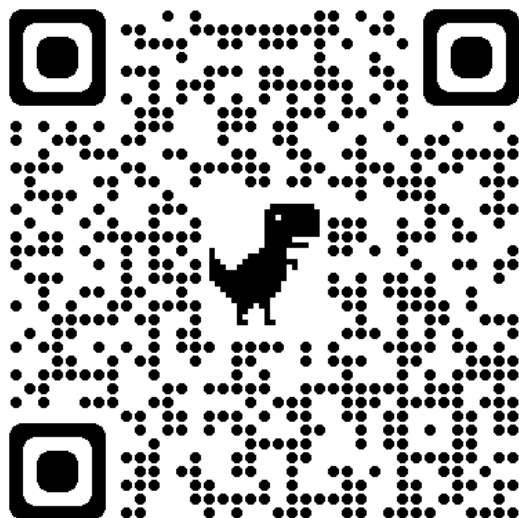




Working in partnership with
parents and other agencies
policy booklet



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10 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies policy

(Alongside associated procedures in 10.1-10.2 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies).

Aim

We actively promote partnership with parents and recognise the importance of working in partnership with other agencies to promote the well-being of children and their families. This includes signposting parents to support as appropriate.

Objectives

- We believe that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and our practice aims to involve and consult parents on all aspects of their child's well-being.
- We also recognise the important role parents must play in the day-to-day organisation of the provision.
- We consider parents views and expectations and will give the opportunity to be involved in the following ways:
 - sharing information about their child's needs, likes, achievements and interests
 - settling in their child to the agreed plan according our settling in procedures
 - taking part in children's activities
 - contributing with ideas or resources as appropriate to enhance the curriculum of the setting
 - taking part in early learning projects, sharing with educators knowledge and insights about their child's learning
 - contributing to assessment with information, photos and stories that illustrate how their child is learning within the home environment, taking part in day-to-day family activities
 - taking part in discussion groups
 - taking part in planning, preparing, or simply participating in social activities organised within the setting
 - involvement in the review of policies and procedures

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- Ofsted and setting contact details are displayed on the parent notice board for parents who have a complaint that cannot be resolved with the setting Lead Practitioner or managers in the first instance, or where a parent is concerned that the EYFS standards are not being maintained

Partnership and signposting to other agencies

- We are committed to ensuring effective partnership with other agencies including:
 - local authority early years services about the EYFS, training and staff development
 - local programmes regarding delivering children's centres or the childcare and early education element of children's centres
 - social welfare departments regarding children in need and children who need safeguarding or for whom a child protection plan is in place
 - child development networks and health professionals to support children with disabilities and special needs
 - local community organisations and other childcare and early education providers
 - Ofsted and setting contact details are made available to other agencies who have a complaint that cannot be resolved with the settings Lead Practitioner or Manager in the first instance, or where a parent is concerned that the EYFS welfare standards are not being maintained.

Legal references

Childcare Act 2006

Education Act 2011

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10 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies Policy

Contents

10.01	- Working in partnership with parents and other agencies
10.02	- Complaints procedure
10.03	- Parental behaviour policy

10 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies procedures

10.1 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies

We believe that families are central in all services we provide for young children. They are involved in all aspects of their child's care, their views are actively sought and they are actively involved in the running of the setting in various ways.

We work in partnership with local and national agencies to promote the well-being of all children.

Families

- Parents are provided with written information about the setting, including the setting's safeguarding actions and responsibilities under the Prevent Duty
- Parents are made to feel welcome in the setting; they are greeted appropriately
- Every effort is made to accommodate parents who have a disability or impairment
- The expectations we make on parents are made clear at the point of registration and parents are required to read and sign the home school agreement
- There is a clear expectation that parents will participate in settling their child at the commencement of a place according to an agreed plan
- There is sufficient opportunity for parents to share necessary information with staff and this is recorded and stored to protect confidentiality
- Key persons support parents in their role as the child's first and most enduring educators

