

## Section 1 – Safeguarding Children – associated policies

Name of Policy	
1.1 Safeguarding children (Including whistleblowing policy) see separate page.	
1.2 Looked After Children	
1.3 Information Sharing	
1.4 Confidentiality and Client Access to Records	
1.5 Uncollected Child	
1.6 Missing Child	
1.7 Supervision of Children on Outings	
1.8 Maintaining Children's Safety and Security on the Premises	
1.9 Complaints – see separate page	
1.10 E-safety Policy, including Cameras, Mobile phones, videos, tablets, internet and social networking policy, including a statement of children's safe use of ICT.	
1.11 Safer Recruitment Policy	
1.12 Prevent Duty and Promoting Fundamental British Values.	
1.13 Attendance monitoring Policy	
1.14 Staff Conduct Policy	

### 1.2 safeguarding children – Looked after children

#### Policy statement

**Children who are Looked After will have a separate 'Welfare file'. (See safeguarding Policy 1.1)**

Acorns is committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential. (See also 1.1 Safeguarding – key commitment 2 for children who already have an open case with CSC)

Definition of 'Looked after Children' (LAC): *Children and young people become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most Looked after children will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s).*

We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations and we aim to provide trauma informed practice. Their trauma may be either suffering from, or witnessing, physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken into the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has impact on their emotional well-being.

In our setting, we foster a child-centred approach, placing emphasis on promoting *children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to*. Our policy and practice guidelines for Looked After Children are based on the two important concepts, *attachment and resilience*. The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis for resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and are the basis in developing positive dispositions for learning. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled enough with their carer to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.

#### Principles

- The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status; this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others. We do not refer to such a child using acronyms such as LAC.

## Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the designated child protection co-ordinator, Catherine Kaiser.
- The designated person and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family, and ensures appropriate information is gathered and shared.
- The setting recognises the role of the local authority social care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parents' or foster carer's role in relation to the setting without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- At the start of a placement there is a meeting of professionals that will determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates and the child's learning needs. This plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and three months. Thereafter at three to six monthly intervals.
  - The care plan needs to consider such issues for the child as:
    - the child's emotional needs and how they are to be met;
    - how any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed
    - the child's sense of self, culture, language/s and identity – how this is to be supported
    - the child's need for sociability and friendship;
    - the child's interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway; and
    - how any special needs will be supported.

In addition the care plan will also consider:

- how information will be shared with the foster carer, the child's parents and local authority (as the 'corporate parent') as well as what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored;
- what contact the child has with his/her birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed;
- what written reporting is required;
- wherever possible, and where the plan is for the child's return home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in planning; and with the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) should be involved in the setting's activities that include parents, such as outings, fun-days etc alongside the foster carer.
- The settling-in process for the child is agreed. It should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. It is even more important that the 'proximity' stage is followed until it is visible that the child has formed a relationship with his or her key person sufficient to act as a 'secure base' to allow the gradual separation from the foster carer. This process may take longer in some cases, so time needs to be allowed for it to take place without causing further distress or anxiety to the child.
- In the first two weeks after settling-in, the child's well-being is the focus of observation, their sociability and their ability to manage their feelings with or without support.
- Further observations about communication, interests and abilities will be noted to form a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage 7 areas of learning.
- Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer.
- If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social care worker according to the setting's safeguarding children procedure.
- Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.
- Transition to school will be handled sensitively and the designated person and or the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parents.

## Further guidance

- Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care (DfEE 2000)
- Who Does What: How Social Workers and Carers can Support the Education of Looked After Children (DfES 2005)
- Supporting Looked After Learners - A Practical Guide for School Governors (DfES 2006)



### 1.3 Safeguarding children - Information sharing

**“Ensuring that children and young people are kept safe and receive the best support they need when they need it is vital. Where information sharing is necessary to achieve this objective, it is important that the practitioners have a clear understanding of when information can be shared. It is also for them to understand the circumstances of when sharing is inappropriate.” Richard Thomas, Information Commissioner. The Data Protection Act (2018) is not a barrier to sharing information but is in place to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately. Further information can be seen in NYSCP One minute guide in Appendix L.**

#### Policy statement

- We recognise that parents have a right to know that information they share will be regarded as confidential as well as be informed about the circumstances, and reasons, when we are obliged to share information.
- We are obliged to share confidential information without authorisation from the person who provided it or to whom it relates if it is in the public interest. That is when:
  - it is to prevent a crime from being committed, intervene where one may have been, to prevent harm to a child or adult; or not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.
- The decision should never be made as an individual, but with the back-up of the co-owners. The three critical criteria are: Where there is *evidence* that the child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm. Where there is *reasonable cause to believe* that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. To *prevent* significant harm arising to children and young people or serious harm to adults, including the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

