

### **10.1 Admissions**

#### **Policy statement**

It is our intention to make our setting accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We aim to ensure that all sections of our community have access to the setting through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

#### **Procedures**

- We ensure that the existence of our setting is advertised in places accessible to all sections of the community.
- We ensure that information about our setting is accessible and provided in written and spoken form.
- We will aim to provide translated written materials where language needs of families suggest this is required, as well as access to an interpreter. Where necessary, we will try to provide information in Braille, or through British Sign Language.
- We arrange our waiting list in birth order. In addition, our policy may take into account the following:
  - the vicinity of the home to the setting; and
  - siblings already attending the setting.
- We keep a place vacant, if this is financially viable, to accommodate an emergency admission.
- We describe our setting and its practices in terms that make it clear that it welcomes both fathers and mothers, other relations and other carers, including childminders.
- We describe how our practices treat each child and their family, having regard to their needs arising from their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, social background, religion and ethnicity or from English being a newly acquired additional language.
- We describe how our practices enable children and/or parents with disabilities to take part in the life of the setting.
- We monitor the gender and ethnic background of children joining the group to ensure that our intake is representative of social diversity.
- We make our Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality Policy widely known.
- We are flexible about attendance patterns to accommodate the needs of individual children and families, providing these do not disrupt the pattern of continuity in the setting that provides stability for all the children.

### **10.1a Settling In**

#### **Policy Statement**

At Cublington Nursery School we want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents, to recognise other adults as a source of authority, help and friendship and to be able to share with their parents afterwards the new learning experiences enjoyed in the nursery school. We also want parents to feel welcome and involved from the beginning.

## Procedures

In order to accomplish this, we aim to create a partnership with parents in the following ways by:

- ensuring plentiful opportunities for parents to inform the nursery school about their children's current achievements and interests.
- encouraging parents to visit the nursery school with their children during the weeks before an admission is planned.
- introducing flexible admission procedures if appropriate, to meet the needs of individual families and children.
- making clear to families from the outset that they will be welcome and supported in the nursery school for as long as it takes to settle their child.
- reassuring parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into nursery school.
- respecting their child's need for the use of a comforter during the settling in period and by sensitively helping the child to develop confidence without the use of a comforter.
- encouraging their child to keep their comforter in their bag for use if necessary.
- encouraging parents, where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious and unhappy. Our settling in procedures aim to help parents and children to feel comfortable in the nursery school, and to ensure that children can benefit from what the group has to offer and feel confident that their parents will return at the end of the session.

## 10.2 Parental involvement

### Policy statement

We believe that children benefit most from early years education and care when parents and settings work together in partnership.

Our aim is to support parents as their children's first and most important educators by involving them in their children's education and in the full life of the setting. We also aim to support parents in their own continuing education and personal development.

Some parents are less well represented in early years settings; these include fathers, parents who live apart from their children, but who still play a part in their lives, as well as working parents. In carrying out the following procedures, we will ensure that all parents are included.

When we refer to 'parents' we mean both mothers and fathers; these include both natural or birth parents, as well as step-parents and parents who do not live with their children but have contact with them and play a part in their lives. 'Parents' also includes same sex parents, as well as foster parents.

The Children Act (1989) defines *parental responsibility* as '*all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property*'. (For a full explanation of who has parental responsibility, refer to the Pre-school Learning Alliance publication *Safeguarding Children*.)

## Procedures

Parents are made to feel welcome in our setting and they are greeted appropriately.

- We have a means to ensure all parents are included - that may mean we have different strategies for involving fathers, or parents who work or live apart from their children.
  - We consult with all parents to find out what works best for them.
  - We ensure ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families.
  - We inform all parents about how the setting is run and its policies, through access to written information and through regular informal communication. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them.
  - We inform all parents on a regular basis about their children's progress.
  - We involve parents in the shared record keeping about their children - either formally or informally – and ensure parents have access to their own children's written developmental records.
  - Information about a child and his or her family is kept confidential with our setting. We provide parents with a privacy notice that details how and why we process their personal information.
  - 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 a child's development that needs to be shared with another agency.
  - We seek parental consent to administer medication, take a child for emergency treatment, take a child on an outing and take photographs for the purposes of record keeping.
  - We provide opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the setting.
  - We inform parents about relevant conferences, workshops and training.
  - We consult with parents about the times of meetings to avoid excluding anyone.
  - We provide information about opportunities to be involved in the setting in ways that are accessible to parents with basic skills needs, or those for whom English is an additional language.
  - We welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take.
  - We inform all parents of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions and we check to ensure these are understood. All parents have access to our written complaints procedure.
  - We provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in the setting and about young children's learning, in the setting and at home.
  - As far as it possible our service is provided in a flexible way to meet the needs of parents without compromising the needs of children.
  - Where applicable our key person will work with parents to carry out an agreed plan to support special educational needs.
  - We involve parents in the shared record keeping about their children, - either formally or informally and ensure parents have access to their children's written developmental; records.
- We support families to be involved in activities that promote their own learning and well-being; informing parents about relevant conferences, training and workshops.

