



LAVEY EARLY YEARS GROUP

Trustees Annual Report **September 2023 – June 2024**

Charity No: NIC105257

63a Mayogall Road,
Knockloughrim, Magherafelt.
Co. Derry. BT45 8PG

Lavey Early Years Group Trustees have produced this report in due regard to the guidance produced by the Commission.

Trustees of Lavey Early Years Group during the reporting period:

Trustees Sept '23 – Feb '24

Chairperson	Leona Larkham
Secretary	Lorraine Young
Treasurer	Kelley Holleran

Committee Members:

Oonagh McCloy
Glenda Kerr
Maeve Duggan
Joanne McMullan
Susan McCloy
Margaret Mary O'Neill
Angela Hearty
Kate O'Neill
Carmel Milne

Trustees Appointed Feb '24

Chairperson	Carmel Milne
Vice-Chairperson	Katherine Dartnell Orozco
Secretary	Niamh Hassan
Vice-Secretary	Imelda Keenan
Treasurer	Shaunine McCrystal
Vice-Treasurer	Agnieszka Dorrity

Committee Members:

Davina Monaghan
Maria McErlean
JoAnne McPeake
Melissa McCloy
Elaine McFadden

On the 12th February, the newly appointed committee were elected following the Annual General Meeting in November. The appointments to the roles of Office Bearers took place by participating in a voting process. The outgoing Committee and incoming Committee are currently in a period of transition dating from 12th February 2024 – 28th June 2024. During this period, the outgoing Committee have provided guidance, advice and assistance to the newly appointed Committee.

Summary of main activities and achievements

The organisation manages the day to day running of the activities of Lavey Early Years Group. It works closely with the playgroup leaders, the parents, the children, the Department of Health Services and the Early Years specialists to ensure that children are not only looked after but also encouraged to enjoy play, education and exploration. The Trustees encourage the playgroup leaders to stimulate the children with a variety of trips and outings but also to ensure that the staff are highly motivated, highly qualified so that parents can feel easy about leaving children in their care. The Trustees also act as fundraisers by seeking grants or organising local activities supported by the community to ensure that the pre-school can continue to survive into the future.

Purposes:

1. To provide high quality preschool education for the children attending our setting ensuring they have the opportunity to learn, socialise and play together in high quality, stimulating environment led by highly trained staff.
2. To encourage parents to become part of our community and support the work of the playgroup through opportunities to visit the setting and become involved in fundraising.

The trustees believe that both our purposes satisfy both elements of the public benefit requirement.

There is no harm flowing from these purposes of Lavey Early Years Group.

Our beneficiaries

- The children; before the age for statutory education, our pupils have a local facility where they can come together to play, to learn, to be motivated, to mix with other children from the same district and learn the social skills that will be required when they go to school.
- The parents of these children will also benefit in that they have an excellent local facility where their children will be looked after by experienced staff where they will be in a safe and healthy environment close to their own homes therefore doing away with the need for transport in a very rural area near Lavey.
- The Community also benefits in that young parents are encouraged to remain and to live locally because there is such a facility close to them. The benefits can be measured by the number of children attending the facility, the number of parents supporting the facility and the number of local people participating in the events laid on for the pre-school by the Group. It also can be measured by the attitudes and levels of satisfaction expressed by the parents and the children themselves to the activities promoted by the playschool.

The information below sets out the activities we have carried out to further our purposes and fulfil each of the public benefit elements during the last 12 months.

During this year, 40 children attended the group. The Department of Education funded all of these children. They enjoyed learning through play in our High/Scope environment adhering to the DENI Curriculum six areas of learning i.e.

- Personal and social development;
- Early Movement and Music
- Early experiences in science and Mathematics
- Creative and aesthetic development;
- Language and Literacy development;
- Knowledge and appreciation of environment.

The Social Services carried out an inspection on 09/11/2023 by Janice Keen with no recommendations. A copy of this report can be sought from the group.