#### Procedures

1. Explain to families how, when and why information will be shared about them and with whom. That consent is normally obtained, unless it puts the child at risk or undermines a criminal investigation
    - We ensure parents receive information about our information sharing policy when starting their child in the setting.
    - We ensure parents have information about our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy.
    - We ensure parents have information about the circumstances when information will be shared with external agencies for example with regard to any special needs the child may have or transition to school.
  2. Consider the safety and welfare of the child when making a decision about sharing information – if there are concerns regarding ‘significant harm’ the child’s well being and safety is paramount.
    - We record concerns and discuss these with the setting’s *designated person* for child protection matters. Record decisions made and the reasons why information will be shared and to whom.
    - We follow the procedures for reporting concerns and record keeping.
    - We seek advice when there are doubts about possible significant harm to a child or others.
    - Managers contact children’s social care for advice where they have doubts or are unsure.
  3. Information shared should be accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose it is being shared for and shared only with those who need to know and shared securely.
    - Our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection procedure and record keeping procedures set out how and where information should be recorded and what information should be shared with another agency when making a referral.
  4. Reasons for decisions to share information, or not, are recorded. Provision for this is set out in our record keeping policy
- Consent** - Parents have a right to be informed that their consent to share information will be sought in most cases, as well as the kinds of circumstances when their consent may not be sought, or their refusal to give consent overridden.
- Our policies and procedures set out our responsibility regarding gaining consent to share information and when it may not be sought or overridden.
  - We cover this verbally when the child starts or include this in our contract.
  - Parents sign a form at registration to say they understand this and copies are given to parents of the forms they sign.
  - Parents are asked to give written consent to share information about any additional needs their child may have, or to pass on child development summaries to the next provider/school.

We consider the following questions:

- Is there legitimate purpose to sharing the information? Does the information enable the person to be identified?
- Is the information confidential? If the information is confidential, do you have consent to share?
- Is there a statutory duty or court order to share information?
- If consent is refused, or there are good reasons not to seek consent, is there sufficient public interest to share information?
- If the decision is to share, is the information shared in the right way? Has the decision been recorded?

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 also see our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy.

**Legal framework** - Data Protection Act 2018, Human Rights Act 1998

### 1.4 Safeguarding Children - Confidentiality and client access to records

**Policy statement - Definition:** *'Confidential information is information of some sensitivity, which is not already lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source, and which has been shared in a relationship where the person giving the information understood it would not be shared with others.'* (Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide)

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. 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; means of storing and sharing that information take place within the framework of the GDPR (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

#### Confidentiality procedures

- We always check whether parents regard the information they share with us to be regarded as confidential or not.
- Some parents sometimes 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.
- Computers which store personal records are password protected. Records are kept in a lockable cupboard when the setting is closed.
- Safeguarding records are marked private and confidential and kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- Staff, students and volunteers all have the importance of client confidentiality explained to them on induction. Breaches of confidentiality are considered gross misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action (see Disciplinary Policy.)
- 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 inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep (see our record keeping procedures) - 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.
- 'Sharing books' or developmental records are on the premises for easy access, however all parents are informed that they must only look at or borrow their own child's book. They are kept in full view of staff at all times.
- We keep all sensitive records securely (see our record keeping procedures).

**Client access to records procedures;** Parents may request access to any confidential records held on their child and family as described 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.
- Acorns commits to providing access within 14 days, although this may be extended whilst the manager prepares the file for viewing.
- 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 social services, 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 have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter. A photocopy of the complete file is taken.
- The setting leader goes through the file and removes any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, 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.

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 child protection.

**Legal framework** GDPR Act 2018 and Human Rights Act 1998

### 1.5 Safeguarding Children - Uncollected child

#### Policy statement

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session/day, the setting puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is cared for safely by experienced and qualified practitioners who are known to them. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for. The procedures are set out clearly in our contract and parents sign to say that they agree to them.

#### Procedures;

Parents of children starting at the setting are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on our Registration Form:



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- Home address and telephone numbers – also place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable).
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting, for example a childminder or grandparent.
- All adults who have parental responsibility for the child.
- Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect them, they provide us with written details of the name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child. We agree with parents how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child and agree a confidential password.
- Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take back-up measures. We provide parents with our contact telephone number.
- We inform parents that we apply our child protection procedures as set out in our child protection policy in the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult **1 hour** after the setting has closed or the end of the booked session.

### **If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we follow the following procedures:**

- The child's file and our diary are checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work. If all contact attempts are unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Form - are contacted. All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or carers.

**Amend Sept 25 – more than 2 emergency contact numbers are kept (parents plus another).**

- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- If no-one collects the child after 1 hour from normal end of session, and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children.
- We contact NYCC children's social services care team:

Duty social worker

01609 780780

- The child stays at setting in the care of two staff members until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker.
- Social Care will aim to find the parent or relative. If they can't, the child will become looked after by the local authority.
- Under no circumstances do staff go to look for the parent, nor do they take the child home with them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.
- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.

**Ofsted may be informed: tel no. 0300 123 1231**

### **1.6 Safeguarding children - Missing child**

#### **Policy statement**

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off our premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the Outings Procedure (1.7) and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

**Procedures – Child going missing on the premises (indoors or out)** - As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/member of staff alerts the setting leader.

- The setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- The setting leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Available staff will go to look around the school perimeter and school staff will be asked to support the search.

