

**WISHING WELL FAMILY CENTRE  
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**ANNUAL REPORT  
JANUARY 2020– DECEMBER 2020**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Mission Statement**

**Wishing Well Family Centre, based in Alliance Crescent, was established in 1989 and is a locally based integrated community organisation that offers support to families, responding in a caring and open way to social, educational, economic and environmental needs within our community.**

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**Wishing Well Family Centre was founded in the Alliance Crescent area of North Belfast in 1989 by a local resident called Linda Mooney, during the period of the Troubles and amidst one of the most fractious interfaces across not only Belfast but Northern Ireland. Over the past 30+ years the organisation has gone from strength to strength, becoming a thriving social enterprise which offers genuine opportunities for cross community interaction and development through the provision of high quality services for children, young people, families, and the wider community within Upper Ardoyne / Ardoyne and North Belfast.**

**The catchment of the facilities and services provided at Wishing Well includes some of the most disadvantaged communities in Belfast, with the area blighted by high levels of unemployment, low levels of educational attainment, high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, inter community issues and areas of dereliction particularly directly on the interface between Ardoyne / Upper Ardoyne. The centre is accessible to all communities in the area, offering a range of pre-school, childcare and out of schools services for children and their families, family support, facilitating community activity and meetings and also delivering an environmental project on a daily basis for members of the wider community.**

**The core focus of the organisation however is the provision of services to local children and their families, giving much needed support to parents and promoting the physical, mental and educational development of local children aged 0 – 12 years of age. From an original staff of 2, Wishing Well employs 35 full and part time members of staff and has become one of the largest employers in the area.**

**Wishing Well Family Centre is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee at Companies House, Charity by HMRC and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. It has an annual turnover of almost £400,000 per annum. Income is generated through a mix of Service Level Agreements with Belfast Trust and Education Authority Belfast, public funding from a number of sources, fees charged for the provision of services and income from general fundraising activities and donations.**

**The organisation operates best practice policies and procedures as a charitable organisation and also as a community based provider of childcare, pre-school and out of school services to children.**

**Funding from the Social Investment Fund has allowed Wishing Well to build a new extension and develop high quality facilities that are neutral and accessible to all communities.**

The investment has provided facilities, namely a 24 place pre-school, 24 place out-of-school, a sensory room used also for baby drop in and midwifery services, office space and a kitchen that meets demand for community space in the area as well as contributing to the physical economic regeneration of North Belfast.

Current services include a Day Nursery (70 places), which incorporates a baby and toddler unit (6 weeks–2 years), a junior playgroup (2-3 years) and a senior playgroup (3+). Wishing Well operates a pre-school group (24 places), funded by the Education Authority, an out of schools group (24 places). Other activities include a volunteer environmental project, advice surgeries on a drop in basis, Sure Start services and courses, seasonal holiday schemes, a local bus service, volunteering and training opportunities and educational support to students and trainees.

In Wishing Well, it is the team who have the greatest influence on the smooth running of the organisation and its ability to fulfil its vision and mission by offering support to families, responding in a caring and open way to social, educational, economic and environmental needs within our community.

Wishing Well demonstrates excellence in its personal practice and maintains positive partnerships with statutory agencies, local nurseries, schools and groups as well a host of children's professionals. Strong links with its community and local neighbourhood partnerships have led to community ownership of the Centre and this has had a very positive impact on the wellbeing and progress of their children. These relationships have been developed and sustained through good practise, transparency and an ethos that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion for all.