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- Key persons regularly meet with parents to discuss their child's learning and development and to share concerns if they arise
- Key persons work with parents to carry out an agreed plan to support a child's special educational needs
- Key persons work with parents to carry out any agreed tasks where a child protection plan is in place
- According to the nature of the setting, there is provision for families to be involved in activities that promote their own learning and well-being
- Parents are involved in the social and cultural life of the setting and actively contribute
- As far as possible the service is provided in a flexible way to meet the needs of parents without compromising the needs of children
- Parents are involved in regular assessment of their child's progress, including the progress check at age two, as per procedure *09.13 Progress check at age two*
- There are effective means for communicating with parents on all relevant matters and *10.2 Complaints procedure* for parents and service users is referred to when necessary
- Every effort is made to provide an interpreter for parents who speak a language other than English and to provide translated written materials
- Information about a child and their family is kept confidential within the setting. The exception to this is where there is cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where there are concerns regarding their child's development that need to be shared with another agency. Parental permission will be sought unless there are reasons not to, to protect the safety of the child
- Parental consent is sought to administer medication, take a child for emergency treatment, take a child on an outing and take photographs for the purposes of record keeping
- Parents' views are sought regarding changes in the delivery of the service

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- There are opportunities for parents to take active roles in supporting their child's learning in the setting: informally through helping out or activities with their child, or through structured projects engaging parents and staff in their child's learning

Agencies

- We work in partnership or in tandem with local and national agencies to promote the wellbeing of children
- Procedures are in place for sharing of information about children and families with other agencies, as put in procedures *07.2 Confidentiality, recording and sharing information*
- Information shared by other agencies (third party information) is also kept in confidence and not shared without consent from that agency
- When working in partnership with staff from other agencies, individuals are made to feel welcome in the setting and professional roles are respected
- Staff follow the protocols for working with agencies, for example on child protection
- Staff from other agencies do not have unsupervised access to the child they are visiting in the setting and do not have access to any other children during their visit
- Staff do not casually share information or seek informal advice about any named child/family
- We consult with and signpost to local and national agencies who offer a wealth of advice and information promoting staff understanding of issues facing them in their work and who can provide support and information for families. For example, ethnic/cultural organisations, drug/alcohol agencies, welfare rights advisors or organisations promoting childcare and early education, or adult education

Schools

- Settings work in partnership with schools to assist children's transition as per procedure *09.12 transition to school*, and share information as per procedure *07.4 Transfer of records*
- The setting manager actively seeks to forge partnership with local schools with the aim of sharing best practice and creating a consistent approach

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10 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies procedures

10.2 Complaints procedure for parents and service users

There is a fair way of dealing with issues as they arise in an informal way, but parents may wish to exercise their right to make a formal complaint. They are informed of the procedure to do this and complaints are responded to in a timely way. The same procedures apply to agencies who may have a grievance or complaint.

Parents

- If a parent is unhappy about any aspect of their child's care or how he/she feels he/she has been treated, this should be discussed with the child's key person. The key person will listen to the parent and acknowledge what he/she is unhappy about. The key person will offer an explanation and an apology if appropriate.

The issue and how it was resolved is recorded on the child's CPOMS file, also linking in the staff member. The recording will also make clear whether the issue being raised relates to a concern about quality of the service or practice, or a complaint. For allegations relating to serious harm to a child caused by a member of staff or volunteer procedure 6.2 Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff will be followed.

- If the parent is not happy with the key person's response or wishes to complain about the key person or any other member of staff, he/she will be directed to the setting Lead Practitioner who will notify the settings manager. Some parents will want to make a written complaint; others will prefer to make it verbally, in which case the setting Lead Practitioner writes down the main issues of the complaint and keeps it on the child's file on CPOMS.
- The setting manager will investigate the complaint and provide time to feedback to the parent within 28 days. A confidential written report of the investigation is kept in the child's file on CPOMS if the complaint relates directly to a child.
- If the parent is still not satisfied, or if the complaint is about the Lead practitioner, the setting Lead practitioner is asked to forward their complaint verbally or in writing to the Setting Manager.

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- If the parent is still not satisfied, then he/she is entitled to appeal the outcome verbally or in writing to the setting manager's who will pass the matter on to the trustees for further investigation, who will respond to the parent within a further 14 days.
- If the complainant believes that the matter has not been resolved and there has been a breach of the EYFS requirements they are entitled to make a complaint to Ofsted. The manager will assist in any complaint investigation as well as in producing documentation that records the steps that were taken in response to the original complaint.
- The setting manager ensures that parents know they can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at any time as follows:

Applications, Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester M1 2WD or telephone: 0300 123 1231

Agencies

- If an individual from another agency wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of the setting, it should be made in writing to the setting Lead Practitioner.
- The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.
- The setting managers investigates the matter and meets with the individual to discuss the matter further within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- An agreement needs to be reached to resolve the matter.
- If agreement is not reached, the complainant may write to the setting manager's, who acknowledges the complaint within 5 days and reports back within 14 days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal and are referred to the owners/directors/trustees.

