

## **Policy 12:**

### **Parent, Carer and Nursery Partnership Policy**

Updated January 2021

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#### **Section 1**

##### **What are the specifics of this Policy?**

##### **What other Policies are relevant to this Policy?**

All policies are relevant to this Policy as partnership is at the core of Nursery practice. Particularly relevant Policies are:

- Staff Policy – Policy 1
- Care, Learning and Play Policy – Policy 3
- Physical Environment Policy – Policy 4
- Toys, Resources and Equipment Policy – Policy 5
- Safety Policy – Policy 6
- Health Policy – Policy 7
- Covid-19 Policy – Policy 7a Please note that whilst some Covid-19 measures are included in this policy, some that apply to this Policy are not. We have a detailed Covid-19 Policy which can be found here: <https://www.children-first.info/media/2862/covid-19-policy-7a.pdf>
- Meals, Menu and Nutrition Policy – Policy 8
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy – Policy 9
- Special Educational Needs, Disabilities Policy and Inclusion Policy – Policy 10
- Behaviour Management Policy – Policy 11
- Parent and Carer Contract – Policy 12a
- Safeguarding Children Policy – Policy 13
- Whistleblowing Policy – Policy 13a
- E-Safety Policy – Policy 13b
- Data Protection Policy – Policy 14

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- Environmental Concern Policy – Policy 15

#### **What is the staff responsibility for this policy?**

The Nursery Managers have responsibility for implementing this policy. The Company Director oversees this Policy.

#### **Who does this policy apply to?**

This Policy applies to all members of the Nursery Community, staff, students, parents, carers, visitors, early years professionals, and all other visitors.

#### **Who is responsible for monitoring this policy?**

The Nursery Managers have responsibility for implementing this Policy at Nursery at all times.

#### **What is the procedure for Policy review?**

This Policy will be reviewed periodically. Reviews may be required as a result of research, training, statutory changes in child-care, the children's needs, parental consultation, police advice or suggestions from courses attended by staff. The Nursery Director and the Nursery Managers are responsible for Policy review.

#### **What do we do if the law changes in any area?**

Children-First refer to the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) on all cases relating to staff conduct, parent conduct, employment law or rights, staff expectations, and any other similar queries. In terms of changes in the law that affect Policy the Nursery Director, reviews aspects of the law or guidance to school and applies the relevant requirements. The Nursery will follow all legal requirements at all times. It is the Nursery Manager's responsibility to ensure the correct action is discussed with the Nursery Director and then implemented accordingly.

### **Section 2:**

#### **What do the aims of this Policy and the Policy Statement tell us?**

##### **What are the aims of the Policy?**

This policy ensures the nursery upholds this statement from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): *"Providers must enable a regular two-way flow of information with parents and, or carers"*. The purpose of this Policy is to set out conduct standards for all parents and carers, along with the expectations of parents and carers and the Nursery working together to create a positive and caring learning environment for every child.

##### **What does the Policy statement tell us?**

We endorse this statement from the EYFS: *"Good parenting and high quality, early learning together provides the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up"*.

### **Section 3:**

#### **How do we work with parents and carers?**

##### **How do we do provide outstanding partnership?**

Each Nursery has a parent and carer Partnership Lead who is responsible for partnership at Nursery, details of the can be found on the staff photo-board at each Nursery or from the manager. Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of all policies, procedure and practice. The Nursery Director is a working parent and the remote parent and carer Partnership Lead. The Nursery builds parent and carer partnerships by having a plethora of proactive systems in place that work effectively for both working and non-working parents

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and carers from their first visit to when children go to school. These include:

Whilst showing carers and parents the Nursery, we ensure that we communicate as much information as possible and the information parents want. We ask parents and carers what they would like to know about the Nursery and ensure that we provide the answers parents and carers need. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to email or phone with further questions at any point during enrolment process, waiting list time, start dates and during the time their child is at Nursery.

We are rightly incredibly proud of our Ofsted reports. Inspectors always speak to carers and parents and their observations on the strength of carer, parent partnership at each Nursery is key to children's success. Reports endorse the highest level of commitment to work at an outstanding level in all of our settings in parent partnership, providing outstanding care and learning for children in most formative time development. Nursery Managers can provide a copy of reports and links to the reports are on the Children-First website.