## WHO'S WHO

<u>Directors / Management Board</u>	<u>Staff Continued</u>	<u>Advisors</u>
Kevin McGlennon Chairperson / Director	Charlene Skillen Childcare Assistant	Finnegan Gibson Accounts
Stephen Dobbin Director	Claire McComiskey Childcare Assistant	Claire O Dempsey Social Services
Keith Johnston Vice Chairman / Director	Nicole Hallam Childcare Assistant	Sharon Harvey Early Years
Roy Brawley Committee Member	Kirsty Begley Childcare Assistant	Glenbrook Sure Start Speech & language
Tracey Hutchinson Manager	Mairead Foster Supervisor	FSB
Catherine Ferguson Deputy Manager	Courtney Alexander Supervisor	<u>Students</u>
Sinead Maguire Committee Member	<u>Volunteers</u>	Nadia Totten Girls' Model
<u>Staff</u>	Roy Brawley Environmental	Jade McCloskey Mercy College
Tracey Hutchinson Manager	Andrew Stewart Environmental	Lauren McCormick Stranmillis
Catherine Ferguson Deputy Manager	<u>Tutors</u>	
Karen B Johnston Early Years Manager	Workforce	<u>SureStart Secondments</u>
Lee Anne Stewart Pre School Supervisor	Early Years	Maria Dalton Sure Start Assistant
Natasha Gibson Deputy Supervisor	Tutorcare	Kathleen Ingham Sure Start Assistant
Laura Burns Supervisor	Ashton Centre	Shannon Cunningham Sure Start Assistant
Louise Williams Childcare Assistant	Belfast Trust	Breige Owens Sure Start Assistant
Tracey Massey Senior Supervisor	Childcare Partnership	Anne Curley Sure Start Assistant
Sharlene Foster Deputy Supervisor	IHASCO	Mairead McGuire Sure Start Assistant
Megan Hale Supervisor	Glenbrook SureStart	Joy Graham Sure Start Assistant
Anita Montgomery Deputy Supervisor		Tracey Toal Sure Start Assistant
Carly Bingham Deputy Supervisor		Laura McCabe Sure Start Assistant
Kerry Douglas Supervisor		Mairead Foster Sure Start Assistant
Lauren Barclay Supervisor Left Sept 2020		Liz Davey Sure Start Supervisor
		Caroline Donnelly Sure Start Assistant
		Elaine McAllister EY Development Worker

## **Achievements and Performance 2020**

- Centre went into lockdown on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Furlough scheme and various grants have helped to secure the future of the Centre. Re-opened on 1<sup>st</sup> July with Pods and flexi- furlough. Remained open through-out the rest of the year.
- Opened our building for Belfast Trust – Glenbrook Sure Start for key worker children April to end of June.
- Staff have been amazing through-out the whole year in dealing with their worries and anxieties regarding COVID 19, putting the safety and well-being of the children to the forefront of everything they do.
- In March 2020, secured a grant from Department of Social Development for £47,942.03 to manage the centre through the Neighbourhood Renewal Implementation Project for one year.
- Successful in receiving grants from Belfast City Council, Education Authority, Belfast Trust and The Social Investment Fund for a variety of capital ventures and revenue costs.
- In March 2020 we had a very successful inspection from Social Services on Quality of Care – Part 1
- Staff have completed training on CCLD Level 5, Covid-19 Infection, prevention and control, Child Protection, Health & Safety, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, Food Hygiene, Special needs, Fire safety, GDPR ,Cluster training, Music and the 7 areas of learning, Hearing impaired, Risk Assessment and Signs of safety
- Glenbrook Sure Start, Smile and Outer West Sure Start – 18 staff seconded to these Surestarts through service level agreements. SLA also set up with the Trust for sponsored Day care.
- All policies and procedures have been updated in line with COVID 19 restrictions and PHA/Government guidelines in collaboration with staff and management.
- Employ 30+ local people and manage numerous students and volunteers.
- Over 100+ children registered every day and attending Baby Room, Toddler Room, Junior Playgroup and Senior Playgroup.
- Future plans include the redevelopment of our back garden with funding from LIF – currently on hold.

## BABY ROOM REPORT

This has been a very eventful and different year in the baby room. As always we welcomed new babies to our room as others have moved on to the Toddler room. The room is registered for four babies (six weeks to one year)

Our room is very colourful and bright with lots of wooden toys and our treasure baskets are full of natural materials which the babies love to play with. The sensory area is also filled with lots of wooden and natural material items along with a sensory board which is great for children to explore. Our cosy black and white themed corner is very popular and also very stimulating for the babies from as young as six weeks old. All our toys and equipment are ideal for sensory play and development. The babies love the lights and textured toys.



