep them up-to-date on current childcare practices, as well as developing their childcare and educational skills.

- A staff induction programme is held for all new employees. During the induction training all newly appointed staff/students are provided with the centre's policies and procedures.
- Opportunities for training in manual handling and food safety, as well as fire safety training are made available to all staff.
- Staff are also encouraged to engage in external training and attend courses/seminars/conferences. We also encourage staff to take advantage of training provided by other childcare organisations.
- Staff members are given the opportunity to share the knowledge gained from the course/training they have attended.
- Fortnightly meetings are held with management and staff in order to discuss operational issues and also to encourage and to provide a mechanism for sharing of new creative ideas for the improvement of the quality of the service offered to the children and their families.
- Staff training needs analysis is carried out and reviewed on a regular basis to establish training requirements.

28. Staff Supervision

Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery is committed to ensuring that every staff member receives effective supervision by team leaders/management on a daily basis. The purpose of this policy is to promote a consistent approach to staff supervision throughout the setting, to ensure that individual management supervision of staff is geared to achieving the objectives of the setting, and in so doing to enhance the quality of staff performance.

The Managing Director of the centre has a responsibility for developing the staff effectively, ensuring that they receive regular quality supervision, clearly stating and agreeing expected work standards and ensuring training and development opportunities are identified, facilitated and evaluated. This is done on a quarterly basis. A record of the planned supervision session is given to the staff member and the other copy is securely kept by the Managing Director.

Staff supervision provides an opportunity to:

- Monitor progress of staff with the objectives agreed at the annual appraisal, in line with the organisation mission statement.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of recent training and development activities contributing to workplace competence and identify any outstanding needs.
- Provide feedback on performance.
- Provide support, direction, advice and guidance on individual cases, staff and management issues.
- Develop skills and understanding.
- Ensure policy and standards are met consistently in practice.
- Discuss any external/personal circumstances that may have a bearing on work procedures.

Furthermore, each staff member individually must:

- Take responsibility for their own performance and learning, ensuring it is integrated into their everyday practice.
- Reflect and learn from their work experience, training and development opportunities.
- Prepare for and take part in supervision under the arrangements agreed.
- Take any action agreed during supervision, to improve performance and enhance their effectiveness.
- May be asked by the Manager Director to provide training to fellow colleagues (train-the-trainer)

The Managing Director will also provide unplanned supervision of staff as may be required from time to time.

29. Staff Records Keeping

A good record keeping system is important for the benefit of both the childcare centre and all members of staff. Procedures for staff records keeping include the following:

- Relevant details of all members of staff are held in confidence. Consequently, access to staff records is limited only to the Managing Director and the individual themselves.
- Staff details including contract of employment, appointed position and salary are strictly kept by the Managing Director.
- Details of salary adjustments are held strictly by the Managing Director.
- Records of individual members of staff are held for a period of ten years.
- Roasters, sick leave and vacation leave papers are all treated with confidentiality and kept in the office.

30. Child Carer's Policies

At Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery we strive to select the most professional and experienced child carers. Furthermore, the childcare centre is never left unsupervised and accordingly, the Managing Director and/or Manager of the centre will be monitoring at all times.

The child carer's policies include the following:

- Child carers shall report to work on time.
- Child carers should be suitably qualified possessing a childcare diploma level 4, first aid course and a clean police conduct.
- At the end of their duty child carers are required not to leave children unattended unless they are replaced by another carer and a proper handover is given.
- Child carers cannot leave children unattended unless another child carer can supervise extra children.
- During working hours child carers must wear the centre's uniform. Staff needs to wear comfortable clean uniform, protective shoes, no jewellery, no tall nails and hair must be tied back.
- Child carers cannot allow any person to pick up children from the centre unless such person is authorized. Children will only be allowed to leave the childcare with the other persons with the prior permission of the parents and the approval of the Managing Director. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to advise the centre about any eventual changes to the family set-up/the persons authorised to collect the children from the centre.
- To preserve the wellbeing of children, child carers who feel sick shall not report to work.
- Messaging and mobile calls are not allowed during working hours. Distractions shall be avoided.
- No person shall be allowed in the childcare centre unless he or she is a parent/guardian of any of the children attending Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery or his or her name is included in the list of names affixed to the front door of the centre.
- No smoking is allowed within the premises.

- Political, religious and any controversial discussions are to be avoided at all times.
- Foul and abusive language, shouting, blasphemy and any type of language or conduct which is not suitable to be heard and seen by children is strictly prohibited.
- No corporal punishment of any kind whatsoever is tolerated at the centre.
- Children should be referred to by their proper names and any form of labelling is avoided.
- It is of outmost importance that child carers must adhere to the rules of professional secrecy and confidentiality.
- In case of any accident the child carer must first try to contact ambulance on number 112 and then inform the parents accordingly about the accident.
- As detailed in section 22 – ‘Staff Recruitment Policy’, in order for child carers to commence working at Team Tickle Child Care & Nursery, they shall receive 300 hours of training in order to familiarize themselves with the premises, the centres policy and children.
- During the months of August and December, the centre will be closed for a week of shutdown i.e. one week in August and one week in December.

31. Whistle Blowing

This policy is designed to safeguard children from any kind of abuse at the centre. In this regard, if any staff member notices any form of abuse taking place, the staff member has the rightful duty to report such instances of any inappropriate behaviour to the Managing Director. The staff may be assured that management will not take any action against any staff member reporting instances of malpractice or wrongdoing.

Reports may also be forwarded to the Child Protection Services on Support Helpline 179 and/or to the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE), Great Siege Road, Floriana, VLT 2000 on 2598 0000.

32. Complaints about the service

Team Tickles Child Care & Nursery believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and desires. We therefore welcome suggestions on how to improve our childcare centre and most importantly, we will also give prompt attention to any concerns regarding your child's care at the centre.

We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate staff member. However, if this does not achieve the desired result, we will deal with such concerns in the following manner:

- The parent/s lodge his/her complain to the Managing Director and/or Manager through phone call or message on 79901420/77118734 respectively.
- The complaint is discussed in privacy at the Managing Director's office.
- If the complaint is not resolved the complaint will enter into a centre Parent/Guardian complaint form and a meeting is held with the parent/s and the Managing Director and/or Manager.
- The Managing Director and/or Manager will ultimately take the final decision and the complaint is signed by all parties involved.

The parent/s may also lodge his/her complain to the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) – Complaints Section on 2598 1414.

33. Data Protection Policy

The centre maintains confidentiality with all users of the service in line with the Data Protection Act. Any information and records concerning children, or their families will only be divulged to the appropriate authorities/authorised persons, for instance, the Department for Social Welfare Standards, or in the case of suspected child abuse to the Child Protection Services.

Furthermore, any activities undertaken by the centre in relation to publicity and the use of photographs/videos of the children will not be permitted without the expressed written consent of the parents/guardians listed in the registration form.