**If a child going missing on an outing** - This procedure describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting leader and/or other staff back in the setting. If the setting Leader has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

- What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and may be responsible for their own child.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The setting leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The setting leader contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting leader. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned there.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, staff contact the venue's security to organise the search and contact the police until the child is found.



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The setting leader contacts the police and may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

### **The investigation**

- Staff aim to stay calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader speaks with the parent(s).
- The owners, carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:

The date and time of the report.

What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.

When the child was last seen in the group/outing.

What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.

The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

### **Managing people**

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to keep everyone calm. The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Setting leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting leader and the other should be one of the setting's owners. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called if necessary.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The manager will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

### **1.7 Safeguarding children - Supervision of children on outings and visits**

**Policy statement;** Children benefit from being taken out of the setting to go on visits or trips to local parks or other suitable venues for activities which enhance their learning experiences. Acorns staff ensure that there are procedures to keep children safe on outings; all staff and volunteers are aware of and follow the procedures below.

#### **Procedures**

- Parents sign a general consent on registration for their children to be taken out as a part of the daily activities of the setting.
- Parents are always asked to sign specific consent forms before major outings.
- A risk assessment is carried out before an outing takes place. If this is somewhere we have visited previously, we will use risk assessments from previous visits, provided that we are certain that no changes have been made.
- All venue risk assessments are made available for parents to see.
- Our adult to child ratio is high, normally one adult to two children, depending on their age, sensibility and type of venue as well as how it is to be reached. The ratio is one adult to three children when using Walkodiles.
- Named children are assigned to individual staff to ensure each child is individually supervised, to ensure no child goes astray, and that there is no unauthorised access to children.
- Outings are recorded in an 'outings record book' kept in the setting stating: The date and time of outing, the venue and mode of transport, names of staff assigned to named children.
- Staff take a mobile phone on outings, and supplies of tissues, wipes, pants etc as well as a mini first aid pack, snacks and water. The amount of equipment will vary and be consistent with the venue, the number of children and length of visit.
- Staff take a list of children with them with emergency contact numbers of parents/carers.
- A minimum of two staff should accompany children on outings and a minimum of two should remain behind with the rest of the children, if only a group of children are taken out.



## 1.8 Safeguarding children - Maintaining children's safety and security on premises

### Policy statement

We maintain the highest possible security of our premises to ensure that each child is safely cared for during their time with us.

### Procedures

#### Children's personal safety

- We ensure all employed staff, students and volunteers have had a DBS check made on them. A member of staff holds an up to date Safer Recruitment certificate.
- Adults do not supervise children on their own.
- All children are supervised by adults at all times (at very minimum, either within hearing or sight).
- Whenever children are on the premises at least two adults are present.
- We carry out risk assessment to ensure children are not made vulnerable within any part of our premises or activities.
- Any medicines or other dangerous substances such as cleaning fluids, are stored out of reach of the children. See Health and Safety policy (4.1)

#### Security

- Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. One adult is allocated to supervise safety at the door.
- The times of the children's arrivals and departures are recorded, other than normal open and closing times.
- The arrival and departure times of adults - staff, volunteers and visitors - are recorded.
- When children are outside, the gate to the setting is padlocked. Anyone wanting access will have to ask a member of staff.
- Our systems prevent unauthorised access to our premises. Although it is a shared building, there is no right of way for anyone from outside into the school building unless accompanied by a staff member.
- Doors are locked internally and can only be opened by adults from inside whenever the large gate is not locked. Gates are checked regularly to ensure they remain locked.
- Our systems prevent children from leaving our premises unnoticed.
- The personal possessions of staff and volunteers are securely stored during sessions.
- Children are encouraged to be aware of their own safety and tell an adult if they are worried. They take part in daily checks and become aware of the need for the gates to be closed etc.
- The internal door to the school has double handles to prevent children from being able to open it.
- A sign is attached to the gate informing people that they cannot enter when children are playing outside.

Adults are aware of the school's lock-down procedure and how we should behave if we are made aware of the threat of an intruder or similar incident (see separate guidance).

In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, for example with regard to safeguarding, health and safety, or legal requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is:

**0300 123 1231; Or in writing;**

**Ofsted, North Region Centre, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Anne's Sq, Manchester, M2 7LA**

## 1.10 Online safety Policy - Including Cameras, Mobile phones, videos, tablets, internet, and Social Network policy

**Policy statement;** Staff must at all times ensure that they use technology in a way that does not expose children to harm, does not bring the setting into disrepute, and that they do not behave in a manner that would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children, or to act as an appropriate role model.

Staff should always adopt high standards of personal conduct, and action will be taken against individuals who use inappropriate language, post inappropriate images, or make inappropriate comments in their private life – this could compromise their position in the work setting and lead to a loss of trust and confidence. Staff are advised to consider and set appropriately their privacy settings and should consider the appropriateness of images and material posted. Once posted online, a message, photo, or video clip can be freely copied, manipulated and circulated, and will potentially exist forever. ALL staff and volunteers sign an e-safety agreement, a copy of which is kept in the policies file.

