

Parent Statement for Partner Services

1. Welcome to our Partner Service

Small Talk, 27 Botairin na Mhuilinn The Burgery Dungarvan, Co. Waterford Dungarvan X35VR99, is a Partner Service, working together with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and parents 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 new funding model for early learning and childcare that brings together three major programmes, the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme - including the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) and Core Funding, with a fourth programme under development – the Equal Participation Model.

As a Partner Service, we offer subsidy schemes to parents and receive Core Funding. 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 Small Talk 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 08:00 to 17:30 Monday to Friday for 50 weeks per year.

At Small Talk we offer the following services to children and their families:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sessional Care for Early Learning & Care (ELC) excluding ECCE provision
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sessional pre-school under ECCE (Free Pre-school)
<input checked="" 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

[Choose all that apply]

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:

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

[Choose all that apply]

Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE):

ECCE provides for 15 hours per week of preschool provision over 38 weeks per year before children start primary school at no charge to parents. A child is eligible to start ECCE in the

September term once they have turned 2 years and 8 months of age on or prior to 31 August that year.

If you are availing of additional childcare, the balance of the childcare fees that you have to pay are the child's fees minus the 15 hours of ECCE per week your child is eligible for. The 15 hours you are awarded is paid by the Department to Small Talk for your child. Any additional childcare hours you are using outside of ECCE are eligible for an NCS subsidy (see details below).

Small Talk must provide you with written details of how the balance of your childcare fees are calculated (that is, the fee we charge less your free 15 hours per week of preschool provision).

Majella Keogh will support you in registering your child for the ECCE programme in our service if your child meets the eligibility criteria. Further information about ECCE is available here -

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2459ee-early-childhood-care-and-education-programme-ecce/>

Please note: In the ECCE Programme you are not required or obliged to select or pay a deposit for any optional extras.

If you do avail of any optional extra, should you, at any time, wish to withdraw from any of the optional extras selected, you must provide Small Talk with 20 working days' notice.

Access and Inclusion Model (AIM):

The goal of AIM is to create a more inclusive environment in pre-schools, so all children, regardless of ability, can benefit from quality early learning and care. The model achieves this by providing universal supports to pre-school settings, and targeted supports, which focus on the needs of the individual child, without requiring a diagnosis of disability.

Further information about AIM is available here - <https://aim.gov.ie/>

Optional:

This service also has an Inclusion Coordinator, who has a special qualification focused on supporting the inclusion of all children in the service.

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 Small Talk and register your NCS subsidised hours of care. The hours that you will agree should be based on the hours you need and what Small Talk can offer you.
- 3) After Small Talk 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 your award.
- 4) **Your NCS subsidy can only be paid once your CHICK has been registered by Small Talk and you have confirmed on the system that all details are correct.**

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

Small Talk 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 days if and when your co-payment amount changes, including details on how it has been calculated.

Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP) Saver Programme

The CCSP Saver Programme is available to eligible children up to the age of 15 years, for low income families who had eligible children registered prior to the CCSP Saver Programme's closure in November 2019. This programme is no longer available to new applicants.

The CCSP Saver Programme funds providers to charge reduced childcare costs to eligible parent's/guardians based on bands of subvention awarded. The CCSP Saver Programme can run for up to 52 weeks of the programme year.

The balance of childcare fees that you have to pay are the child's fees minus the subsidy you are eligible for. The subsidy you are awarded is paid by the Department to Small Talk for your child.

Small Talk must provide you with written details of how the balance of your childcare fees are calculated (our fee less your CCSP Saver Programme subsidy).

will assist you in registering your child for the CCSP Saver Programme in our service if you and your child meet the eligibility criteria. **Further information about the CCSP Saver Programme is available here ([CCSP Saver Programme Rules](#)).**

Calendars

Small Talk 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 an Approved Provider, we operate a Fees Policy that is transparent and understandable to our parents. Please do not hesitate to contact Natalie Hartley 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 2023/2024 involves no increases of fees on those charged to parents on the 30th of September 2021, called a 'fee freeze'. In order that you can understand what this fee freeze means for you, we have outlined our fees and associated fees policy below.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>a) Our service was in existence in September 2021</p> <p>As a Partner Service, we are committed to operating the 'fee freeze' for Programme Year 2023/2024. This means that we will not charge our parents more for the same service than what we were charging in September 2021.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>b) Our service has been established since September 2021</p> <p>As a Partner Service, we are committed to operating the 'fee freeze' for Programme Year 2023/2024. This means that we will not charge our parents more for the same service than what we were charging when we first became a Partner Service.</p>

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.