In compliance with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, the following documentation is in place:

- Admissions Policy.
- Complaints procedure.
- Record of complaints.
- Developmental records of children.

### **Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Complaint Investigation Record (2015)
- Engaging Mothers & Fathers (2010)
- Safeguarding Children (2013)
- The First and Foremost Series (2008)

## **10.3 Children's records**

### **Policy statement**

We have record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; the means we use to store and share that information takes place within the framework of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

This policy and procedure should be read alongside our Privacy Notice, the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and the Information Sharing Policy.

### **Procedures**

If a child attends another setting, we will establish a regular two-way flow of appropriate information with parents and other providers, where appropriate we will incorporate comments from other providers as well as parents and/or carers into the child's records. We keep two kinds of records on children attending our setting:

#### ***Developmental records***

- These include observations of children in the setting, photographs, video clips and samples of their work and summary developmental reports.
- These are usually kept in the playroom and can be freely accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents.

#### ***Personal records***

- These include registration and admission forms, signed consent forms, correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
- Early Support – including any additional focussed intervention provided by our setting, eg support for behaviour, language or development that needs an SEN action plan and records of any meetings held.

- Welfare and child protection concerns – including records of all welfare and protection concerns, and our resulting action, meetings and telephone conversations about the child, an Education, Health and Care Plan and any information regarding a Looked After Child.
- Correspondence and Reports – including a copy of the child's 2 year old progress check as applicable, all letters and emails to and from other agencies and any confidential reports from other agencies.
- These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet and are kept secure by the person in charge in an office or other suitably safe place.
- We ensure that access to children's files is restricted to those authorised to see them and make entries in them, this being the manager, deputy, designated person for child protection, the child's key person or other staff as authorised by the manager.
- We may be required to hand children's personal files to Ofsted as part of an inspection or investigation process, or to a local authority conducting a S11 audit as long as authorisation is seen. We ensure that children's personal files are not handed over to anyone else to look at.
- Parents have access, in accordance with our Privacy Notice, Confidentially and Client Access to Records Policy, to the files and records of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
- We retain some children's records for three years after they have left the setting, except records that relate to an accident or child protection matter, which are kept until a child reaches the age of 21 years or 24 years respectively. These are kept in a secure place. Developmental records are passed on to the child's parents and then on to the next school.

### **Archiving children's files**

- When a child leaves our setting we will remove any remaining paper documents (after the Learning Journey has been returned to the parents and the Development Matter Statements has been sent to their next school) from the child's personal file and place them in a robust envelope, with the child's name and date of birth on the front and the date they left. We will seal this and place it in an archive box, stored in a safe place (i.e. a locked cabinet) for three years. After three years it is destroyed.
- Where there were s.47 child protection investigations, we will mark the envelope with a star and archive it for 25 years.
- We store financial information according to our finance procedures.

### **Other records**

- We keep a daily record of the names of the children we are caring for, their hours of attendance and the names of their key person.
- Students on Pre-school Learning Alliance or other recognised qualifications and training, when they are observing in the setting, are advised of our Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and are required to respect it.

## **Legal framework**

- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

## **10.6 Making a complaint**

### **Policy statement**

Our setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

### **Procedures**

All settings are required to keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request

### ***Making a complaint***

#### **Stage 1**

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the setting leader.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

#### **Stage 2**

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the setting leader and the management team.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the setting leader may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the setting leader or manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaint Investigation Record, which is made available to Ofsted.

#### **Stage 3**

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the manager. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and the manager should have the support of the deputy manager/senior staff member.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaint Investigation Record.

#### **Stage 4**

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting 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 discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (setting leader and chair, director or owner) 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 s/he gives.