During this academic year we;

- Participated in 'Forest Friday' weekly within the forest area located within our school grounds
- Celebrated sporting events in the Parish
- Visited the crib in the chapel at Christmas
- Santa visited; each child received a special gift from Santa on his visit to the Group
- Walked to Our Lady's Shrine in the Old Graveyard to welcome the month of May
- Travelled by bus to Portrush for annual summer trip to the Wacky Workshop
- Sport's Day was held in Lavey Termoneeny Centre on 7th June 2024.
- Primary school visits; Mrs Mitchell (P1 teacher in St. Brigid's PS) visited the setting to meet the children transitioning to P1 at the end of May before our pupils officially visited the primary school in June to become familiar with the environment. This is very important link which helps to develop relationships.

- Our parents were invited to attend annual meetings to discuss their child's progress. We also provided parents with opportunities to attend our AGM and to become involved in helping support our fundraising initiatives.

Risk of harm and private benefit

Regular risk assessments are carried out prior to pupils in our setting participating in activities. This includes outdoor play activities which take place in our Forest area and outdoor play areas. All possible adjustments are made to ensure absolute minimal risk of harm to any pupils, staff, parents or community members attending our setting.

A private benefit is gained by the Parish of Lavey who owns the building that has been renovated by Lavey Early Years Group to be used in the provision of preschool education. The facility is necessary to deliver the educational service to the beneficiaries. The charity committee has a long-term lease on the facility and the investment is reasonable when compared to other available facilities. Therefore, the private benefit is incidental and necessary for the achievement of the charity's purposes.

Compliance with Public Benefit

The Charity has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities entered into during the year have helped to achieve the Charity's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit. Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others The charity holds no funds as custodian trustees on behalf of others.

Structure and Governance and Management

Lavey Early Years Playgroup is a Registered Charity and is governed by the terms of its constitution, which was adopted by the membership on 17th May 2016. Lavey Early Years Playgroup is registered with the Charity Commission and is placed on the Northern Ireland register of charities from 14th July 2016. The objectives and activities of the Charity are administered by a Management Committee, which shall consist of not less than five nor more than twelve members, which includes the three honorary officers being Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The members are elected at the Annual General Meeting which is held no later than 1st November each year.

Constitution Document of Lavey Early Years Group

Early Years Vision and Values

Children are

- Strong, competent and visible in their communities
- Physically and emotionally healthy

- Eager and able to learn
- Respectful of difference

We believe in

- Childhood - in its own right
- Listening to children – and those who care for them
- A strong voice for children
- Play, fun and creativity
- Parenting
- Community
- Partnership
- Inclusion and diversity
- Excellence and evidence based innovation
- Effective stewardship and governance
- A professional, committed and recognised workforce

Early Years Promotes

- Play based learning environments for all young children
- Evidence based innovative services for children, families and communities
- Opportunities for all children to reach their full potential
- Partnerships with parents/carers and other agencies
- A co-ordinated, integrated and holistic approach to young children's learning and development
- Training, professional development opportunities and appropriate remuneration for all adults working with young children
- High quality services to children, member groups, parents, staff, volunteers and funders
- The central role of the adult in early childhood settings
- Community Development approaches to Early Childhood Development
- Stronger government investment and recognition of the importance of early years
- **Name**

The name of the Playgroup is Lavey Early Years Group, and the group is a body associated with Early Years.

- **Administration**

Subject to the matters set out below the group and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the management committee, constitution by clause 5 of this constitution (“The Committee”).

- **Objects**

3.1 The group is established to promote play based learning environments for all children of the area served Lavey and its surrounding environs in County Derry without distinction of age, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic identity, political or religious opinion, by associating the statutory authorities, community and voluntary organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to advance education, and in particular:

- To advance the education of the beneficiaries by the provision of safe and satisfying group play, with the right of parents/carers to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of the group; and to promote the preservation of health of the beneficiaries; and
- To support the values and principles of Early Years