We have many different themes throughout the year, for example All About Me, transport, the seasons, animals, Easter, Halloween and Christmas. The themes change each month and as the babies love painting we display all their beautiful theme related artwork around the room. We also display photos and self-portraits along with hand and footprint pictures. All our daily routines, plans and themes can be seen on our noticeboard outside the room.

We continue to have a relaxed routine for the day to day running of the room whilst catering for each child's individual needs. This relaxed atmosphere helps the babies to settle in well.

Unfortunately in March, the Centre had to close due to covid-19. We did not re-open until 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 at which time we welcomed most of our babies back.

In line with Government guidance we made a few changes in our room. All soft furnishings had to be removed and we also received new cleaning equipment, for example new wipe down mats and a steamer. This is to ensure that everything in the room is cleaned thoroughly. Parents also cannot bring their babies directly into the room. They are taken by staff at the front door and brought to the room. This proved to be a challenge as we found when settling in new babies who arrived in the baby room in September but everyone-staff, parents and babies have all coped very well with the new restrictions.

Although this year has been challenging at times, the staff and babies have enjoyed every moment and we shall continue to build on our routines and introduce more fun-filled ideas and activities for our babies.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our parents for their continued support.

Laura Burns  
Supervisor

## TODDLER ROOM REPORT

The Toddler room is very bright and colourful. There is a maximum of nine places on a daily basis and the age range is twelve to twenty two months.

This has been an unusual year for the centre. We had to close from April re-opening on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 due to the covid-19 situation. The Toddler room re-opened in August when the number of children attending was increased. Since re-opening we have had new guidelines and restrictions in place. For example, parents/carers are not permitted into the centre so the children are brought to their rooms by staff and all soft furnishings have been removed. All cleaning of equipment is increased, constant hand washing and social distancing are now in place.

Our room is arranged into different areas – home corner, small world, cars and garage, sensory and song/story corner. Our cosy corner has been removed due covid-19 restrictions as has the sand tray. The children really enjoy art and craft activities and these are displayed around the room. They are taken down at the end of each month, quarantined for seventy two hours and then sent home with the children. All our toys and equipment help the children in their various stages of development. Our treasure baskets are full of natural materials which are all ideal for sensory play.



We have a sleep room attached to our toddler room and incorporate sleep time within our daily routine – 11:30am to 1:00pm approximately. This routine is very beneficial especially for children who attend for a full day, however times can be changed to suit the individual needs of the children.

Each month we base our plans on a particular theme, shape and colour which all link into our monthly plans and daily routine. The monthly plans and daily timetable are on display outside and inside the room.

Throughout the year, weather permitting, we make great use of our safe and secure outdoor area. The children always enjoy playing outside and this assists in their physical and social development. We look forward to the completion of our new outdoor area in the near future.

This year has been a very different year for us with many restrictions in place but we have made the time here fun filled and as safe as possible for the children.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff, students, parents and of course the children for their support and understanding through which has been a challenging year.

**Megan Hale**  
Supervisor

## JUNIOR PLAYGROUP REPORT

It has been another very busy albeit strange year in Junior Playgroup. All the children including new starts have settled in extremely well and adapted to the new routine. We have sixteen places available on a daily basis with children aged between 1 year 10 months and 2 years 10 months.

Our room, which has had a makeover, is very bright and colourful with lots of activities on offer to suit all children. They enjoy table top toys, as well as jigsaws, the house corner, imaginary play and construction. They also love arts and crafts and these are displayed around the room.

Our activities are based around the six areas of learning and our monthly plans and themes are all centred on these and are displayed outside our room on the noticeboard. Our daily routine is also displayed along with photos of the staff.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, our centre was closed during the months of April, May and Jun of 2020 and we re-opened on 1<sup>st</sup> July. On re-opening necessary changes were made to our routines. For example, the children are brought to the room in the mornings and collected at home time by staff as parents cannot enter. This means that we do not have the usual interaction with parents but we keep them informed of their child's progress by phone, notebooks etc. Parents can contact us directly by phone anytime.

Physical play is part of the curriculum and is very important for the children.