**Mobile phones and internet;** At Acorns, the three co-owners often need to use the setting phone as part of their work eg. contact parents, ordering products etc. However, we recognise the risks to both adults and children from mobile phone use and have agreed rules for their use in the setting. This is that personal phones (or any device which can take images) will be stored in a communal box in the closed storage cupboard. In an emergency, staff can be contacted on Acorns' phone. One person (who is not on the nappy rota) will be responsible for the phone at all times. Business calls will only be made if ratios allow for them, and on the setting's phone. **All staff, volunteers and students are required to sign our E-safety Policy (Appendix H)**

**Cameras;** Digital cameras are used in the setting as part of the assessment and planning process. However, only one camera is in use at any one time, and this is downloaded daily by the DSL or deputy, in order to create learning stories, brochures, our daily board, training materials, and our website. Photographs are also occasionally, used in academic/course work. In order to ensure that photographs are only taken of normal play activities, photographs are downloaded on to the Acorns computer daily. These are accessed by password given only to



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employees. **Amend Sept 26 – A tablet is used to access the Tapestry. Staff can upload to this, but uploads cannot be published without the managers' approval.**

**Parents are not allowed to take photographs on Acorns premises and are asked not to use their phones.**

**Storage of images of children;** Photographs are downloaded on to the Acorns laptop at the end of each day. These are then used to create learning stories or for displays within the setting and leaflets, for example. These are checked by the managers. Once images have been used, the photographs taken will be deleted. Storage complies with GDPR 2018 policy. **Amend Sept 26. The Tapestry app is used in accordance with parents' agreement and Tapestry policy. A camera is used to create half termly progress reports. Photographs are overseen by the managers and kept at Acorns on the laptop.**

### Procedures

The use of phones by employees, students and volunteers, is to be kept to emergencies only.

- Under no circumstances should mobile phones be used to take photographs of children, even with parents' consent.
- Phones and cameras should not be taken into the toilet area.
- Parents are asked to sign a consent form for photographs to be taken. It is explained that their child may appear in other children's photographs, and are sometimes used for training and our publicity materials, and parents are asked for permission for this.
- Any photographs taken for publicity materials, such as brochures, training or our website will not identify children individually and full-face pictures and close-ups are not used.

**Internet and Social Networking; A separate policy is available to cover online safety fully.**

The internet is used at Acorns on reputable websites to support children's learning. The management also use it for emailing, keeping up to date with policies, business purposes and for ordering equipment.

Staff should never seek to communicate with children/make contact or respond to contact with children, outside a clear work context. They should never give any personal details to children, and if they have personal contact with parents/carers of children, they should make their manager aware. Any communication via computer and other devices should take place within professional boundaries, and should avoid communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming'.

See <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/one-minute-guides/social-media-guidance-for-professionals/>

**Procedures; Internet;** The internet at Acorns is subject to NYCC vetting so only sites deemed suitable by them are available. Whilst management use the internet for the reasons stated above, employees, students and volunteers should only use the internet to support children's learning under supervision. Web pages are checked to ensure safe content before they are shared with children.

**Sandra Matthews** is responsible for the Acorns' website content. We endeavour to ensure that children cannot be identified in any photographs and we never use children's names or any other identifying feature.

### Social networking;

- **All** members of staff are asked to sign our **e-safety guidelines (Appendix H)** and a copy of this is kept in their personal file.
- Staff, students and volunteers **should NOT** be 'friends' with current parents in social network sites.
- Acorns should **never be referred to on social networking sites in any capacity whatsoever**, even indirectly.
- Staff should be extremely sensitive when writing 'statuses' as to how parents might view Acorns in the light of any comments made, for example saying that they are unwell, as this could easily be seen by parents.
- Any breeches of confidentiality or discussing Acorns on social networking websites will be taken very seriously and may lead to dismissal. And our procedures may be followed under section 1.2 'Allegations against members of staff'.

## 1.10 continued Statement for *Children's safe use of ICT*

We believe that ICT is an important aspect of learning. Children can use the internet, under adult supervision, to extend their knowledge of the world and support their curiosity. We ensure that all children have access to a wide variety of resources using current technology, such as a computer tablet (not internet connected), digital camera, and computer games. We recognise that children need to be competent and confident in the use of ICT from an early age. However in order to ensure that children get the best learning opportunities from ICT, we have agreed a set of guidelines for its use. **Staff are asked to sign our e-safety policy (appendix H) which advises on safe use of the internet, social networking, and use of technological equipment.**

**Acorns' ethos** - In our experience, many parents believe that children should not be using a computer whilst they are at preschool, as they have sufficient screen time in their access to ICT at home. We agree, believing that learning social skills should take priority over using a computer. Research has established that children using ICT tend to play alone. At Acorns, we ensure that children have technological experiences, but this is balanced carefully against social experiences. We check with parents to ensure that children are learning computer skills at home, to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in this area. If parents felt that their child was disadvantaged in their access to ICT, we would support their individual needs by providing access to some screen time through supervised use of our laptop or tablet.