- **Powers**

3.2 In furtherance of the above objects, but not further or otherwise, the Group may:

- Provide, assist in providing or secure the provision of educational and recreational facilities and practical assistance for the beneficiaries, or facilities for the benefit of the general public in the area of benefit;
- Provide, maintain and equip or assist in the provision, maintenance and equipment of premises and facilities designed to carry out the objects of the group;
- Obtain, collect and receive money by way of grants, donations, bequests, legacies or other lawful methods and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;
- Purchase take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any real or personal property and any rights and privileges necessary for the promotion of the above objects and construct, maintain and alter any buildings or erections which the group may think necessary for the promotion of its objects;
- Make any regulations for any property which may be so acquired;
- Subject to any consents as may be required by law, sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or assets of the group with the view to the furtherance of its objects;
- Subject to such consents as may be required by law receive money on deposit or loan and borrow or raise money in such a manner as the group shall think fit and to charge all or any part of the property or assets of the group with a view to the furtherance of its objects;

- Invest the moneys of the group not immediately required for the furtherance of the said objects in or upon such investments, securities or property as may be through fit, subject nevertheless to such conditions as may for the time being be imposed or required by law;
- Recruit and train volunteers with relevant skills to carry out the objects of the group;
- Employ and pay any person or persons, NOT being a member of Committee to supervise, organise and carry on the work of the group and make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of remuneration to employees;
- Promote and organise co-operation in achievement of the above objects and to that end to work in group with local authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above objects in the area of benefit;
- Establish and support, co-operate with, join or amalgamate with any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the above objects;
- Do all such other lawful things as may be necessary for the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

• **Membership**

- 4.1 Membership of the group shall be open to the following, irrespective of ethnic identity, disability, age, gender, political party, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status or religion:
- a) Lavey Early Years Group in the area of benefit who support the objects of the group and whose applications for membership are accepted by the Committee; such members shall be called Family Members and shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the group. Each family is entitled to 1 vote. Those aged 18 and over shall be eligible to be nominated for election to the Committee;
 - b) Well-wishers anywhere or persons who, in the opinion of the Committee, have special knowledge or experience to offer to the group; such members shall be called Associate Members and shall have the right to vote at meetings of the group.

• **Management Committee**

- 5.1 The Committee shall meet not less than twice a term and shall consist of not less than five members of the group and no more than twelve members, elected at an Annual General Meeting.
- Nominations from family members of the group for members of the Committee must preferably be in writing, and must be in the hands of the Honorary Secretary of the group at least 2 days before the Annual General Meeting hereinafter mentioned.
 - If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, election shall be by secret ballot of the members of the group present and voting at an Annual General Meeting.

- If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, further oral nominations may with the approval of the Annual General Meeting be invited from members present and voting at the said Annual General Meeting.
- Nominees must consent in person or in writing to their nomination prior to election

5.2 A Committee member shall, subject to 5.4, hold office until the next Annual General Meeting following his/her appointment. Committee members may hold office for a period of up to 2/3 years and shall retire in rotation with the longest serving one third to retire at each Annual General Meeting, or if it is not possible to determine that, then the third to retire shall be determined by drawing lots. On retirement, members will be eligible for re-nomination and election.

5.3 The Committee members elected at the Annual General Meeting shall have the power to co-opt further members to fill any casual vacancy arising on the Committee, who shall be family members of the group, and shall be elected annually by and from the members of the Committee at their first meeting following the Annual General Meeting.

5.4 The Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be the honorary Officers of the group, shall be full Family members/associate members of the group, and shall be elected annually by and from the members of the committee at their first meeting following the Annual General Meeting. The office of the chairperson shall not be held by any one person for more than three consecutive years.

- The Committee shall consist of:
 - 3 officers (Chair, secretary and treasurer); and
 - Additionally not less than 2 nor more than nine elected members; and
 - If the committee so decides, not more than 3 members co-opted by the committee; and
 - No husband/wife/partner or close relative of a paid member of staff can be on the management Committee; and
 - No husband/ wife or partner of another committee member can be on the management committee.

5.5 Any member of the Committee who fails to attend 3 consecutive Committee meetings without reasonable excuse shall lose his/her place on the Committee which may be filled by co-option in accordance with Clause 5.3 above.

