



04. Code of Conduct Policy

Aims of Policy

Parents, children and all stakeholders are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all our staff, and it is regarded as an essential part of the warm welcoming ethos of our Pre-School. The aim of this Policy is to provide guidelines which will help us maintain and improve standards and protect all our staff from any misunderstandings or criticism.

Standards

We expect all our staff to provide high levels of care and, if necessary, advice to parents and other members of staff. All staff are role models for the children and we expect all staff to lead by example. We do not shout or raise our voices unless we believe the safety of a child is compromised. No inappropriate language or phrases will be used. We will endeavour to use a reassuring, non-threatening tone and positive body language at all times. We are aware that aggressive body language or shouting presents a negative example of how we should behave as adults.

We require all staff, students and volunteers to treat one another with friendliness, care and courtesy. We familiarise all new staff with all our policies as part of their induction. Staff and children alike should feel safe, valued and protected at Seer Green Pre-School. Staff will be expected, by following agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Pre-School Manager or Trustee Chairperson any deficiency in the standards. The 'Whistleblowing Policy' (Policy 39) may be followed where appropriate.

Disclosure of Information

We are a very open, democratic Pre-School and pride ourselves on open communication; however, when information is necessarily confidential it should only be made available on a "need to know" basis.

Confidentiality

We expect all staff and to respect any confidential or sensitive information that they may have access to as a result of working in the Pre-School environment. Staff are reminded not to discuss individual children, other than within the staff team for the purposes of curriculum planning/group management, with people other than the parents/guardians of that child. If a member of staff is in any doubt about the confidentiality of an issue, they should discuss their concerns with the Pre-School Manager or Trustee Chairperson (where appropriate). Issues relating to the employment and payment of any member of staff, will remain confidential to the individual concerned and to those involved in the decision making - or the administering - of the process.

Staff are also reminded of their obligations to respect confidentiality as detailed throughout all the sections of our 'Safeguarding Children' policies (Policies 22 to 30).

Physical Intervention

Physical intervention, where a child's movements are restricted against his/her will, may be required to keep the children in the Pre-School safe. This differs from positive handling, which involves the appropriate positive use of touch, which may be required in a range of situations.

Physical intervention is always used as a last resort, and reduced at the earliest possible time. If appropriate, other strategies must be used first. When all other strategies have been exhausted, it may become necessary to physically intervene for several reasons.

The use of physical intervention should only be as a supportive act of care, not as a punishment. If a child was behaving in a way that could cause them to hurt themselves or someone else, staff have to try to prevent this from happening, and if all other measures have been exhausted, intervening may be necessary. This approach is supported by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Any use of physical intervention in a provision should be consistent with the principle of reasonable minimal force. Where it is judged that restrictive physical intervention is necessary, staff should:

- aim for side-by-side contact with the child; avoid positioning themselves in front (to reduce the risk of being kicked) or behind (to reduce the risk of allegations of sexual misconduct);
- aim for no gap between the adult's and child's body, where they are side by side; this minimises the risk of impact and damage;
- aim to keep the adult's back as straight as possible;
- beware in particular of head positioning, to avoid head butts from the child;
- hold children by "long" bones, i.e. avoid grasping at joints where pain and damage are most likely;
- ensure that there is no restriction to the child's ability to breathe; in particular, this means avoiding holding a child around the chest cavity or stomach; and
- avoid lifting children.

Staff are not allowed to use seclusion (which is where children are forced to spend time alone in a locked room) except in an emergency situation. Restrictive physical intervention is not used to bring children to, or hold them in, time-out.

Where physical intervention is needed, a form should be completed, signed by the staff and any witnesses, and the parents / guardians should be informed at the point when the child is collected.

Any complaints regarding physical interventions will be addressed following the appropriate complaints procedure, and documented and retained in line with data retention policies. LADO will be contacted for advice.

Where repetitive behaviour results in physical intervention being required regularly, a behavioural plan for the child should be discussed. Appropriate training for staff can be sourced.

Appearance

The appearance which we present to each other, parents, carers and visitors is important. Our expectation of all Pre-School staff is that they conform to standards of dress as befits a profession. Although many styles of dress are acceptable, staff should dress appropriately for their job and give a positive image.

Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking

Except for medical reasons, employees must not take any substances that might affect their work. No staff should consume or be under the influence of drink/drugs during their hours of work. No smoking or vaping is permitted anywhere on the premises or in the Pre-School grounds.

Hospitality, Gifts and Sponsorship

Staff should not accept significant personal gifts from parents, outside suppliers or hospitality that might give rise to suspicion or concern. Any gifts of a value greater than £50 must be declared to the Pre-School Manager. Offers to attend purely or mainly social or sporting functions should only be accepted when the function is part of Pre-School life or when the Pre-School is being represented, or when it is clear that the hospitality is corporate rather than personal. When an outside agency wishes to sponsor an activity, particular care must be taken if dealing with any potential contractor, or when any partner, spouse or relative of a member of staff might benefit.

Outside Commitments

We would encourage all staff to inform the Pre-School Manager of any additional employment that they choose to take on, that may affect their flexibility to work at the Pre-School. They should be clear about their contractual obligations and make sure their additional employment does not conflict with their Pre-School interests. Additionally, all staff must not engage in any activity which could weaken or undermine the name of, and the viability of, the Pre-School.

Mobile Phones and Social Networking Sites

Please refer to pages 2 and 3 of our 'Safeguarding Children Policy – Child Protection' (Policy 22) for details on mobile phone usage and social networking sites.

Conclusion

Our staff at Seer Green Pre-School are our strength. How the staff conduct themselves reflects on the whole Pre-School. High standards and expectations are essential in all aspects of our work.

As with all the policies for Seer Green Pre-School, the Operational Plan should be referred to for the specific details of day to day operations of the Pre-School. In addition, any issues which arise in the course of a child's time with the Pre-School and that are related to a child's health and wellbeing, parent's or staff's concern, or the overall care and safety of our children, staff, parents and equipment will be dealt with in a professional and confidential manner in order to arrive at an appropriate outcome.

This policy was adopted on (date) _____

Signed on behalf of Seer Green Pre-School (Chairperson) _____

This policy was reviewed as indicated below:

*2012 created
2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 reviewed and updated as required
July-Nov 2017 reviewed and updated
June-July 2018 reviewed and updated
May 2019 reviewed and updated
June 2020 reviewed
June 2021 reviewed and updated
July 2022 reviewed
June 2023 reviewed
September 2024 reviewed and updated*

UNCRC related articles:

Number 19

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Number 36

Governments must protect children from all other forms of bad treatment.