### Use of the computers and the internet

The internet can be a very useful way of extending children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them and they also need to know how to use a computer. However there are some important points to be aware of;

- Children will never have unsupervised access to the internet. It is important that adults supervise children to ensure that they only access sites which are safe and suitable for their age group. Our internet is filtered by North Yorkshire for safe content, but adults ensure that they know which sites children are using and what they are doing.
- Children need to learn from adults how games are played and how to find what they are looking for, so adults stay with children to show them how to navigate the internet.
- Children have a wide range of experience of using ICT at home, from those who can use it independently, to those who have no experience at all, so it is essential that adults are responsible for differentiating support effectively.
- Children will **not watch videos or television on the internet**. Research shows that there is no educational or developmental benefit to merely watching video with little or no interaction. It is however, acceptable if children want to watch a video to learn more about





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a subject which interests them, but an adult will support them in this and ensure that they understand what they are seeing and are gaining additional learning from it, by asking appropriate questions and encouraging discussion.

- Adults also need to ensure that children take turns and do not spend long periods of time using the computer. Children learn more effectively through moving around at this age, and should be active for most of the day, so it is not desirable for them to sit still for long periods, either using the computer or watching others use it.
- Some parents ask that their child does not use a computer at Acorns. We respect their wishes in this.

### Agreed Code of practice

- **Children will never use the internet or computer games unsupervised.**
- **Only reputable websites such as Cbeebies and Hungry Little Minds will be used for games. These websites will also be promoted to parents as reputable sites for home education.**
- **Only educational games will be played.**
- **Children will not use the PC as though it is a television for watching, rather than interacting, except to extend knowledge. An adult will supervise any use of the internet for reference.**
- **Children will not be allowed to spend more than a maximum of 20 minutes using, or watching someone use, the PC. There should only be a maximum of two children waiting for one child to finish.**
- **Children will not be allowed to watch others using the computer, other than when waiting for their turn.**
- **Children will be encouraged to operate the computer independently rather than watching an adult.**

<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/parents-carers/parent-info/games-consoles-smart-devices-and-how-to-keep-your-children-safe/>

**Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings: Online Safety Considerations for Managers 2019.**

## 1.11 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy – Safer Recruitment Policy

### Introduction;

All organisations which employ staff or students and volunteers to work with children, must adopt a consistent and thorough process of safer recruitment in order to ensure that people who work with children are always suitable to do so. This policy has been created using guidance from the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, Government guidance, and with regard to Level 3 Safer Recruitment Training undertaken by Acorns' DSL, Catherine Kaiser and Deputy Sandra Matthews.

Safer recruitment practice includes people who may not have direct contact with children, but because of their presence and familiarity in a setting, might still be seen as safe and trustworthy.

When selecting adults to work with children, we ensure that the DSL takes a lead in the selection process and is on the interview panel.

### Procedures

#### Safer Recruitment Practice;

Safer recruitment practice is at the forefront of our recruitment process including;

- Advertising and information for applicants.
- References
- Other checks before interview eg. Identifying gaps in employment history
- Selection of candidates
- Interviewing of short-listed candidates
- Offer of appointment to the successful candidate
- Induction and supervision of newly appointed staff

#### Advertisements and information for Applicants

Any advert for staff will demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding and protecting children by ensuring that all recruitment advertising materials contain a policy statement to this effect. All information we give to the interested applicant will highlight the importance placed on a rigorous selection process.

The information will stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly, and that a DBS check application will be required straight away.

The **job description** will set out the extent of the relationship with, and the degree of responsibility for, children with whom they will have contact. The person specification will explain;

- The qualifications and experience needed for the role.
- The competencies and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate.
- How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process.

The application will ask for;

- Full personal information, including any former names by which the person has been known in the past.
- A full history of employment, both paid and voluntary, since leaving school, including periods of further education or training. This must include – start and ends dates, explanations for leaving, and any reasons for gaps in employment.
- Details of any relevant academic and/or vocational qualifications.
- A declaration that the person has **no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, including those regarded as spent**. This will also include referral to or inclusion on the DBS Barred List, restricting or preventing them from working with children (Appendix G)

**CV's** drawn up by applicants in place of an application form are not acceptable because these will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present, and may omit relevant details.

### References;



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The application form will ask both professional and character references, one of which must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Additional references may be asked for where appropriate. For example, where the applicant is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, a reference from that employer will be asked for in addition to the current or most recent employer.

**References must be sent wherever possible to business, not a home address.** Wherever possible, references should be obtained prior to interview so that any issues of concern raised by the reference can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate during interview. **Update Sept 25 refer to criteria 3.13 to 3.21 EYFS Sept 25, page 26. This will guide any recruitment process undertaken.** References must contain objective, verifiable information, and in order to achieve this, a reference pro-forma with questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children should be provided.

### References must include;

- Length of time the person has known the applicant and in what capacity.
- Post held with dates, salary and reason for leaving.
- Ability and suitability to work with children.
- Skills, strengths and weaknesses and how these have been demonstrated
- Any current disciplinary investigation and/or sanctions.
- Any allegations and/or disciplinary investigations relating to the safety or welfare of children, and the outcome of these (including where any sanction has expired).
- Details of any criminal convictions, cautions or bind-overs
- Sickness record
- If the referee would re-employ the applicant and, if not details of why
- Verification of the identity of the referee.