5.6 The trustees (if appointed for the purpose of holding property in their own names on behalf of the Group) shall be notified of and shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the Committee but without the power to vote.

- **Functions of the Committee**

6.1 The Committee may make such regulations as they consider appropriate for the efficient conduct of the business of the Committee and the group.

6.2 The Committee may appoint such staff NOT being members of the Committee as they consider necessary on such terms and conditions as they may determine.

6.3 The Committee may appoint such sub-Committee's, advisory groups or working parties of their own members and other persons as they may from time to time decide necessary for the carrying out of their work, and may determine their terms of reference, duration and composition. All such sub-Committee's shall report back fully and promptly.

6.4 The proceedings of the Committee shall not be invalidated by any failure to elect or any defect in the election, appointment, co-options or qualification of any member.

- **Chairing Meetings**

7.1 All meetings of the group or of the Committee or of any of its subcommittees shall be presided over by its Chairperson failing whom its Vice-Chairperson, if one has been appointed. If neither the Chairperson nor Vice-Chairperson is present, those present may elect one of their number to take the chair. The Chairperson of any meeting shall have a second or casting vote

- **Finance**

8.1 All moneys raised by or on behalf of the group shall be applied to further the objects of the group and for no other purpose provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment of legitimate out-of-pocket expenses to members of the group engaged upon the approved business of the group.

8.2 The Honorary Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the group.

8.3 The financial year of the group shall run from 1st September to 31st August.

8.4 The annual accounts shall be verified / audited by an independent person using the guidelines and thresholds determined by Charity regulations. The independent person shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

8.5 An annual statement of the accounts for the last financial year shall be submitted by the Committee to the Annual General Meeting.

8.6 A bank account shall be opened in the name of the Group. The Committee shall authorise in writing an Office Bearer and 2 members of the Committee to sign cheques on behalf of the group. All cheques must be signed by no less than 2 of the authorised signatories.

- **Trust Property**

9.1 The group may appoint and may terminate the appointment of no less than 3 people to act as Trustee's for the purpose of holding any moneys or property belonging to the group. The title to all or any such real and/or personal property which may be required by or for the purposes of the group shall act under the instructions of the Committee who shall, subject

to the approval and consent of the group as determined by a General Meeting, have the power to fill vacancies among the Trustee's.

- **Annual General Meeting**

10.1 The first Annual General Meeting of the Group shall be held not later than the 1st November each year. An annual General meeting of the Group shall be held at such place and time (not being more than 15 months after the holding of the proceeding Annual General Meeting) as the committee shall determine.

10.2 At such Annual General Meeting, the business shall include the following:

- a) the election of members to serve on the committee;
- b) the appointment of an auditor or an independent person to examine the annual accounts;
- c) the consideration of an Annual Report of the work done by or under the auspices of the Committee;
- d) the consideration of the annual accounts;
- e) the transaction of such other matters as may from time to time be considered necessary.

11. Special General Meetings

The Committee may at any time at its discretion and shall upon a requisition signed by not less than 4 members having the power to vote and giving reasons for the request, call a Special General Meeting of the Group for the purpose of altering the constitution in accordance with Clause 13 hereof or of considering any matter which may be referred to them by the Committee or for any other purpose.

11.1 The Secretary or Chair shall send a note of the date, time and place of each special general meeting with a list of items to be discussed to all members at least 2 weeks before the date of the meeting.

11.2 If the Chair or Secretary does not call a special General Meeting within 2 months of a proper request to do so, any member may call that meeting by putting up a notice in a conspicuous place where the group meets at least 2 weeks before the meeting.

- **Rules of Procedure at all Meetings**

Voting

12.1 Subject to the provisions of Clause 13 hereof all questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote there at. (In case of an equality of votes the chairperson shall have a second or casting vote)

Minutes

12.2 Minute books shall be kept by the Committee and all other subcommittees and the appropriate Secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions.