#### **Stage 5**

When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the setting leader and the chair, director or owner is 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, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

#### ***The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Information Commissioner's Office***

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

- The telephone number and address for Ofsted with regard to a complaint is:

- Ofsted  
National Business Unit

Picadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
Telephone 03000 123 1231

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

- These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Policy given to you when you registered your child at our setting. The ICO can be contacted at:

- Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House,

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire. SK9 5AF

Ico.org.uk

## **Records**

- A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept; for at least three years, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaint Investigation Record, which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

## **Legal framework**

- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)



## 10.7 Provider records

### Policy statement

We keep records and documentation for the purpose of maintaining our business. These include:

- Records pertaining to our registration.
- Landlord/lease documents and other contractual documentation pertaining to amenities, services and goods.
- Financial records pertaining to income and expenditure.
- Risk assessments.
- Employment records of staff including their name, home address and telephone number.
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of anyone else who is regularly in unsupervised contact with the children.

We consider our records as confidential based on the sensitivity of information, such as with employment records. These confidential records are maintained with regard to the framework of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

This policy and procedure should be read alongside our Privacy Notice, Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and Information Sharing Policy.

### Procedures

- All records are the responsibility of the manager who ensures they are kept securely.
- All records are kept in an orderly way in files and filing is kept up-to-date.
- Financial records are kept up-to-date for audit purposes.
- Health and safety records are maintained; these include risk assessments, details of checks or inspections and guidance etc.
- Our Ofsted registration certificate is displayed.
- Our Public Liability insurance certificate is displayed.
- All our employment and staff records are kept securely and confidentially.

We notify Ofsted of any change:

- in the address of the premises;
- to the premises which may affect the space available to us or the quality of childcare we provide;
- to the name and address of the provider, or the provider's contact information;
- to the person managing the provision;
- any significant event which is likely to affect our suitability to look after children; or
- any other event as detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2017).

### Legal framework

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Human Rights Act 1998

## Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Accident Record (2013)
- Accounts Record (2015)
- Safeguarding Children (2013)
- Recruiting Early Years Staff (2016)
- People Management in the Early Years (2016)
- Financial Management (2010)
- Medication Administration Record (2015)
- Daily Register and Outings Record (2015)
- Managing Risk (2009)
- Complaints Investigation Record (2015)

## 10.9 Fees and Funding

### Policy Statement

It is our intention to make our setting accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We aim to ensure that all sections of our community have access to the setting through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

The Nursery Manager has current details of rates. Fees are not charged for Staff Training days or holidays and are reviewed once a year. There are 3 terms; they fall roughly as indicated below.

- Autumn Term - September to December
- Spring Term - January to April
- Summer Term - May to July

**Opening Hours:** We are open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9.15 – 3.15 and Thursday and Friday from 9.15 – 1.15.

**Notice of changes:** We require half a terms notice if your child is leaving nursery. If less notice is given, we still require payment for the notice period and any EEF claimed may be required to be repaid to Buckinghamshire County Council.

**Invoices:** Fees will be invoiced at six periods in the year as the start of each half term. These invoices will cover the child's regular hours. Any extra hours will be invoiced at the end of a half term. Fees are charged a half term in advance, to allow management to employ and rota staff appropriately.

**Universal Nursery Funding:** Parents can apply for EEF (Early Education Funding) to give their child up to 15 free hours of nursery education a week. The funding will be used to give children their entitled free hours.

The Nursery will not take the amount off your child's invoice total, but will actually allocate the free hours and then charge at the fee rate for the rest of the hours not covered under the free entitlement.

**Extended Free entitlement:** If places and setting finances allow, we may be able to offer children of eligible parents a limited number of extended free hours. Please check your eligibility at HM Revenue and customs (GB) - [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

**Fees unpaid and arrears:** All fees should be paid within 21 days. Any difficulties regarding inability to pay within the time limit should be discussed with the manager. In extreme cases failure to pay may result in withdrawal of the child's place.

**Fees during Absence:** If your child is absent from the nursery during term time due to sickness or holiday the full fee must be paid for the place. In the case of long term sickness over two weeks the full fee is payable for the term, but under exceptional circumstances arrangements will be made to reduce fees to a holding amount only.

**Nursery Holidays and Closures:** We are open for 38 weeks per year. The holidays are fixed and fall within the local school holidays at Christmas, Easter and Summer. We will notify you of the term dates each September. You will be given advance notice of any other planned closures. Fees are not charged for planned closures or any staff training days. In extreme circumstances the nursery may be closed at short notice due to adverse weather conditions, floods, staff shortages, failure of services, natural disasters, terrorist attacks etc. and fees will not be refunded in these circumstances.