Ofsted complaints record

- Legislation requires settings to keep a record of complaints and disclose these to Ofsted at inspection, or if requested by Ofsted at any other time.

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- The record of complaints is a summative record only.

A record of complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

- In all cases where a complaint is upheld a review will be undertaken by the trustees to look for ways to improve practice where it is required.

This procedure is displayed on the Parent Notice Board.

10 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies procedures

10.3 Parental behaviour policy

Our Pre-school believes staff, parents/carers and Pre-school children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which the Pre-school conducts itself. Behaviour that will cause harassment, alarm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to the aims of the Pre-school.

We expect parents and carers to show respect and concern for others by:

- supporting the respectful ethos of our Pre-school by setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards all members of the Pre-school community.
- working together with staff for the benefit of children. This includes approaching the Lead Practitioner or Deputy Lead Practitioner to resolve any issues of concern and to discuss and clarify specific events in order to bring about a positive solution;
- correcting own child's behaviour, especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour.
- respecting the Pre-school environment, including keeping the Pre-school tidy by not littering.
- respecting the safety of others, including not bringing dogs or other pets onto the Pre-school site.
- No Smoking or vaping on the pre-school site.

In order to support a peaceful and safe Pre-school environment, we will not tolerate:

- disruptive behaviour which interferes with the operation of a Pre-school, an office area or any other part of the pre-school grounds.
- attempts to gain entry to any part of the premises in disregard of procedure or without permission and appropriate supervision
- using loud and/or offensive language or displaying temper.
- damaging or destroying Pre-school property.

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- smoking/ vaping and consumption of alcohol or other drugs on the pre-school site or accessing the pre-school site whilst intoxicated
- Discrimination towards anyone involved with the pre-school.

The Pre-school will not tolerate threatening, abusive or insulting words and behaviour by people attending the Pre-school. Physical attacks and threatening behaviour, abusive or insulting language to staff, committee members, parents and carers, children and other users of the school premises will result in suspension. This also includes abusive and insulting language used on phones or any written communication.

Threats and abuse towards staff and volunteers

The setting is responsible for protecting the health and safety of all staff and volunteers in its services and has a duty of care in relation to their physical and emotional well-being. We believe that violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against staff are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Where such behaviour occurs, we will take all reasonable and appropriate action in support of our staff and volunteers.

- Staff and volunteers have a right to expect that their workplace is a safe environment, and that prompt and appropriate action will be taken on their behalf if they are subjected to abuse, threats, violence or harassment by parents, service users and other adults as they carry out their duties.
- The most common example of unreasonable behaviour is abusive or intimidating and aggressive language. If this occurs, the ultimate sanction, where informal action is not considered to be appropriate or has proved to be ineffective, is the withdrawal of permission to be on the premises.
- Where a person recklessly or intentionally applies unlawful force on another or puts another in fear of an immediate attack, it is an offence in law which constitutes an assault. We would normally expect the police to be contacted immediately.

There are three categories of assault, based on the severity of the injury to the victim.

1. Common Assault - involving the threat of immediate violence or causing minor injury (such as a graze, reddening of the skin or minor bruise).
2. Actual Bodily Harm - causing an injury which interferes with the health or comfort of the victim (such as multiple bruising, broken tooth or temporary sensory loss).
3. Grievous Bodily Harm - causing serious injury (such as a broken bone or an injury requiring lengthy treatment).

There is also an aggravated form of assault based upon the victim's race, religion, disability or sexual orientation and other protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 which carries higher maximum penalties.

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It is important to note that no physical attack or injury needs to have occurred for a common assault to have taken place. It is sufficient for a person to have been threatened with immediate violence and put in fear of a physical attack for an offence to have been committed.

Any staff member or volunteer who feels under threat or has been threatened, assaulted, or intimidated in the course of their work must report this immediately to their manager who will follow the setting manager's procedures and guidance for responding.

999 should always be used when the immediate attendance of a police officer is required.

The police support the use of 999 in all cases where:

- there is danger to life
- there is a likelihood of violence
- an assault is, or is believed to be, in progress
- the offender is on the premises
- the offence has just occurred, and an early arrest is likely

If it is not possible to speak when making a 999 call because it alerts an offender, cough quietly or make a noise on the line, then follow the prompts to dial 55 (mobiles only) for a silent call. Police may be able to trace the call and attend the premises.

Harassment and intimidation

Staff may find themselves subject to a pattern of persistent unreasonable behaviour from individual parents or service users. This behaviour may not be abusive or overtly aggressive but could be perceived as intimidating and oppressive. In these circumstances staff may face a barrage of constant demands or criticisms on an almost daily basis, in a variety of formats for instance, email or telephone. They may not be particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation but can have a cumulative effect over a period of undermining their confidence, well-being, and health. In extreme cases, the behaviour of the parent or other service user may constitute an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, whereby:

A person must not pursue a course of conduct:

- (a) which amounts to harassment of another, and*
- (b) which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.*

If so, the police have powers to act against the offender. Such situations are rare but, when they do arise, they can have a damaging effect on staff and be very difficult to resolve. If the actions of a parent appear to be heading in this direction, staff should speak to their manager who will take appropriate action to support. This may include the manager sending a letter to the aggressor,

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warning them that their behaviour is unacceptable and may result in further action being taken against them. All incidents must be recorded and reported to the setting's line manager using form.

Methods

Where the parent's behaviour merits it, the setting manager, with another member of staff present, should inform the parent clearly but sensitively that staff feel unduly harassed or intimidated and are considering making a complaint to the police if the behaviour does not desist or improve. The parent should be left in no doubt about the gravity of the situation and that this will be followed up with a letter drafted by the setting Lead Practitioner but sent to their line manager for approval before being issued.

- Whilst acknowledging that service users i.e. parents and families, may themselves be under severe stress, it is never acceptable for them to behave aggressively towards staff and volunteers. Individual circumstances along with the nature of the threat are considered before further action is taken.
- All parties involved should consider the needs, views, feelings and wishes of the victim at every stage. We will ensure sympathetic and practical help, support is available to the victim both at the time of the incident and subsequently.
- Following an incident of misconduct that has not required Police to attend, the Lead Practitioner can suspend a child and/or their parent for the remainder of the day, with immediate effect. If a child is suspended there will be no refund of fees paid for those sessions from which they have been suspended.
- The Lead Practitioner must inform the Manager and Committee Chair as soon as possible with a written report of the circumstances. The Manager and/or Chairperson can extend the suspension to 7 days if necessary and will inform the parent accordingly either in writing or by telephone.
- The Manager or Chairperson will invite the offending parent/carer for an interview if it is deemed necessary. The Manager or Chairperson must be accompanied at the interview by the Manager or another staff/Committee member who is not directly involved. The parent/carer is permitted to bring a person of their choice to the interview as well. An agreed written record of the discussion will be made for the official complaint's records. All of the parties present at the meeting must sign the record and be in receipt of a copy of the document.
- If at this stage the parent/carer and Pre-school cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved. Staff or volunteers within the Pre-school Learning Alliance are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators.
- The mediator keeps all discussion confidential and can hold separate meetings with the Pre-school personnel and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice they give.

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- When the mediator has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the parent/carer and Pre-school personnel will be held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached. A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, will be made. Everyone present at the meeting must sign the record and be in receipt of a copy of the document. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.
- The Pre-school will use outside agencies to help enforce any decisions, which may include but is not limited to: summoning police to remove the parent/carer from the premises and applying for a court injunction to exclude the person or persons from the premises. If a child is left in defiance of the suspension, we will follow the procedure set out in our *06.5 uncollected child policy*.

Police involvement:

- When they attend the setting or service, the police will take written statements from the victim (including a 'Victim Personal Statement') and obtain evidence to investigate the offence in the most appropriate and effective manner.
- The police will also consider any views expressed by the setting Lead Practitioner and manager/chair person/trustees as to the action they would like to see taken. The manager should speak to the victim and be aware of his or her views before confirming with the police how they wish them to proceed.
- In some cases the victim may be asked by the police if he/she wishes to make a complaint or allegation against the alleged offender. It is important to ensure that the victim can discuss the matter with their line manager, a colleague or friend before deciding on their response. It is helpful for the victim to be assured that, if there is a need subsequently to give evidence in court, support can be provided if it is not already available from Victim Support.
- The decision regarding whether an individual is prosecuted is made by the police or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) based on the evidence and with due regard to other factors.
- After the incident has been dealt with, a risk assessment is done to identify preventative measures that can be put in place to minimise or prevent the incident occurring again.