Quorum

- 12.3 The quorum at Annual General Meetings of the Group shall be 5 and at meetings of the Committee shall be 3 or such other number as the Committee may from time to time determine.

Standing Orders

- 12.4 The Committee shall have power to adopt and issue Standing Orders and/or Rules for the Group. Such Standing Orders and/or Rules shall come into operation immediately PROVIDED ALWAYS THAT they shall be subject to review by the Group in General Meeting and shall not be inconsistent with this constitution.

13 Alterations to the Constitution

- 13.1 Any alterations to this Constitution shall receive the assent of not less than two thirds of the members of the Group present and voting at the Annual General Meeting or a meeting specially called for the purpose PROVIDED THAT notice of any such alteration shall have been received by the Honorary Secretary in writing not less than 21 clear days before the meeting at which the alteration is to be brought forward.
- 13.2 At least 14 clear days notice in writing of the meeting setting forth the terms of the alteration to be proposed shall be sent by the Honorary Secretary to each member of the Group PROVIDED FURTHER THAT no alteration shall be made which would cause the Group to cease to be a charity at law. No amendments may be made to 14.1 14.2 14.3 or 8.1.

14 Dissolution

- 14.1 If the Committee by a simple majority decide at any time that on the grounds of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Group they shall call a meeting of all members of the Group who have the power to vote of which meeting not less than 21 days notice (stating the terms of the Resolution to be proposed thereat) shall be given.
- 14.2 If such decision shall be confirmed by a simple majority of those present and voting at such meeting the Committee shall have power to dispose of any assets held by or in the name of the Group.
- 14.3 Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or charitable institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Group as the Committee may decide.

15 Indemnity

The Group shall indemnify and keep indemnified every officer, member, volunteer and employee of the Group from and against all claims, actions and proceedings (and all costs and expenses in connection therewith or arising therefrom) made or brought against the Group in connection with its activities, the actions of its officers, members, volunteers or employees, or in connection with its property and equipment but this indemnity shall NOT extend to liabilities arising from wilful and individual fraud, wrongdoing or wrongful omission on the part of the officer, member, volunteer or employee sought to be made liable. The Treasurer shall affect a policy of insurance in respect of this indemnity.

This constitution was formally reviewed on the 20th May 2024 by the Trustees at a Special General Meeting.

Review of Lavey Early Years Group Financial Position June 2024

Income

With 40 children enrolled in Lavey Early Years this year, majority of the income was through PEAGS funded places. Each place also required a £20 per year registration fee and £40 per term snack fee.

Grants

We were fortunate to receive £5,950 funding from The Pathway Grant. This was spent on much needed resources to include Forest school training, outdoor resources, iPads and indoor resources such as new sand and water trays. We are eligible for this grant in 24/25 also.

In January 2024 we received £800 of an Electricity Grant.

We received an anonymous donation of £2000 from a community member in November which was much appreciated.

Fundraising

Christmas Hampers – As we do each Christmas, parents of pupils attending Lavey Early Years Group kindly donated items to create Christmas hampers. Tickets were then sold amounting to £800.

Big Bank Holiday Cash Bonanza

Donations accrued by Committee members in support of Bank Holiday Cash Bonanza as well as well as online ticket sales via Klubfunder. £1000 prize money won by Mrs Edel Mulholland McGirr. Total raised from fundraiser: £4,814.21

Expenditure

Salary Costs make up the bulk of expenditure for 23/24. The increase in minimum wage in April 2024 along with a committee vote saw an increase to all wages in Lavey Early Years. This has also resulted in an increase in Pension and Employers National insurance costs.

An increase in Electricity cost have meant £3,162.52 has been paid to date on this. Another bill is expected at the end of this month. Other expenses include – Early Years Subscription fee (£312.50 per month), Phone and Internet (£250 per quarter), Repairs and Maintenance (£250 per quarter) Insurance costs, COR licence, Accountant Fees, Weekly grocery bills and other resources as and when required.

Approved by the Trustees on 28th June 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Signed Carole Melne (Chairperson)

Signed Diana Hassen (Secretary)