We provide this both indoors and out and we make full use of our outdoor play area and garden. We have a variety of equipment such as bikes, scooters, balls, balancing beams, climbing frames, play houses, large soft blocks, tents and tunnels. Trips to the local park are always very popular and in autumn we gather leaves, twigs and acorns which are displayed on our sensory tray. On special occasions such as Halloween or Christmas the children have great fun making and decorating shortbread, buns and treats. Cooking activities are always very enjoyable.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff and students for their continuous hard work throughout the year. I would also like to offer a warm welcome to our new junior playgroup staff - Courtney and Claire who have both settled into the room extremely well. Thanks also to the parents/carers for all their support especially during this anxious time. We hope that next year will be a healthy, successful and rewarding one.

Kerry Douglas  
Supervisor

## SENIOR PLAYGROUP

The Senior Playgroup is a very busy room which is used as a stepping stone for the children who will be entering into Pre-School education. We do this by introducing rules and routines, personal choices, encouraging independence and involvement in all areas of play. This year all the children enjoyed making the transition to Senior Playgroup and they were very excited with the activities which were on offer.

The children are always very busy and are encouraged to partake in all the activities which are based on monthly themes around the six areas of learning. Each child can progress through play at their own level of development. These daily and monthly plans are displayed on our noticeboard outside the room.

The children work very hard on arts and crafts and take great pleasure in displaying these around the room. Our arts and crafts change every month according to our plans and themes.

We have continued to use our outside garden area as much as possible. It has an excellent range of equipment such as a playhouse, climbing frames, see saws and beams. The children are able to have great fun using this equipment as well as having lots of outdoor exercise. We also use the area for picnics, storytelling sessions, walks and gathering leaves for our autumn displays.

In March 2020 our centre had to close due to the covid pandemic. We remained closed until 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. This was a strange time for all. On return in July changes were made to our routine. For example, the children were taken from parents and carers at the front door and brought to their rooms by the staff. Some children were quite anxious at this separation. However after a couple of weeks they soon became accustomed to this new way of doing things. Also each room became a pod which means no mixing with other rooms. We also had a lovely Halloween party at which the children all had a wonderful time.

The room continues to provide a safe and comfortable environment in which the children are able to play, explore and learn.

Unfortunately during November (12<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>) our room had to close once again for two weeks due to a case of covid-19. This resulted in the Senior Playgroup children needing to isolate for fourteen days. However they all returned safe and well and staff were delighted to welcome them back and continue with Christmas activities, arts and crafts along with lots of discussions about keeping safe and healthy.

I would like to say thanks to all the staff for their continued hard work throughout the year, and also to our parents for their continued support during what has been a very different year for us all.

Tracey Massey  
Senior Supervisor



## PRE-SCHOOL REPORT

In September 2020 we welcomed sixteen children into the Pre-School.

The Pre-school setting prepares the children for their transition to primary school. Every day our activities are based around the six areas of the pre-school curriculum. These are:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Language development
- Early mathematical experiences
- Physical development and movement
- The world around us
- The arts

Due to Covid-19 we are focusing especially on the health and well-being of our children.

The children are regularly monitored on their development and parents are kept up to date on their child's progress. We do this through two written reports during the year. This year all communication with parents/carers is done via telephone, Facebook, WhatsApp or a socially distanced meeting.

Pre-School unfortunately had to finish early in March 2020 due to Covid-19. Staff took part in home learning with the children via our Facebook page. Staff also visited each child at home and they had their very own individual graduations instead of a class one.

We enjoyed a trip to The Gruffalo Trail in October and also a visit from Jo Jingles. Our Christmas concert shall be recorded and parents/carers can watch this virtually.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their hard work and the parents/carers for their continued support throughout what has been a very different year.



**Lee Anne Stewart**  
Supervisor

## OUT OF SCHOOLS REPORT

Our Out of Schools is an exciting place for the children to attend after school. It provides fun, relaxation and learning through a variety of activities. The room is very spacious and bright and is registered for twenty four children.

The children have lots of space for games, drama, cookery, and have great fun creating wonderful works of art. These arts and crafts are all displayed around the room, creating a happy and colourful environment. It also gives the children a sense of belonging. Everything we do in Out of Schools is to promote creativity, social skills and imagination. We also feel it is important to encourage children to voice their opinions, ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Role play is a very popular activity in which the children sing, dress up and act together. We also allow the children the opportunity to do their homework and help them by offering guidance, encouragement and support.



