



Policies & Procedures

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Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Policy statement

Pencaitland Playgroup is committed to the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race colour, nationality, religious belief, ethnic or national origins, age and disability. We recognise the problems associated with bullying and harassment of both children and adults and are committed to providing an environment in which all individuals can operate effectively, confidently and competently.

Harassment and/or bullying is not acceptable under any circumstances, either to adults or children who use the service, or to members of staff. The focus of this policy is to promote good relationships and positive behaviours that engender mutual respect and esteem between and among staff, children and parents.

To fulfil our commitment to provide an environment in which all individuals, including children, can operate effectively, confidently and competently, the organisation will:

- Promote a safe, healthy and fair environment in which all adults and children feel secure, valued and respected
- Listen to children and adults who are being bullied and reassure them that they are safe and have done the right thing by telling someone
- Take all reports of bullying and or harassment incidents seriously and investigate promptly. Staff, children and parents will be fully supported if bullying is reported or observed
- Ensure all members of staff, children and parents have an understanding of what bullying/harassment is and know what the group procedures are when it is reported or observed
- Help children to communicate more effectively in conflict situations
- Review the settings environment and routine to identify any factors which might allow or foster incidents of bullying or harassment
- Encourage individuals to record incidents which they feel are indicative of bullying and/or harassing behaviour

In circumstances where a staff member is identified as the bully, then the complaint will be made to the manager. If it is the manager who is named, then the chairperson will be contacted to deal with the situation.

It is the responsibility of every member of the Playgroup and of those who are visiting the organisation's premises, to take responsibility for their behaviour and modify it if necessary.

The manager will be responsible for embedding anti-bullying awareness in the policies and practices of the group.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that it is achieving its objectives and is effective.

Pencaitland Playgroup

Capability Procedure

Background

This Capability Procedure may be used where there is an issue in terms of a staff member's ability to do their job. This procedure runs parallel with, but is not part of the Disciplinary Policy. The Capability Procedure may be used to improve performance where the reason for underperformance is a lack of skill, inadequate training and lack of support. If a member of staff is underperforming in their role due to carelessness, negligence or lack of effort then this will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the disciplinary policy. An initial meeting will take place between the employee and their line manager to establish whether the underperformance is due to lack of capability or misconduct.

Introduction

Pencaitland Playgroup places great importance on maintaining levels of performance at an acceptable standard and this capability procedure provides a fair and objective process to enable managers to ensure that those standards are met in every aspect of the Playgroup's operations.

Definition

For the purpose of this Capability Procedure, capability is defined as:

Where a member of staff is failing in a significant or persistent way to carry out their responsibilities or duties in a satisfactory manner, either due to a lack of ability, inadequate training or lack of experience. Such failings will be identified by use of the following procedures and steps taken to improve performance. Where such steps prove unsuccessful the member of staff may have their employment terminated on the grounds of incapacity.

The procedures set out in this document aim to ensure that there is:

1. A means of monitoring performance and establishing performance criteria.
2. A degree of consistency in how staff with widely differing responsibilities and duties are given opportunities to attain satisfactory levels of performance.
3. Assistance in identifying the most appropriate form(s) of support and providing that support.
4. If a member of staff fails to overcome their difficulties, any consequent action will be based on:
 - Adequate evidence that the member of staff is incapable of performing their duties satisfactorily.
 - A fair procedure.
 - The fact that the member of staff was given all reasonable assistance to overcome such failings.

Procedure

Stage 1 - Informal Procedure

Where a Playgroup employee exhibits an inability to perform their duties satisfactorily, the manager/committee will attempt to resolve the matter informally via a meeting between the line manager and the member of staff. The nature and date of the meeting will be recorded and a letter sent to the member of staff indicating the nature of their unsatisfactory performance and how such performance can

be improved to the satisfaction of the line manager. Specific examples of the member of staff's underperformance will be provided by the line manager for the employee. The member of staff should be informed that they may be accompanied at any formal meetings, if they wish, by a representative or a work colleague. At this meeting, the line manager will agree performance standards with the member of staff, and a time period (normally three months) over which improvement will be expected. They will also agree how the individual's performance will be monitored. A performance improvement plan should be documented and signed by the line manager and member of staff. Regular performance reviews will take place over the next 3 months.