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 before any subsidy is applied.

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 and charged for additionally.

3.7 Fee Review Process - Core Funding is a payment to Partner Services designed to support quality, sustainability, and enhanced public management, with associated conditions in relation to fee control and cost transparency, incorporating funding for administration and to support the employment of graduate staff.

Partner Services must uphold their contractual obligations regarding their 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, Pobal or the Department. 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 move straight to Stage 1 and raise the case directly with the relevant CCC.

Small Talk 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 Small Talk for the purpose of advertising its service or providing information to parents/guardians. Small Talk will print and co-sign a Parent Statement for each family. A copy signed by [Insert service name] and the parent/guardian will be retained on file. Any changes to Fee Policies will require that an updated Parent Statement is displayed and Small Talk will issue updated Parent Statements by email to our parents/guardians and retain proof of the associated email.

3.8 Fee Policy

Fee policy is not the same as the fee policy that we had in place on September 30, 2021

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

3.9 Fee Tables

3.9.1 - Section A: Fee Tables

Fee Type Name	Age Range	School Age / Early Years	ECCE Available?	Session Start Time	Session Finish Time	Incorporated Services?	Choose Incorporated Service	Additional Information	Hrs per Day	Days per Week	Hrs per Week	Full Fee	Fee (including ECCE – 3 Free Hours)	Effective From	Effective To
Part Time ECCE (up to 2 additional hours) (pro rata)	2y 8m - 5y 6m	ELC	Yes	08:00	14:00	No		Part time care provided for 50 weeks of the year. ECCE provided for 38 weeks per year. Maximum 5 hours part time care is available between the hours of 8.00 and 14.00	5	5	25	€125	€60.5	28/08/2023	25/08/2024
Toddler Part Time Day Care (pro rata)	2y - 3y	ELC	No	08:00	14:00	No		Toddler Part Time Day Care is provided for 50 weeks of the year. Minimum 2 days per week. Maximum 5 hours part time care is available between	5	5	25	€150	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024

								the hours of 8.00 and 14.00.							
School Age Childcare Session (up to 3 hours) (pro rata)	5y - 13y	SAC	No	13:30	17:30	No		For Term Time School Age Childcare (After school care).	3	5	15	€60	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024
Part Time School Age Childcare (3-5 hours) (pro rata)	5y - 13y	SAC	No	08:00	17:30	No		Part Time School Age Childcare for 3 to 5 hours per day (for after school during term time between the hours of 1.30pm and 5.30pm and for 3 to 5 hours during out of term time).	5	5	25	€100	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024
Full Day ECCE 8am to 5.30pm (pro rata)	2y 8m - 5y 6m	ELC	Yes	08:00	17:30	No		Full day care provided for 50 weeks per year. ECCE provided for 38 weeks per year.	9.5	5	47.5	€200	€135.5	28/08/2023	23/06/2024
Toddler Full Day Care (pro rata)	2y - 3y	ELC	No	08:00	17:30	No		Toddler Full Day Care provided for 50 weeks of the year. Minimum	9.5	5	47.5	€225	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024