This year has been a very unusual one. The centre closed in April and reopened again on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 due to Covid-19 and because of this we have not had the wonderful trips out which we usually would have had. However despite this we have all learnt to use our imagination, think outside the box and most importantly still have fun whilst keeping safe. We have visited our local park and collected leaves, had picnic breaks and explored the outdoors.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their hard work and support throughout the year. Thanks also to parents for their patience and understanding during which has been a challenging year.

**Mairead Foster**  
Supervisor

## ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The volunteer environmental team has worked very hard this year in maintaining the centre and its grounds to a very high standard, both when opened and closed. (The centre closed April to end of June due to covid-19).



Gardens to the rear of the centre and car park to the side have been well tended to throughout the year. Play areas for the various age groups have been fenced off and the children have spent many happy hours in the gardens.

The re-development of the area to the back of the centre has been put on hold due to Covid-19. It is hoped to be completed summer 2021.



Andy and I have carried out painting jobs in the centre and helped put together various pieces of furniture and equipment. We have worked tirelessly in completing the many jobs that always need doing, such as fixing fences, growing vegetables, power hosing, unblocking sinks, clearing gutters, repairing and putting up furniture, driving our mini bus - the list is endless....

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Andy and management for all their hard work, support and dedication in helping to make this another successful year for us.



**Roy Brawley**  
Environmental Supervisor

## Wishing Well Family Centre – Operational Guidance (subject to change)

It goes without saying that the safety of the children and of our staff is our top priority. We are working hard, following the latest & ever changing government guidance, to develop and implement new ways of operating. This will allow us to operate as safely as possible, adhering to measures that will help limit the risk of coronavirus transmitting within our setting.

### Arrival/Entrance

Every day parent/carer must complete a Covid 19 disclaimer before your child will be allowed to attend. This will record daily if the child or any family member has been diagnosed or is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms.

A temperature check will also be carried out at reception and the child will continue into the building through a tray of disinfectant. This procedure is also in place for all staff. If a child's temperature is in the amber zone we may still allow them to attend but we will closely monitor them throughout the day and if this rises they will be sent home. If your child's temperature is in the red zone we will not accept them into nursery. If a child is unwell at all we will ask parents/carers to keep them at home and contact us before their session begins.

We want children to feel safe, happy and stimulated in our setting and to feel secure and comfortable with our staff in the absence of their parents.

Government restrictions have resulted in limited access to the building for parents so to manage the arrival and departure of children from the front of the setting, at least 2 Managers/staff will be present, they will sign the children in / out to minimise the risk of cross infection. We advise parents and carers to follow guidance given by signage in entering the building, physically distancing from each other and from staff when dropping off and collecting their children and to limit drop off and collection to one parent or carer per household. All children's belongings should be clearly labelled including juice cups, dummy's etc.

We encourage children not to bring toys or other items from home to the setting, unless this is essential to their health and wellbeing. If a child is upset/unsettled we will attempt to comfort and settle, if we are unable to do so we may allow one parent to accompany their child but due to Government guidelines a parent cannot stay in any area for longer than 15 mins. However, if a child becomes overly distressed we will contact the parent / carer and we may discuss a reduction of hours/sessions for the child to attend to allow time to settle.

From 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 in line with Government regulations, we have asked parent/carers/visitors to wear a face covering when entering the building.

### In setting

All children and staff are placed within play pods, children and staff remain at all times to their allocated rooms/play pods. Group sizes will be subject to a risk assessment to ensure compliance with best available guidance and PHA advice in order to ensure staff feel safe at all times. Where possible the same groups (staff and children) will be maintained from day to day to minimise the risk of infection spreading throughout the setting and to provide a level of continuity for the children. If a member of staff is asked to change pod for any reason they will sanitise and change clothing. If staff need to consult with some-one in a different area, where possible phones should be used.

At present we have no sand play, soft furnishing or dressing up clothes to minimise the risk of cross infection. Items such as playdough can be used but each child

should have individual pieces in labelled personal containers or discarded on the day.

