



Job Description

School Age Childcare Practitioner

Smart Steps Bridgend / St. Aengus National School

Employer: Smart Steps Limited

Job Title: School Age Childcare Practitioner

Location: Smart Steps Bridgend, St. Aengus National School, Bridgend, Co. Donegal

Number of Positions: 2

Contract Type: Year-round, part-time during school term with the possibility of increased hours during school closure periods, camps and out-of-term provision.

Reporting to: Service Manager / Person in Charge

Start Date: To be confirmed

About Smart Steps

Smart Steps Limited provides high-quality, school-based childcare services for children and families across Donegal. Our services are designed to support children before and after the school day in a safe, caring, welcoming and child-centred environment.

We are delighted to be opening a new school-age childcare service at St. Aengus National School, Bridgend, and are now recruiting two School Age Childcare Practitioners to join our team.

Purpose of the Role

The School Age Childcare Practitioner will support the daily operation of the Smart Steps Bridgend service, helping to provide a safe, enjoyable and engaging environment for children attending before-school and/or afterschool care.

The role involves supervising children, supporting play and recreational activities, assisting with daily routines, promoting positive behaviour and working as part of a team to ensure a high standard of care is provided at all times.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

The School Age Childcare Practitioner will be responsible for:

- Ensuring a welcoming, friendly and child-led service is provided for children each day.
- Building positive and supportive relationships with the children and families availing of the service.
- Carefully observing children to identify their needs and interests, without unnecessary interference, and supporting children's interests through the planning of activities and requesting of appropriate resources.
- Managing confidential information carefully and appropriately, in line with the organisation's Confidentiality Policy and GDPR requirements.
- Working with the Manager to develop daily, weekly and monthly activity plans.
- Assisting the Manager with risk identification, risk assessments and the development of strategies to manage risk.
- Reporting any incidents, accidents or concerns to the Manager and/or the organisation in line with service procedures.
- Participating regularly in supervision and support sessions.
- Developing positive relationships with teachers, school staff and the wider school community.
- Keeping accurate records, including attendance logs, cleaning schedules and medication records.
- Representing the organisation professionally by phone, in person and in any other relevant communication.
- Completing stock checks and reporting supply shortages.
- Assisting with the preparation and serving of meals and snacks.
- Working with the whole staff team to ensure a thoroughly clean, safe and well-maintained environment is provided.
- Participating in continuous professional development and any other training requested by the Manager or required to meet the needs of the service.
- Undertaking any other reasonable duties that may be required from time to time, in line with the needs of the setting and/or Smart Steps.

Essential Requirements

Applicants should have:

- A genuine interest in working with children
 - A caring, warm and professional approach
 - Reliability, punctuality and a strong sense of responsibility
 - Good communication and teamwork skills
 - The ability to support children in a calm, patient and positive manner
 - An understanding of the importance of child safeguarding, wellbeing and inclusion
 - Flexibility and willingness to support the needs of a new and developing service
 - The ability to follow policies, procedures and direction from management
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Qualifications and Experience

A relevant childcare qualification at QQI Level 5 or higher is desirable; however, applications are also welcome from candidates with significant, relevant experience working with children.

Relevant experience may include childcare, school-age care, early years, education, special needs assisting, youth work, sports coaching, children's activities or other child-focused roles.

Candidates who do not hold a formal childcare qualification but can demonstrate strong, relevant experience, reliability and a child-centred approach are encouraged to apply.

Desirable Skills and Experience

The following would be an advantage:

- Experience working in a school-age childcare, afterschool, school, childcare or community setting.
 - Experience planning and delivering age-appropriate activities for children.
 - Interest or skills in arts and crafts, sport, outdoor play, music, drama, games or other creative/recreational activities.
 - Experience supporting children with additional needs.
 - Knowledge of child safeguarding and child protection procedures.
 - Good command of the Irish language.
 - Current certification in Child Protection, First Aid, Fire Safety and/or HACCP, although training can be provided where required.
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Personal Qualities

The successful candidate should demonstrate:

- A professional, friendly and approachable manner, with the ability to engage positively with people from diverse backgrounds.
 - A genuine passion for supporting the development, wellbeing and happiness of children aged 4 to 13 years.
 - A commitment to facilitating a child-led environment that supports children, families and the wider community.
 - A commitment to providing a high-quality service through reflective practice, research and continuous professional development.
 - A strong team approach, with a focus on working collaboratively with the whole staff team to achieve the best possible outcomes for children.
 - Reliability, punctuality, a positive attitude and a strong work ethic.
 - The ability to prioritise tasks and work flexibly in a fast-paced and changeable environment.
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Safeguarding

Smart Steps Limited is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All staff are expected to share this commitment.

Successful candidates will be required to complete all relevant recruitment and safeguarding checks before commencing employment, including reference checks, Garda vetting and any required child safeguarding training.

Hours of Work

This is a year-round position, with working hours based around the needs of the school-age childcare service.

During school term time, hours will primarily be during out-of-school times, including breakfast club and afterschool care.

During school closure periods and out-of-term provision, hours may increase up to full-time, depending on service needs and staff availability.

Specific working hours will be discussed at interview and agreed in advance.

Salary / Remuneration

Remuneration starts at €15.00 per hour, with final salary details to be discussed at interview. Pay will depend on qualifications, experience and the specific requirements of the role.

What We Offer

At Smart Steps, we value our staff and recognise the important role they play in creating positive experiences for children and families. We aim to provide a supportive, welcoming and professional working environment where staff feel encouraged, respected and part of a team.

Benefits include:

- Ongoing training, mentoring and support to help staff feel confident in their role and continue developing their skills.
- Career development and progression opportunities as Smart Steps continues to grow and develop its services.
- Free childcare spaces for staff children, subject to availability, service suitability and the needs of the setting.
- Paid lunch breaks, where applicable to the working day.
- Dedicated HR support to provide guidance and support around employment-related matters.
- Supportive supervision and management guidance through regular supervision, communication and team support.
- A relaxed, friendly and welcoming working environment where staff are supported to enjoy their work and contribute positively to children's experiences.

Equal Opportunities

Smart Steps Limited is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from candidates who are enthusiastic, caring and committed to supporting children in a positive, child-centred environment.

How to Apply

To apply for this position, please complete the online application form available on our website.

Website: www.smartsteps.ie

Email: info@smartsteps.ie

Closing Date

Friday 26th June 2026.