The referee must be asked to confirm whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the applicant has had any allegations made against them, or concerns raised which relate to either the safety or welfare of children, or about the applicant's behaviour towards children. Details about the outcomes of any concerns or allegations should be sought.

**Open references or testimonials will not be accepted.**

### Other Checks before Interview;

If the applicant claims to have specific qualifications or experiences relevant to working with children, which may not be verified by a reference, the facts should be verified by making contact with the relevant body or previous employer and any discrepancy explored during the interview.

### Selection of Candidates;

Standard procedures will be followed to ensure that the best candidates are selected fairly. All applicants must be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

### Safer recruitment means that all applications must additionally be;

- Checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed. Incomplete applications should not be accepted and will be returned to the candidate for completion.
- Scrutinised for any anomalies or discrepancies in the information provided.
- Considered with regard to any history gaps, or repeated changes in employment, or moves to supply work, without clear and verifiable reasons.

All candidates will be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity, with a full birth certificate, passport or photo card driving licence, and additionally a document such as a utility bill or bank statement that verifies the candidate's name and address. Where appropriate, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

Candidates must also be asked to bring original or certified copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies, written confirmation of their qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

### Interviewing short listed Candidates;

Questions will be set which test the candidate's specific skills and abilities to carry out the job applied for.

The candidate's attitude towards children in general must be tested and also their commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Any gaps and changes in employment history must be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from the information supplied by the candidate or by the referee,

All candidates must bring to the interview documentary evidence as detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act and in line with the DBS requirements. See [www.ukimmigration.com/employer/uk\\_work\\_permit14.htm](http://www.ukimmigration.com/employer/uk_work_permit14.htm) and [www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-servicecheck/documents-the-applicant-must-provide](http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-servicecheck/documents-the-applicant-must-provide) where relevant, change of name documentation must be brought to the interview.

### Offer of Appointment

Any offer of employment will be conditional upon all pre-employment checks being completed satisfactorily. This includes DBS check, verification of the candidate's medical fitness, verification of relevant professional status and any restrictions which may have been imposed.

All checks will be confirmed in writing, recorded and retained on the candidate's personnel file, together with photocopies of documents used to identify identity and qualifications.

**DBS Checks;** There are three levels of checks, Standard, Enhanced and Enhanced with Barred checks. DBS checks are available to organisations which work in employments listed in the Exceptions Order (1975) to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, as amended by the Protection of Freedom Act 2012.

Standard DBS check – this will reveal any convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings received.

Enhanced Disclosure – this includes the same as the standard check, plus any additional information held by police that's reasonably considered relevant to the workforce being applied for.



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Enhanced Disclosure with Barred list Check – This includes all of the information above, but also identifies whether the person is barred from working with children.

Under DBS regulations, DBS disclosures can usually only be kept for 6 months, but a record should be kept of the date the disclosure was obtained and who by, the level of disclosure and the unique reference number.

**DBS Update service;** This is a subscription service which allows the applicant to keep their DBS check up to date on line. This allows employees to check a certificate online without having to make another application. This can be carried out provided that we have the applicant's permission.

### **Record Keeping;**

A record is kept of evidence to show that checks have been carried out in respect of staff, supply staff, volunteers and students.

Satisfactory references are kept on the candidate's personnel file, in the case of supply staff, students and volunteers, in a central record within the organisation (Even if they have been recruited through an agency).

Where information gained from either references or other checks, calls into question the candidate's suitability to work with children, or where the candidate has provided false information in support of the application, the facts should be reported to the Police and DBS.

### **Induction of staff, students and volunteers;**

- The induction of all newly appointed staff includes a planned and structured induction. This begins with an introduction to our child protection policy and procedures. This includes introducing the DSL and their role, and the role of staff in safeguarding.
- New staff are provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their own role and responsibilities and the standard of conduct and behaviour expected.
- They are also made aware of our personnel procedures relating to disciplinary issues and our whistle-blowing policy.
- They are asked to complete basic Safeguarding training.

Acorns has a four-week review period, during which a new member of staff will not be allowed to carry out regulated activity unsupervised.

Once all checks and a DBS check is fully completed, and the induction period satisfactorily carried out, the member of staff will be asked to have a discussion with the manager and DSL in order to discuss how regulated activity can be carried out and the arrangements to ensure that children are fully protected.

Safeguarding controls and supervision will be undertaken by the manager and DSL on a regular basis, and the member of staff will have at least a six-monthly appraisal meeting so that any concerns can be discussed.

**Our current procedure meets EYFS 2025 requirements, but a full update will be written Sept 26. Any recruitment will follow EYFS guidance Sept 2025.**

### **Legal framework**

*Primary legislation;* Children Act (1989 s47), Protection of Children Act (1999), Data Protection Act (1998)

The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004), Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

*Secondary legislation;* Sexual Offences Act (2003) Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government 2018. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)

What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)

Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004

## **1.12 Safeguarding and child Protection Policy - Prevent Duty and Promoting Fundamental British Values.**

All registered early years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" This duty is known as the *Prevent Duty*.