We use outdoor spaces to create more distance and open windows to keep fresh air circulating. Art work will be removed from displays on a Friday and sent home on a Monday.

Toys, equipment and surfaces are to be cleaned at the end of each session and regularly throughout the day. Toys available to the children will be rotated so they can be adequately cleaned between rotations.

Outdoor play operates within the designated groups and there will be no mixing of the groups in outdoor areas. Hands should be washed before & immediately after outdoor play time. Outdoor equipment will be cleaned before and after use particularly things that hands touch i.e. railings, handles etc.

With regards to physical contact for example for nappy changing / toileting / nose cleaning the existing policies around intimate care and infection control will apply i.e. use of gloves / disposable apron / hand washing.

If a child needs a change of clothes staff should follow guidance and then place the clothes in a plastic bag tie it securely and place into child's bag.

All cot sheets and blankets are changed after each child and washed at the end of each day.

Frequent hand washing is common practice throughout the day with liquid soap and tepid water for at least 20 seconds. If liquid soap and water are not readily available, (when outdoors etc.) we use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser/wipes with at least 60% alcohol. We continue to promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

For cleaning of surfaces and toys which is done at the end of each session and throughout the day staff will first use a disposable cloth to clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water. Then disinfect these surfaces with cleaning products/disinfectant, paying particular attention to frequently touched areas and surfaces such as toilets, grab rails and door handles.

### Snacks & Meals

These will be provided in the room that the children are allocated to.

Tables will be cleaned before and after meals / snacks.

Staff will be the only ones to handle utensils and serve food to reduce the spread of germs. Each child will have their food set onto their plate and given to them, the 'buffet break' or help yourself from a central plate method will not be used at this time.

When preparing snacks staff must ensure no more than 2 people are in the kitchen at any one time and that they use opposite sides of the kitchen maintaining social distance as per guidelines.

Staggered break/lunch times are in place for staff and they will supply their own lunches/drinks and if when using the kitchen area it should be used by maximum two people at a time. All equipment and work surfaces must be cleaned thoroughly after use.

### What we will do if children / staff or parents develop COVID-19 symptoms

Staff or children with a high temperature of 37.8° or more, a new continuous cough or loss smell or taste should get a test immediately. If test is positive, self-isolate for 10 days. If negative return to setting when feeling well.

**Staff must follow normal reporting procedures. Parents must contact 02890 740454 prior to their agreed start time. Staff or children with household members who are**

**known to have COVID-19 should also stay away from the setting for 14 days and notify us.**

**If a child or a member of staff develops symptoms of COVID-19 while in the setting they should immediately be taken to a designated isolation room, where a designated staff member will supervise the child at a safe distance until parent/carer is able to collect. If the child becomes acutely unwell – staff will follow normal procedure and call an ambulance and inform the parent / carer.**

**Parents of other children who have been in contact with that child will be informed and advised to follow the guidance for households as per [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).**

**Staff who have been in contact with that child - management must risk assess any staff exposure from child with suspected Covid-19 to determine need for isolation.**

**All families travelling abroad must follow Government guidance in regards to self-isolation on return.**

#### **Visitors/service users**

**When entering the building visitors/service users need to complete a Covid 19 disclaimer and have a temperature check before continuing into the building through a tray of disinfectant. We encourage visitors and service users to follow government guidance in regards to social distancing while in the building.**

**Relevant software is available to conduct meetings remotely although at this time face to face meetings are discouraged.**

**Outside agencies using our facilities must follow ours and their own guidance at all times.**

#### **Reducing the spread of infection**

**Wash hands regularly – for at least 20 seconds**

**Cover your mouth & nose with a tissue or sleeve when you cough or sneeze**

**Put used tissues in bin immediately and wash hands**

**Keep the 2 metre social distance rules.**

#### **When using centre minibus**

**All staff will wear appropriate face coverings, children's hands are sanitised before getting on the bus, no food or drink can be consumed, where possible the children will be seated in family groups and on their own designated seat.**

**We would also encourage for track & tracing downloading the StopCOVID NI app.**