

Working in partnership with parents and other agencies policy and procedure

Alongside associated procedures in 'Working in partnership with parents and other agencies', this policy was adopted by *Pinecones Nursery School* on *01.01.2021* Most recently reviewed *April 2023*

Aim

We actively promote partnership with parents and recognise the importance of working in partnership with other agencies to promote the well-being of children and their families. This includes signposting parents to support as appropriate.

Objectives

- We believe that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and our practice aims to involve and consult parents on all aspects of their child's well-being.
- We also recognise the important role parents must play in the day-to-day organisation of the provision.
- We consider parents views and expectations and will give the opportunity to be involved in the following ways:
 - sharing information about their child's needs, likes, achievements and interests
 - settling in their child to the agreed plan according our settling in procedures
 - taking part in children's outings
 - contributing with ideas or resources as appropriate to enhance the curriculum of the setting
 - taking part in early learning projects, sharing with practitioners knowledge and insights about their child's learning
 - contributing to assessment with information, photos and stories that illustrate how their child is learning within the home environment, taking part in day-to-day family activities
 - taking part in discussion groups when they take place
 - Ofsted and setting contact details are displayed on the parent notice board for parents who have a complaint that cannot be resolved with the setting manager in the first instance, or where a parent is concerned that the EYFS standards are not being maintained

Partnership and signposting to other agencies

- We are committed to ensuring effective partnership with other agencies including:
 - local authority early years services about the EYFS, training and staff development
 - local programmes regarding delivering children's centres or the childcare element of children's centres

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- social welfare departments regarding children in need and children who need safeguarding or for whom a child protection plan is in place
- child development networks and health professionals to support children with disabilities and special needs
- local community organisations and other childcare providers
- Ofsted and setting contact details are made available to other agencies who have a complaint that cannot be resolved with the Setting Manager in the first instance, or where a parent is concerned that the EYFS welfare standards are not being maintained.

Legal references

Childcare Act 2006

Education Act 2011

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We believe that families are central in all services we provide for young children. They are involved in all aspects of their child's care, their views are actively sought and they are actively involved in the running of the setting in various ways.

We work in partnership with local and national agencies to promote the well-being of all children.

Families

- Parents are provided with written information about the setting
- Parents are made to feel welcome in the setting; they are greeted appropriately, there is adult seating and provision for refreshment should parents need to meet.
- Every effort is made to accommodate parents who have a disability or impairment.
- The expectations we make on parents are made clear at the point of registration.
- There is a clear expectation that parents will participate in settling their child at the commencement of a place according to an agreed plan.
- There is sufficient opportunity for parents to share necessary information with staff and this is recorded and stored to protect confidentiality.
- Key persons support parents in their role as the child's first and most enduring educators.
- Key persons regularly meet with parents to discuss their child's progress and to share concerns if they arise.
- Key persons work with parents to carry out an agreed plan to support a child's special educational needs.
- Key persons work with parents to carry out any agreed tasks where a child protection plan is in place.
- According to the nature of the setting, there is provision for families to be involved in activities that promote their own learning and well-being.
- Parents are involved in the social and cultural life of the setting and actively contribute.
- As far as possible the service is provided in a flexible way to meet the needs of parents without compromising the needs of children.
- Parents are involved in regular assessment of their child's progress, including the progress check at age two, as per procedure '*Progress check at age two*'.
- There are effective means for communicating with parents on all relevant matters and '*Complaints procedure for parents and service users*' is referred to when necessary.
- Every effort is made to provide an interpreter for parents who speak a language other than English and to provide translated written materials.

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- Information about a child and their family is kept confidential within the setting. The exception to this is where there is cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where there are concerns regarding their child's development that need to be shared with another agency. Parental permission will be sought unless there are reasons not to, to protect the safety of the child.
- Parental consent is sought to administer medication, take a child for emergency treatment, take a child on an outing and take photographs for the purposes of record keeping.
- Parents' views are sought regarding changes in the delivery of the service
- Parents are actively encouraged to participate in decision making processes via a parent forum.
- There are opportunities for parents to take active roles in supporting their child's learning in the setting: informally through helping out or activities with their child, or through structured projects engaging parents and staff in their child's learning.

Agencies

- We work in partnership or in tandem with local and national agencies to promote the wellbeing of children.
- Procedures are in place for sharing of information about children and families with other agencies, as out in procedures '*Confidentiality, recording and sharing information*'.
- Information shared by other agencies (third party information) is also kept in confidence and not shared without consent from that agency.
- When working in partnership with staff from other agencies, individuals are made to feel welcome in the setting and professional roles are respected.
- Staff follow the protocols for working with agencies, for example on child protection.
- Staff from other agencies do not have unsupervised access to the child they are visiting in the setting and do not have access to any other children during their visit.
- Staff do not casually share information or seek informal advice about any named child/family.
- We consult with and signpost to local and national agencies who offer a wealth of advice and information promoting staff understanding of issues facing them in their work and who can provide support and information for families. For example, ethnic/cultural organisations, drug/alcohol agencies, welfare rights advisors or organisations promoting childcare and education, or adult education.

Schools

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

The setting manager actively seeks to forge partnership with local schools with the aim of sharing best practice and creating a consistent approach

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Complaints procedure for parents and service users

There is a fair way of dealing with issues as they arise in an informal way, but parents may wish to exercise their right to make a formal complaint. They are informed of the procedure to do this and complaints are responded to in a timely way. The same procedures apply to agencies who may have a grievance or complaint.

Parents

- If a parent is unhappy about any aspect of their child's care or how he/she feels he/she has been treated, this should be discussed with the child's key person or senior member of staff. The staff member will listen to the parent and acknowledge what he/she is unhappy about. The staff member will offer an explanation and an apology if appropriate. The issue and how it was resolved is recorded in the child's file and Complaint Investigation Record. The recording will also make clear whether the issue being raised relates to a concern about quality of the service or practice, or a complaint. For allegations relating to serious harm to a child caused by a member of staff or volunteer procedure '*Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff*' will be followed.
- If the parent is not happy with the key person/senior member of staff response or wishes to complain about the key person or any other member of staff, he/she will be directed to the setting manager. Some parents will want to make a written complaint; others will prefer to make it verbally, in which case the setting manager writes down the main issues of the complaint using the Complaint Investigation Record and keeps it in the child's file.
- The setting manager will investigate the complaint and provide time to feedback to the parent within 28 days. A confidential written report of the investigation is kept in the child's file if the complaint relates directly to a child.
- If the complainant believes that the matter has not been resolved and there has been a breach of the EYFS requirements they are entitled to make a complaint to Ofsted. The manager will assist in any complaint investigation as well as in producing documentation that records the steps that were taken in response to the original complaint.
- The setting manager ensures that parents know they can complain to Ofsted by telephone or in writing at any time as follows:

Applications, Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD or telephone: 0300 123 1231

Agencies

- If an individual from another agency wishes to make a formal complaint about a member of staff or any practice of the setting, it should be made in writing to the setting manager.

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- The complaint is acknowledged in writing within 10 days of receiving it.
- The setting manager investigates the matter and meets with the individual to discuss the matter further within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- An agreement needs to be reached to resolve the matter.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they are entitled to appeal and are referred to the owners/directors/trustees.

Ofsted complaints record

- Legislation requires settings to keep a record of complaints and disclose these to Ofsted at inspection, or if requested by Ofsted at any other time.
- The record of complaints is a summative record only.

A record of complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

- In all cases where a complaint is upheld a review will be undertaken by the owners/directors/trustees to look for ways to improve practice where it is required.

This procedure is stored in the policy folder

Further guidance

Complaint Investigation Record (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2015)