**Procedures;** At Acorns, safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do, therefore to ensure that we adhere to and achieve the requirements of Prevent Duty, we will;

- Provide appropriate training for staff and ensure that they fully understand their duties. Part of this training will enable staff to identify children (or families) who may be at risk of radicalisation.
- Build children's resilience by promoting *fundamental British values*, enabling them to develop the courage and confidence to challenge extremist views. The EYFS sets standards for learning, development and care, which are embedded within children's PSED, Communication development and Understanding the World.
- We will assess the risk, by means of formal risk assessment, of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of the terrorist ideology. This will begin as we aim to develop respectful and open relationships with parents, using information gathered from registration forms, and our knowledge of families gained from home visits.
- We will ensure staff understand the possible risks so they can respond in an appropriate and proportionate way.
- We will be aware of the online risk of radicalisation through the use of social media and the internet.
- As with managing our safeguarding risks, our staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour, unusual or unexpected drawings or comments, concerning or violent behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection (children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or may seek to hide their views). The key person approach means we already know our children well and so we will notice any changes in behaviour, demeanour or personality quickly.



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- We will not carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life, but we will take action when we observe behaviour of concern. The key person approach means we already have a rapport with our families, so we are well-placed to notice any changes in behaviour, demeanour or personality quickly.
- We will work in partnership with our local NYSCP for guidance and support.
- We will assist and advise families who raise concerns with us, in order to be able to signpost appropriate support mechanisms.
- We will ensure that our Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake Prevent Duty awareness training (as a minimum) so that they can offer advice and support to other members of staff.
- Staff will have an on-going and open discussion about their own beliefs around British values, and what they mean to staff, children and families using the setting, ensuring that there is a balance created between celebrating and respecting difference, whilst being aware of the dangers of radicalisation.

#### “Fundamental British Values”

For further information with regards to how the EYFS can help children and staff understand British Values and The Prevent Duty, please refer to sections Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Understanding the World (UTW)

To help understand how this is put into practice on a daily basis at Acorns, a few examples are listed below:

##### **Democracy:** Making decisions together: PSED;

Managers and staff can encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, encouraging children to know their views count, value each other's views and opinions, and talk about feelings. For example, saying when they do or do not need help. When appropriate demonstrate democracy in action, for example, children sharing views on what book to choose at circle time by a show of hands.

Staff can support the decisions that children make, and provide activities that involve turn taking, sharing and collaboration. Children should be given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where views are listened to and valued.

##### **Rule of Law:** Understanding rules matter: PSED

- Staff can ensure that children understand their own and other's behaviours and its consequences, and to distinguish right from wrong.
- Staff can collaborate with children to create the rules and codes of expected behaviour, for example, to agree the rules about tidying up and ensure all children understand rules apply to everyone.

##### **Individual Liberty:** Freedom for all: PSED & UTW

- Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff can provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities. For example, allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, or talking about their experiences and learning.
- Staff should encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example, in a small group discuss how they feel about the transition from nursery to school.

##### **Mutual Respect and Tolerance:** treat others as you want to be treated: PSED & UTW

- Managers and leaders create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and race are valued and children are engaged with the wider community.
- Children should acquire a tolerance and appreciation of and respect their own and other cultures: know about similarities and differences between themselves and others among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions and share practices, celebrations and experiences.
- Staff should encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other people's opinions.
- Staff should promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping.

##### **What is not acceptable:**

- Actively promoting intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
- Failure to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregating boys and girls.
- Isolating children from the wider community.
- Failure to challenge behaviours (whether this is staff, children or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.
- That any child should be treated less favourably than other child, for any reason. All children and families will be treated with unconditional positive regard.

### 1.13 Attendance Monitoring Policy

**Rationale;** It is important that our records of children's attendance are accurately kept and regularly monitored to ensure that we can identify any potential problems and look for patterns. All managers and staff are alert to signs that children and learners who are missing might be at risk of abuse or neglect, and appropriate action is taken when children and learners stop attending. We are aware that attendance is not statutory, but that non-attendance could be an indicator of other concerns. We are particularly aware of the need to monitor groups such as children who are in receipt of two year old funding, and those for whom we receive Early Years Pupil Premium, as these groups are considered to be vulnerable learners.

**Procedures;**

- Children's attendance is monitored through daily registers. All absences and reasons given for them are recorded.
- Parents are asked to inform us in person, by phone, by text or Facebook message, if their child will not be attending for any reason, as soon as possible. If we are not contacted, we will ask parents about absences on the child's return.
- All absences will be recorded, and frequent absences (50% attendance or less) will be investigated and further action or monitoring considered. We will always discuss our concerns with parents and endeavour to enable children to attend as regularly as possible.
- Absence is also monitored for the health and well-being of children, for example so that we are aware of outbreaks of illness which need to be investigated, or to warn parents of infections such as chickenpox or German Measles.
- Monitoring attendance and use of government funded hours may be passed on at the local authority's request.
- If a child is missing from nursery on several occasions or stops attending the setting with no explanation, staff are alert to the possibility of risk of abuse or neglect, and informs the DSL who will investigate and liaise with outside agencies. **Amend from Sept 25 – we will keep an additional emergency contact number and this person will be contacted in prolonged or frequent absences, or if there are concerns over well-being.**

**Funded places;**

- Two-, three- and four-year-old funding is provided through the local authority. This is public money, and we have a duty to ensure it is used appropriately. If a place has been reserved but is being used for less than 50% of booked session, we reserve the right to offer that place to any child who may be on our waiting list, for example, a child who has been allocated two-year-old funding, but cannot take up a place at Acorns because sessions are full. This way we can be sure to use the funding to its best effect.
- We would discuss reasons for absence with parents before retracting the funding offer and make every effort to work with them to encourage them to increase attendance. Funding would only be withdrawn as a last resort, and at the end of a school term.

### 1.14 Staff Conduct Policy

**Statement;**

All adults have a crucial role to play in the lives of children and responsibilities and behaviour needs to reflect this.

All staff have the responsibility of keeping children safe and to protect them from abuse and to take steps to ensure their safety and well being. The safeguarding culture at Acorns is child-centred and takes place through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationship between adults and children.

When individuals accept the role to work with children they should understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust involved in that role. Staff should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe, and applied equitably. All staff are in a position of trust in relation to all children. Staff have the position of power and influence, and all staff should understand this, and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence. Due to the potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable children, staff have the responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

**Procedures; Expected conduct**

- Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others and report and record any such incident or concerns, following our Whistle-blowing Policy.
- All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. High standards of personal conduct must be adopted in order to maintain the confidence and respect of parents and colleagues.
- Individual actions in personal life may come under scrutiny from the community and the wider public including with regard to their own children and families. Staff should be aware of their own behaviour both in and out of the workplace which could compromise their position within the workplace in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence or bringing Acorns into disrepute.
- A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self expression. However, staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role which may be different to that adopted at home. Staff should ensure that they are dressed decently, safely and appropriate for the job they undertake.





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- Staff need to take care not to accept any gifts that may be construed as a bribe by others or lead to the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, eg Christmas, and this is usually acceptable, but to receive gifts on a regular basis is unacceptable. It is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to children or their families as it might be interpreted as a gesture to either bribe or groom.
- Staff should take care when selecting children for a specific activity or job in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be taken when excluding children from an activity. Methods of selection should always be subject to clear, fair agreed criteria.
- All staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for children to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a crush or infatuation. They should ensure that their behaviour cannot be questioned, does not encourage this behaviour and be aware that such infatuations may carry the risk of words and actions being misinterpreted. Any staff member who becomes aware of a child becoming infatuated, however small and seemingly insignificant, with either them or another member of staff must report it immediately to the manager so early intervention can be taken to prevent this escalating. The manager should handle the situation sensitively considering staff, the child and parents, ensuring a plan is put together to manage the situation, maintaining the dignity of all. The plan should involve all parties, be robust and regularly monitored and reviewed.
- It is acknowledged that sometimes members of staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside the workplace with both the child and their parents in order to groom the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse. Be aware that some types of social contact with children and/or families may be perceived as harmful or influential and may bring Acorns into disrepute. If you need to support a parent and they become dependent on you outside of your professional role this should be discussed with the manager and appropriate support and referrals should be sought.
- Staff should make sure online safety is paramount at all times working to national and local guidelines. Use of the computer and other technologies must take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, cameras, videos, webcams and other handheld devices and include Facebook, emails, messaging, texts, blogs, gaming websites to name a few (this is not exhaustive and are examples of some only). Staff should not request any personal details from children and parents other than what is required in their professional role. See also section 1.10.
- All communication must be transparent. Staff must not give personal details to parents or children including mobile number, email address, home address, web-based i.d. eg. Facebook details. If staff are contacted they must report this to the manager and the child/parent must be politely and firmly informed that this is not acceptable.
- Physical contact with a child must be carried out in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to individual needs and their care plan. Some children are uncomfortable with physical contact and this must be respected. Permission may need to be sought first and sensitivity may be needed. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reactions or feelings. Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult.
- If a member of staff believes their own, or a colleague's action could be misinterpreted or an action could possibly be abusive, the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the manager and recorded. Advice may need to be sought from the LADO.
- Staff need to be aware if a child has suffered previous abuse as they may react differently, they may need support to help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Children with physical disabilities may require more physical contact. It is important that staff are aware of children who may interpret physical contact differently to others, eg. Those with Sensory Processing Difficulties and children who may be on the Autistic Spectrum.
- Holding and physical restraint – this is covered in our Health and Safety Policy (4.4) – and will be recorded as an incident and parents informed as soon as possible after the incident has occurred.
- For any concerns over staff conduct, please refer to section 1.1 Allegations against members of staff and our Whistle-blowing procedure.

All referrals are to be made to the Multi agency screening team (MAST)

Tel: 01609 780780 or 01609 535070

This number can also be used out of hours to contact the Emergency Duty Team

Alternatively, to by pass the initial part of the call, to go straight to the advisors

Tel: 01609 535070

All Acorns policies are fully reviewed every two years. There have been some amendments made to meet EYFS requirements in Sept 25, but a full review will be carried out in Summer 26.