If the individual's performance improves adequately over the timescale, then the process will terminate at this stage. If performance remains unsatisfactory, then the formal procedure will be invoked by the line manager as set out in stage 2.

Stage 2 - Formal Procedure

Information Collection: The Chairperson/Manager may call on the support of an external advisor or another member of the Committee, to undertake collecting the necessary information. They would be expected to interview the member of staff concerned and the Line Manager, as well as any other appropriate individuals. The member of staff should be informed that they may be accompanied at any meetings, if they wish, by a representative or a work colleague.

The Chairperson should not be available at this time as they may have to deal with an appeal. Another committee member should deal with this at this stage.

A written report based on evidence gained e.g. by interviews and observation of performance will be prepared by the Committee Member/Manager.

The report should be precise and specific in the observations and comments it makes and shall contain clear information on:

- areas where the member of staff is failing to perform adequately
- actions already taken by the Committee/Manager to address these failings and whether these actions were adequate - i.e. were clear performance standards set and monitored
- whether the member of staff acknowledges a problem and shows a willingness to improve
- the impact of the individuals failings on colleagues and work output
- any other mitigating factors.

The report should be given to the member of staff concerned and to the line manager. Both may record in writing any comments on the observations contained within the report.

The Committee Member/Manager will consider the report, and may opt to take one of the following options:

- no further action
- instruct the line manager to set reasonable performance standards for the individual and monitor these for a set period of time. (This option should be chosen if this has not previously been carried out adequately and at least three months given to improve)
- convene a formal capability hearing to consider the matter further.

Stage 3 - Capability Hearing

The Committee Member/Manager will write to the member of staff informing them of the date of the hearing, attaching any relevant documentation.

The letter shall contain:

- The performance deficits in sufficient detail to ensure that the member of staff fully comprehends their nature, extent and seriousness.
- The time, date and venue of the interview.
- The person who will conduct the interview, usually the Chairperson / Manager
- A statement that all employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at any interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures.
- At least 10 days notice of the hearing.
- The member of staff will have the right to be accompanied at any formal meeting, if they wish, by a representative or a work colleague.

At the hearing, the member of staff will be given the opportunity to put forward a defence, to bring witnesses in support of their defence, to present mitigating circumstances and to make a full statement. A written copy of the procedure to be adhered to during the hearing should be made available to the member of staff before the hearing takes place. If the allegation is found to be justified, then a decision on the action to be taken must be made. Depending on the nature, frequency and seriousness of the allegation(s) it is expected that at this stage a First Written Warning will be given and this will be confirmed in writing. This warning will remain 'live' for a period of six months.

A letter should be sent to the member of staff confirming the decision and the reason(s) why it was made. The letter will also indicate that the member of staff's progress will continue to be monitored and how this will be carried out. A time scale for performance to improve and a review date(s) will be specified. This detail will be summarised in a performance improvement plan. Regular review meetings will be planned.

If the failings are found to be not sufficiently serious to warrant a formal warning or where there are mitigating circumstances, then monitoring should be discontinued subject to a clear indication to the member of staff that it may be reintroduced if the problem(s) reappear.

Stage 4 - Second Capability Hearing

If poor performance continues, the process set out in stage 3 should be repeated. The time scale for improvement will depend on the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the employee concerned and the seriousness of the complaint(s).

If the conclusion of the second hearing is that performance has not sufficiently improved and that there is still evidence of incapability despite support and prior warnings, a Final Written Warning should be issued. This warning will remain 'live' for a period of twelve months. The letter confirming the decision as well as covering the points made at Stage 3, should clearly state that if an improvement is not forthcoming, the Committee will convene a final meeting at which it will consider terminating the contract of the member of staff involved on the grounds of capability. This detail will be summarised in a performance improvement plan. Regular review meetings will be planned.

Stage 5 - Dismissal

The appropriate committee member will conduct the third hearing the procedures outlined in Stage 3 will be followed. If there is still no improvement or insufficient improvement after a Final Written Warning, or if improvement has not been maintained for the period stated above, the member of staff will normally be

dismissed with notice or pay in lieu of notice. Alternatively, at the employer's discretion alternative work elsewhere in the organisation may be offered.

Appeals

A member of staff who wishes to appeal against any formal capability decision must do so within five working days of the decision. The employer will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible. Any capability warning given will be reviewed at the appeal and the result will be confirmed in writing.

Pencaitland Playgroup

Code of Conduct for Playgroup Staff

Parents, carers and children 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 Playgroup.

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 our staff to provide high levels of care and if appropriate, advice to parents and other members of staff. Staff will be expected, by following agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Play Leader any deficiency in the standards.

If it is the Playgroup Leader who is causing the concern, then staff should report any problems or grievances to the Chairperson.

Focus

During Playgroup hours we expect our staff to provide their full attention, focus and interaction on the children at all times. Session preparation should be carried out in the time allocated, as per the staff contracts, outside of Playgroup open hours. Security of the children in our care is paramount, therefore full focus from staff must be on the children, their actions and their whereabouts at all times.

Disclosure of Information

We are a very open Playgroup and pride ourselves on open communication; however, when information is necessarily confidential it should only be made available on a "need to know" basis. All staff must sign and adhere to the Playgroup Confidentiality Policy.

Appearance

The appearance which we present to each other and parents and visitors is important. Our expectation of all Playgroup staff is that they conform to standards of dress as befits a profession. Clothing and shoes should be neat, clean and in good repair. Long hair should be tied back, no jewellery except watches, important rings and studded earrings.

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, if found to be, they shall be asked to leave the premises immediately. No smoking is permitted on the premises.

Absences and Time Keeping

All staff must inform the Playgroup Leader and Chair by 8.00am if they are unable to reach playgroup by their contracted hours. Staff are responsible for ensuring they arrive at work early enough to begin work at their contracted start time. Staff are required to remain at work until their appointed finish time, unless granted authorisation by the Playgroup Leader. If they are absent through illness or other circumstances, they must inform the Playgroup Leader and Chair by 8.00am so arrangements can be made for staff cover. It is the responsibility of the Chair to find replacement cover from the contacts detailed on the absence policy list.

Outside Commitments

Prior to commencing any additional employment staff should be clear about their contractual obligations and make sure their additional employment does not conflict with the playgroup interests.

Mobile Phones & Digital Equipment

In relation to use of mobile phones and use of digital equipment, below are some best practise guidelines:

1. All staff mobile phones should not be carried on the person or within the playgroup rooms; they should be stored in staff bags and turned on silent.
2. The playgroup main telephone number should be used as the main point of contact for staff in an emergency.
3. The use of mobile phones being carried on a person or used in the playgroup room will result in a disciplinary procedure.
4. The use of a mobile phone by the Playgroup Leader to take photographs which will be shared to parents, displayed etc is acceptable.
5. It is the responsibility of the Playgroup Leader to delete all photographs stored on a digital camera or mobile phone after transfer to the computer for printing and sharing purposes.
6. It is the responsibility of the Playgroup Leader to approve photographs for use on displays and for marketing purposes and so on..

Social network, such as Facebook, MSN, Twitter

We request staff agree to the following:- I will not create, transmit, display or publish any material that is likely to: harass, cause offence, inconvenience or needless anxiety to any other person or bring the Playgroup into disrepute In line with safeguarding procedures, no comments should be made with reference to the Playgroup, its staff, committee members, children, families, any persons associated with it or events. I will not place any information regarding my activities at Playgroup, or the Playgroup in general on my personal social networking sites.

Supervision

The Play Leader task manages and provides day to day guidance for Playgroup staff. The Play Leader will provide tasks that need to be done day to day and these may vary depending on what events are taking place in a term.

Conclusion

Our staff at Pencaitland Playgroup are our strength. How the staff conduct themselves reflects on the whole Playgroup. High standards and expectations are essential in all aspects of our work.

Pencaitland Playgroup

Confidentiality Policy

Statement of intent

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality pre-school care and education.

Aim

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.

Methods

To ensure that all those using and working in the playgroup can do so with confidence, we respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents may ask the Play Leader for access to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs and welfare.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other other parents or carers.
- Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person and all staff.
- Any concerns/evidence relating to a child's personal safety are kept in a secure, confidential file and are shared with as few people as possible on a "need-to-know" basis.
- Personal information about children, families and staff is kept securely whilst remaining as accessible as possible.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- Parent helpers are advised of our confidentiality policy and are required to respect it.
- Information given by parents/carers to the Play Leader or Play Assistant will not be passed on to other adults without permission, unless it is felt that it will affect the child's welfare.

All the above undertakings are subject to the paramount commitment of the Playgroup, which is to the safety and well-being of the child.

This policy was revised and agreed by Pencaitland Playgroup Committee.

Pencaitland Playgroup

Health & Hygiene Policy

Pencaitland Playgroup promotes a healthy lifestyle and a high standard of hygiene in its day-to-day work with children. This is achieved in the following ways:

Health

Food

All snacks provided will be wholesome and staff will pay due attention to children's particular dietary requirements.

When the children cook as an activity, the staff will provide healthy, wholesome food, promoting and extending the children's understanding of a healthy diet.

Outdoor play

Children will have the opportunity to play in the fresh air in the Playgroup's own enclosed and supervised outside play area, weather permitting. Parents/carers will be asked to provide appropriate clothing when necessary.

Illness

Parents/carers are asked to keep their children at home if they have any infection, and to inform the Playgroup as to the nature of the infection so that the staff can alert other parents/carers, and make careful observations of any child who seems unwell.

Parents/carers are asked not to bring into the Playgroup any child who has been vomiting or had diarrhoea until at least 48 hours have elapsed since the last attack.

If children seem unwell during the session – have a temperature, sickness, diarrhoea or pains, particularly in the head or stomach – the Play Leader will call the parents and ask them to collect the child, or send a known carer to collect on their behalf.

Local Children's Social Care services will be informed of any serious accident or injury, serious illness or death affecting a child whilst at Playgroup and act on any advice given.

If the children of Playgroup staff are unwell, the children will not accompany their parents/carers to work in the Playgroup.

Cuts or open sores, whether on staff or children, will be covered with sticking plaster or other dressing.

Protective gloves will be worn when cleaning up any substances.

If a child is on prescribed medication the following procedures will be followed:

- if possible, the child's parents / carers will administer medicine. If not, then medication must be clearly labelled with child's name, dosage and any instructions.
- Written information will be obtained from the parent / carer, giving clear instructions about the dosage, administration of the medication and written permission for a member of staff to follow the instructions.
- All medications will be kept safely and in an appropriate place and are checked on a regular basis to make sure they are in date.

- A medication form will be available to log in: name of child receiving medication; times that the medication should be administered; date and time when medication administered; and the signature of the staff member who has administered each dose and a staff witness. The signature of the parent will be added when collecting the child to confirm they have been informed the medication has been given. The form should be retained in the child's file.

With regard to the administration of life saving medication such as insulin, epipens, hypodermic injections or tube- administered medication, the administration or provision of oxygen, gastro feeding, naso-gastric tube feeding, cleaning and changing of feeding tubes and emptying/changing stoma bags the following conditions in addition to regular medication apply:

- Written agreement from the child's GP must be provided by the parent / carer.
- Any training specified by the GP must be undertaken and will be provided by a qualified health professional.

The Playgroup will ensure that the first aid equipment is kept clean, replenished and replaced as necessary. Sterile items will be kept sealed in their packages until needed.

Information sources

Parents / carers will have the opportunity to discuss health issues with Playgroup staff and will have access to information available to the Playgroup.

The Playgroup will maintain links with health visitors and gather health information and advice from the local health authority information services and / or other health agencies.

Hygiene

To prevent the spread of all infection, adults in the Playgroup will ensure that the following good practices are observed:

Personal hygiene

Hands washed after using the toilet.

Children with pierced ears not allowed to try on or share each other's earrings.

A large box of tissues available and children encouraged to blow and wipe their noses when necessary. Soiled tissues disposed of hygienically.

Children encouraged to shield their mouths when coughing.

Paper towels used and disposed of appropriately.

Hygiene rules related to bodily fluids followed with particular care and all staff and volunteers aware of how infections, including Hepatitis B and HIV infection, can be transmitted.

Cleaning and clearing

Any spills of blood, vomit or excrement must be wiped up with paper towel, cleaning fluid appropriate to spillage. Disposable gloves always used when cleaning up spills of body fluids. All equipment must then be double bagged and put in the bin in the hallway for disposal. Floors and other affected surfaces will be disinfected. Fabrics contaminated with body fluids thoroughly washed in hot water. Children kept away from the contaminated area until it has been cleaned and dry.

Spare laundered pants, and other clothing, available in children's bags in case of accidents and polythene bags available in which to wrap soiled garments.

All surfaces cleaned daily with an appropriate cleaner.

Food

Playgroup will observe current legislation regarding food hygiene, registration and training. Those responsible for the preparation and handling of food will be competent to do so. In particular, each adult will:

Always wash hands under running water before handling food and after using the toilet.

Not be involved with the preparation of food if suffering from any infectious/contagious illness or skin trouble.

Never smoke in the kitchen or any room storing food.

Never cough or sneeze over food.

Use different cleaning cloths for kitchen and toilet areas.

Prepare raw and cooked food in separate areas.

Keep food covered and refrigerated when necessary.

Ensure waste is disposed of properly and out of reach of the children. Keep a lid on the dustbin and wash hands after using it.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly before use.

Use tea towels for adult's cups.

Keep all utensils clean and stored in a dust-free place, e.g. closed cupboard or drawer.

Not use cracked or chipped china.

Children's cups and plates are thoroughly washed in a dishwasher at a high temperature each week.

Reporting of food poisoning

Food poisoning can occur for a number of reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhoea are as a result of food poisoning and not all cases of sickness and diarrhoea are reported.

Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within the setting, the supervisor will contact the Environmental Health Department and the Health Protection Agency, to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.

If the food poisoning is identified as a notifiable disease under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988 the setting will report the matter to the Environmental Health Department.

Nappy Changing Policy

No child will be excluded from participating in our setting who may, for any reason not yet be toilet trained and who may still be wearing nappies or equivalent.

Parents/Carers are to provide nappies and wipes and store these in a suitable named bag on the child's peg along with a full change of clothing.

Only staff with a full disclosure check as part of the protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme are able to change any child during playgroup hours.

This guidance is also relevant when attending to a child who requires a change of clothing.

We ask all staff/parents/carers to follow the nappy changing procedure which will be displayed above the nappy changing station.

A child will never be left alone on the changing mat. The child's privacy will be respected at all times during nappy changing. The changing area/mat will be cleaned before and after changing with a suitable anti-bacterial cleaner. A fresh, disposable nappy mat will be used to cover the mat during each nappy change. Staff will wear disposable plastic aprons and disposable gloves while changing wet and dirty nappies.

Staff will follow the nappy changing procedure.

The nappy will be disposed of by double bagging the disposable mat cover, nappy and soiled wipes and placing them in the lidded nappy bin. All children will be lifted down from the changing table. Staff will then remove their gloves and apron and dispose of them in the bin next to the changing station.

If a child's clothes have been soiled or where reusable nappies are used any solid waste should be flushed down the toilet. Soiled items will be double bagged and given to the parent on collection.

If the area becomes contaminated it will be washed with detergent and hot water then disinfectant, using bleach based disinfectant. After cleaning, hands will be washed again in the small bathroom. Hands will then be washed again in the main playroom.

Staff will always dispose of gloves and aprons before moving to another room.

Staff's hands must be washed after this practice, even if gloves have been worn.

In the event of older or heavier children using the changing mat, they will be positioned on the floor in the long corridor (first toilet) and the above procedure will be followed.

All nappy changes are to be recorded on a recording form and the form will be placed in the child's bag and information shared with parents/carers.

Where children are participating in potty training, they will be taken to the children's toilet which provides privacy. Children should become familiar with the toileting area to develop confidence and familiarity with the environment. Children should be given the opportunity to use the toilet independently or be given assistance as required. All children will be encouraged to adopt good personal hygiene habits.

Where potties are used they should be cleaned thoroughly after use. They should be cleaned using an anti-bacterial cleaner and then stored upside down out of reach of children.

The changing area will be cleaned thoroughly each night.

Mobile phones, cameras or any other recording device are not permitted in the toilet area at any time.

Monitoring of this Policy

It will be the responsibility of the Playgroup Leader to ensure that all staff, including new or temporary staff, are familiar with this policy and to monitor that it is being implemented.

This will be achieved by regularly inspecting the changing area for cleanliness and supplies and ascertaining whether the appropriate records are being maintained and parents kept informed.