## 10.10 Confidentiality and client access to records

### Policy statement

*'Confidential information is information that is not normally in the public domain or readily available from another source, it should have a degree of sensitivity and value and be subject to a duty of confidence. A duty of confidence arises when one person provides information to another in circumstances where it is reasonable to expect that the information will be held in confidence.'*

*Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers (DCSF 2008)*

In our setting, staff and managers can be said to have a 'confidential relationship' with families. It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education in our setting. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. There are record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; the means we use to store and share that information takes place within the framework of the General Data Protection Regulations (1028) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

### Confidentiality procedures

- We always check whether parents regard the information they share with us to be confidential or not.

- Some parents may share information about themselves with other parents as well as staff; the setting cannot be held responsible if information is shared beyond those parents whom the person has 'confided' in.
- Information shared between parents in a discussion or training group is usually bound by a shared agreement that the information is confidential to the group and not discussed outside of it. We are not responsible should that confidentiality be breached by participants.
- We inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep (see our Children's Records Policy and Privacy Notice) - for example with regard to any injuries, concerns or changes in relation to the child or the family, any discussions with parents on sensitive matters, any records we are obliged to keep regarding action taken in respect of child protection and any contact and correspondence with external agencies in relation to their child.
- We keep all records securely (see our Children's Records Policy and Privacy Notice).
- Information is kept in a manual file. Our staff may also use a computer to type reports, or letters. Where this is the case, the typed document is deleted from the PC and only the hard copy left.
- Where it is helpful to keep an electronic copy, we will download it onto
- disc labelled with the child's name and kept securely in the child's file. No documents are kept on the hard drive. This is because the settings PC's do not have the facilities for confidential use folders.
- Our staff discuss children's general progress and well being together in meetings, but more sensitive information is restricted to our manager and the child's key person, and is shared with other staff on a need to know basis.
- We do not discuss children with staff who are not involved in the child's care, nor with other parents or anyone else outside the setting.
- Our discussions with other professionals take place within a professional framework and not on an informal or ad-hoc basis.
- Where third parties share information about an individual, our managers check if it is confidential, both in terms of the party sharing the information and of the person whom the information concerns.

### **Client access to records procedures**

The parent is the 'subject' of the file in the case where a child is too young to give 'informed consent' and has a right to see information that our setting has compiled on them. Parents may request access to any confidential records held on their child and family following the procedure below:

- Any request to see the child's personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the setting leader or manager.
- We will acknowledge the request in writing informing the parent that an arrangement will be made for him/her to see the file content subject to a third-party consent.
- Our written acknowledgement allows 40 working days for the file to be made ready.
- A fee may be charged for repeated requests, or where a request required extensive administration to fulfil.
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file.
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. Copies of these letters are retained on file.
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records.

- It also includes workers from any other agency, including children's social care, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received, these are attached to the copy of the request letter.
- Members of our staff should also be written to, but we will reserve the right under legislation to override a refusal for consent or just delete the name of the staff member and not the information. We may grant refusal if the member of staff has provided information that could be considered 'sensitive; and the staff member may be in danger if the information is disclosed; or if that information is the basis of a police investigation. However, if the information is not sensitive, then it is not in our interests to withhold that information from a parent. In each case this should be discussed with members of staff and decisions recorded.
- The manager and senior staff go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. A thick black marker is used, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file.
- What remains is the information recorded by the setting, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents, who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the setting leader, so that it can be explained.
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against the setting or another (third party) agency.
- It is an offence to remove material that is controversial or to rewrite records to make them more acceptable. Our recording procedures and guidelines ensure that the material reflects an accurate and non-judgemental account of the work we have done with the family.
- If a parent feels aggrieved about an entry in the file, or the resulting outcome, then we will refer the parent to our complaints procedure.
- The law required that the information we hold must be held for a legitimate reason and must be accurate (see our Privacy Notice). If a parent says the information we hold is inaccurate, then the parent has a right to request for it to be changed. However, this only pertains to factual inaccuracies. Where the disputed entry is a matter of opinion, professional judgement, or represents a different view of the matter than that held by the parent, we will retain the right not to change that entry, but we can record the parent's view of the matter. In most cases we would have given a parent the opportunity at the time to state their side of the matter and it would have been recorded there and then.
- If there are any controversial aspects of the content of a child's file, we must seek legal advice. This might be where there is a court case between parents, where social care or the police may be considering legal action, or where a case has already completed and an appeal process is underway.
- We never 'under-record' for fear of the parent seeing, nor do we make 'personal notes' elsewhere.

Telephone advice regarding general queries may be made to The Information Commissioner's Office Helpline 0303 123 1113.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the setting, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

### **Legal framework**

- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

### **Further guidance**

Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government 2015)