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10 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies policy

Alongside associated procedures in 10.1-10.4 Working in partnership with parents and other agencies, this policy was adopted by Isleham Under Fives Association on 12th October 2022.

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 and outings
 - contributing with ideas or resources as appropriate to enhance the curriculum of the setting
 - taking part in early learning projects, sharing with practitioners 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
 - taking part in a parent forum to encourage the democratic participation of parents in discussions about the day-to-day organisation of the setting, consulting about new developments and other matters as they arise
 - involvement in the review of policies and procedures
 - 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 manager in the first instance, or where a parent is concerned that the EYFS standards are not being maintained

Partnership and signposting to other agencies

Isleham under fives association Policies & Procedures for the EYFS 2021 (Early Years Alliance 2021)

- 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 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 providers
 - Ofsted and setting contact details are made available to other agencies who have a complaint that cannot be resolved with the Setting 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

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, there is adult seating and provision for refreshment.
- 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.
- 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.
- Key persons regularly meet with parents to discuss their child's progress 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
- Parents are actively encouraged to participate in decision making processes via a parent forum.
- 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 out 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 education, or adult education.

Schools

- Settings work in partnership with schools to assist children's transition as per procedure 09.12 Prime times – transition to school., and share information as per procedure 07.6 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.

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 staff. The staff member will listen to the parent and acknowledge what he/she is unhappy about. The staff member will offer an explanation and an apology if appropriate. The issue and how it was resolved is recorded in the child's file and Complaint Investigation Record. 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 response or wishes to complain about the staff member or any other member of staff, he/she will be directed to the setting manager. Some parents will want to make a written complaint; others will prefer to make it verbally, in which case the setting manager writes down the main issues of the complaint using the Complaint Investigation Record and keeps it in the child's file.
- 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 if the complaint relates directly to a child.
- If the parent is still not satisfied, or if the complaint is about the setting manager, the setting manager is asked to forward their complaint verbally or in writing to the committee chair, if appropriate, the deputy manager will assist the chair in dealing with the complaint.
- If the parent is still not satisfied, then he/she is entitled to appeal the outcome verbally or in writing to the committee chair who will pass the matter on to 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 manager.
- The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.
- The setting manager 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 line manager, 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.
- 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 Parent Notice Board.

Further guidance

Complaint Investigation Record (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2015)

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10.3 Environmental Policy

Introduction

Sustainable development is essential to ensure quality of life without damaging the planet for the future. This requires a balance between economic prosperity, social equity and care for the environment. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to promote and practice environmentally sustainable development.

We believe that introducing environmental issues throughout its services and practices, in an appropriate manner, will enable children and families, students, staff and volunteers and the local community to develop sustainable behaviour.

Objectives

1. To encourage children and families, students, staff and volunteers and the local community to care for themselves [their health and wellbeing], for each other and for the environment
2. To encourage children and families, students, staff and volunteers and the local community to use their individual, and collective talents so that they can contribute to the economic prosperity of their local community and the country
3. To ensure the children and their families and students have all they need to prepare them for their future success
4. To promote and practise the principles of social equity both in the Preschool and through the Preschool's links with partner agencies local, regional, national and global communities.
5. To empower children and families, students, staff and volunteers and the local community to lead sustainable lives through providing learning and support to achieve sustainable behaviours.
6. To share responsibility with the wider community, for promoting and practising policies which, show concern and care for the future of the global environment.

Inclusion and Participation

Children and families, students, staff and volunteers and members of the local community are encouraged to participate in decision making through service delivery, stakeholder consultations and forums and the Preschools Governance structures. The preschool encourages participants to feel confident about finding solutions and to enjoy making positive contributions to society. Issues such as discrimination, equality and opportunity, citizenship, cultural and religious awareness and care for the environment are consistent themes for children and families, staff and volunteers and the local community to engage with.

Resources and Purchasing

The Preschool are committed to reduce, re-use, and recycle wherever practicable. Equipment will be turned off when not in use and old equipment will be disposed of following ecological guidelines. The

Preschool will endeavour to become a model of sustainable procurement, using goods made from recycled materials and goods and services from local sources where possible.

Energy and Water

The Preschool are conscious of the need to conserve energy and water, and it will continue to implement initiatives to encourage high levels of efficient and effective use of these resources.

The Preschool

Waste Management

The Preschool will reduce as much waste as possible to avoid landfill deposits by:

- Using paper and other consumables sparingly before putting it in recycling bags;
- Use email and social media wherever practicable to communication with staff and volunteers, children and families using the Preschool and its' facilities, other agencies and the community;
- Recycle items such as paper, cardboard, ink cartridges and plastic products.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

The Preschool will take the following steps to reduce carbon emissions:

- Obtain food and drinks from locally sourced providers/suppliers;
- Use eco-friendly products for all repairs, maintenance and decorating;
- Purchase energy efficient appliances and equipment – with the 'Energy Star' label;
- Sign up for renewable energy and obtain green tariffs;
- Reduce heating and lighting and other utility consumption;
- Purchase durable goods;

Sensible Use of Paper

The Preschool will work towards a paperless environment; where the use of paper is required for activities – recycled paper will be used and all used paper will be re-cycle.

Protection of the Rural Environment

The Preschool will contribute towards the protection of the rural environment through its services and activities to children and families and with the local community through:

- Emphasising the importance of the countryside and the sustainable use of land and resources;
- Promoting the importance of locally grown and sourced food and other resources;
- Promoting the importance of habitat and wildlife;
- Promoting the sustainable development and management of the countryside;
- Supporting other nature, wildlife and countryside agencies with their sustainability

policies.

Travel and Traffic

The preschool promotes walking, scooting and cycling to the preschool.

Food and Drink

Children's health and well-being are improved with a healthy and balanced diet. The Preschool therefore encourage healthy eating and all food and drink offered by the Preschool to children and families and visitors is nutritionally healthy. Children are encouraged to drink plenty of water throughout their attendance at the Preschool to ensure that they remain appropriately hydrated. We will support children and their parents to make healthy choices and promote health and well-being through our Health and well-being Strategy.

Building and Grounds

As the Integrated Centre are refurbished and maintained they will use environmentally friendly products, services and processes where possible and practicable and dispose of used items in an eco-friendly manner, meeting current environmental regulations.

Local Well-being

Through engaging with parents/families, the local community, local businesses, schools and community groups, the preschool will provide activities such as Green Days/Weeks to raise awareness of sustainability issues.

Global Dimension

As Preschool we engage and participate in activities linking us to the wider world such as the World Wildlife Fund, Comic Relief, Oxfam, and Children in Need etc. The preschool also has links with other schools, centres, community groups and other agencies, including Higher Education Institutes in seeking to develop wider international links.

Learning and Support

The Preschool are committed to developing learning and support services to children and families that will deepen environmental awareness and an understanding of sustainable development; helping children and families to develop a greater knowledge of their responsibility to care for themselves, others and the environment.

The aim is to continue to extend this ethos of sustainability in our determination to move towards a healthier, safer, more inclusive and equitable society and encourage service users to become ambassadors for sustainability in the wider community.

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10.4 Serial and unreasonable complaints

The Preschool is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the preschool. However, we do not expect our staff or committee members to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect them from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The Preschool defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff or committee who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the preschool's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Ofsted or Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on the preschool's time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff or committee member regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the preschool that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Manager or Chair will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Manager or Chair will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Preschool causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the Preschool

This policy can also be adapted to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints'