

# **Our Free Minds**

## **Use of Services & Participation Policy**

### **The purpose and scope of this policy statement**

Our Free Minds is a community-based, child-led provision. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and sustainable environment for children, families, staff and volunteers.

This policy sets out expectations for participation, boundaries around communication and conduct, and how the charity manages situations where participation becomes challenging.

### **Shared responsibility and participation**

Participation in Our Free Minds relies on a shared understanding between families and the organisation.

By using our services, families are expected to engage respectfully with staff and volunteers, accept the ethos and operating model of Our Free Minds, follow agreed communication routes and boundaries, and recognise that the provision may not be the right fit for every family.

Access to Our Free Minds is not an automatic entitlement and depends on this shared understanding being maintained.

### **Behaviour and communication expectations for adults**

All adults engaging with Our Free Minds are expected to communicate respectfully, avoid hostile or emotionally charged interactions, follow staff guidance during sessions and transitions, respect safeguarding responsibilities, and raise concerns through appropriate channels rather than during safeguarding-critical times.

### **Communication at drop-off and pick-up**

Drop-off and pick-up times are safeguarding-critical periods. Staff must prioritise supervision, safe arrivals and departures, and immediate welfare needs.

Brief verbal handover may be necessary where relevant. Staff may not be able to engage in extended or difficult discussions at these times. Matters that are emotionally charged, complex or policy-related may need to be discussed in another meeting, phone call or via email.

### **Equality, inclusion and reasonable adjustments**

Our Free Minds is committed to equality and inclusion in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where requested, provided they do not compromise safeguarding, staff capacity, or the safe operation of the provision.

## Managing concerns and breakdowns in trust

Concerns should be raised through the Complaints Policy or Conflict Management Policy.

Where communication becomes persistently difficult, boundaries are repeatedly challenged, or trust breaks down, restorative approaches may not be sufficient to resolve the difficulty.

## Right to pause, restrict or withdraw access to services

The charity reserves the right to pause participation, place conditions on continued participation, or withdraw access to services where necessary to protect children, the wider community, staff wellbeing, or the sustainable operation of the provision.

Any decision will be proportionate, considered at an appropriate level of leadership or governance, and documented.

## Safeguarding

Nothing in this policy overrides our Safeguarding Policy or statutory duties. The welfare of children is always the primary consideration.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was adopted by: <a href="#">Our Free Minds</a>	Last reviewed and signed by:
Last signed off by all trustees: 23.12.25  To be reviewed: 21.1.27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#">Katie Kotting, Chair of the Board of Trustees</a></li><li>- <a href="#">Clea Sambrook, Trustee for Safeguarding</a></li><li>- <a href="#">Poppy De Witt, Trustee</a></li></ul>