								2 days per week.								
Wobbler Full Day Care (pro rata)	1y - 2y	ELC	No	08:00	17:30	No		Wobbler Full Day Care is provided for 50 weeks of the year. Minimum 2 days per week.	9.5	5	47.5	€250	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024	
School Age Childcare Full Day Care	5y - 13y	SAC	No	08:00	17:30	No		For Out of Term School Age Childcare - 1 day per week.	9.5	1	9.5	€38	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024	
School Age Childcare Full Day Care	5y - 13y	SAC	No	08:00	17:30	No		For Out of Term School Age Childcare - 2 days per week.	9.5	2	19	€76	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024	
School Age Childcare Full Day Care	5y - 13y	SAC	No	08:00	17:30	No		For Out of Term School Age Childcare - 3 days per week.	9.5	3	28.5	€115	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024	
School Age Childcare Full Day Care	5y - 13y	SAC	No	08:00	17:30	No		For Out of Term School Age Childcare - 4 days per week.	9.5	4	38	€150	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024	
School Age Childcare Full Day Care	5y - 13y	SAC	No	08:00	17:30	No		For Out of Term School Age Childcare - 5 days per week.	9.5	5	47.5	€190	€	28/08/2023	25/08/2024	
Morning Session ECCE 9am to	2y 8m - 5y 6m	ELC	Yes	09:00	12:00	No		ECCE provided for 38	3	5	15	€0	€0	25/09/2023	23/06/2024	

12pm (pro rata)								weeks per year							
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3.9.2 - SECTION B - FEES EXTRAS: DEPOSIT / DISCOUNT / OPTIONAL EXTRAS* / ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Type	Extras	Amount	Description	Additional Detail / Conditions	Effective From	Effective To
Discount		€	10% for siblings (subtracted from the fee due before the NCS subsidy is deducted)	For ECCE the 10% sibling discount is subtracted from the fee due after the ECCE subvention is applied.	28/08/2023	25/08/2024
Deposit		€50	Deposit ECCE preschool place only (9am to 12pm).	This deposit is refunded once the registration is approved on the Hive.	28/08/2023	25/08/2024
Deposit		€	One week's fees (before any subsidy is deducted)	Deposit is refundable when a child commences at Small Talk / Big Talk and will be used as payment towards fees incurred during the settling in period and hours booked with us taking into account any subsidy due.	28/08/2023	25/08/2024
Additional Services		€5	Transport from school €5 per trip per child, €2.50 per trip per sibling collected at the same time.		28/08/2023	25/08/2024
N/A		€	Hourly rate for children settling in	Wobblers - €6.50 / hr Toddlers - €6.00	28/08/2023	25/08/2024

				/ hr Preschool Age - €5.50 / hr School Age - €5.00 / hr		
Optional Extra	One Paid Preschool Trip	€30	€30 for once-off day trip. This is the maximum charge and the amount will be confirmed one month in advance.	This is the maximum charge and the amount will be confirmed one month in advance.	28/08/2023	23/06/2024
N/A		€5	€5 per month for Drama		28/08/2023	25/08/2024
Discount		€	50% for staff (subtracted from the fee due after the ECCE subvention is applied and any NCS subsidy is applied)	This is subtracted from the fee due after the ECCE subvention is applied and any NCS subsidy is applied.	28/08/2023	25/08/2024

3.9.3 - Section C – Other Additional Information

Please refer to the Small Talk / Big Talk Information Handbook for details regarding the above.

* These are entirely optional to parents

3.10 The changes to our Fees Policy as applicable on September 30, 2021 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
Session (3 hours)	SAC		4	13		09:00	12:00	No		No 3 hour session (out of term)	3	5	15	€	€60
Session (3 hrs) Toddler Room	ELC		2	3		09:00	12:00	No		No 3 hour session	3	5	15	€	€100
Session (3 hours)	ELC		3	5		09:00	12:00	No		No 3 hour session	3	5	15	€	€75

Queries -If you have any queries or wish to discuss any of the above, please contact **Natalie Hartley**. **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**

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
Junior Preschool Room	QQI Level 8 BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies
Toddler Room	QQI Level 8 BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies
Wobbler Room	QQI Level 8 BA (Hons) Early Childhood Education and Care
Senior Preschool Room / School Age Childcare (After school)	QQI Level 8 BA (Hons) Early Years & Childhood Studies

4.2 Our staff have the following qualifications:

<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.
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Small Talk 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 Small Talk for the purpose of advertising its service or providing information to parents/guardians.

This Parent Statement, which is an agreement solely between the parent/guardian and the provider, sets out what is on offer at Small Talk and the applicable fees. If these terms conflict with the terms of any other agreement between Small Talk 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.

Signed on behalf of : Small Talk	
Signed – Parent/Guardian	
Date	