We make parents and carers aware that the Nursery fees for younger children are higher than children over 3 as the staff ratios are much higher for children under 3. Parents and carers are aware that we accept all government approved fee schemes. We offer the 15 and 30 hours FEEE to all qualifying parents. Our Parent Contract and Enrolment Form is updated annually, and Parents are informed and sometimes consulted on changes to the terms and conditions. Fees are reviewed annually, and parents are kept up to date.

Very close partnerships and flexibility are critical when parents settle children into Nursery. Children-First enables children to integrate, according to the needs of the individual child and their parent or carer. Gradual settling with parents, carers and children sharing sessions together, smooths the route to Nursery. This supports young children to feel safe, secure, loved and engaged in the Nursery. The Nursery enables a close partnership with carers and parents to ensure a happy, measured transition from home into Nursery.

Carers and parents are welcome to email the Nursery directly to exchange information or ask questions of the Manager or staff, request extra sessions, ask how their child has settled during the day, or flag up something important such as a holiday. Parents and carers are encouraged to phone the Nursery at any time to ask any questions or ask how their child has settled that day or anything else. This easy access to Nursery is especially important in the early days of settling at Nursery, or after a prolonged absence.

Nursery is committed to partnership and engagement. Children are very interested in parent and carer experiences of occupations, professions, family, careers, and diversity of cultures, festivals, beliefs and recipes. Parents, carers and close relatives are welcomed into the Nursery to share these experiences with the children. This extends learning and understanding for children, whilst embracing British Values. Children get very excited about visits, especially when it is their relative who is visiting and sharing!

Parents and carers enjoy quality daily handovers at drop off and collection. At drop off carers and parents update Nursery about, medication, other relevant information such as a change in collection time or health worries. Evening handovers are very important. We give a catch up about the child's day at Nursery, mealtimes, activities enjoyed, toileting, achievements, and general behaviour or wow moments. Parents and carers take home a written daily report, supplementing the verbal handover process.

Carers and parents are regularly updated by whiteboard messages, noticeboards, informative weekly catch-ups and detailed Newsletters, full of information. Frequent updates keep everyone informed of the

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daily working of the Nursery, children's activities during the week, plans for next week, special activities, interesting visits, festivals, special days, stay and play sessions, outings, menu changes, Specialist Teachers, invitations to events or parties, important reminders and the life of children at Nursery.

Nursery life is very busy and full for children and Nursery shares a superabundance of special times with carers and parents. The list is incredibly long, but a taste of examples are: breakfast sharing, stay and play days, festive plays, Specialist Teacher sessions, themed craft sessions, woodland walks, Gruffalo hunts, art sessions, cooking activities, August Carnival, Pre-Schooler's graduation party, festival celebrations, parties, grandparents' day, International Woman's Day, Easter egg hunts and picnics.

Carers and Parents Evenings are informal and informative. This is an opportunity to sit down and discuss children's progress and development and to ask questions. For parents or carers who are unable to attend the time and date offered, we happily agree daytime meetings ensuring inclusion. Children's records and learning journeys are discussed and reviewed. Children's records are accessible, without notice, if parents or carers want to review them or discuss their child's progress and development.

Parents and carers love their child's individual on line learning journey, it can be accessed via an App whilst on the go. The App provides detailed, regular developmental updates, videos images, visual images, observations, wow moments and information about their child's progress at Nursery. Parents and carers are encouraged to upload home observations, photos, and videos to give the Nursery an insight into things that each child enjoys doing at home.

Parents and carers want healthy nutritious, food for their children and compliment us on the quality and nutritional value of our menus. Menus rotate over 3 weeks. Updated menus, in response to new guidance, are reviewed by our Nutritionist [www.juliawolman.co.uk](http://www.juliawolman.co.uk) Children enjoy diverse tastes, flavours and textures from around the world. Carers, parents and children are consulted about meals they enjoy. Favourite, healthy recipes from home are tried at Nursery and if they are a hit we include them in our menus.

The Nursery sends out parent and carer consultations twice a year. This can be anonymous, via paper returns or emailed back. Feedback is given on the developments made via the, "You said, we did!" board in Nursery, as well as individual emails where requested. Special consultations are sent out if an area of the Nursery has planned refurbishment, for example an outdoor area. This ensures that we consider and act on carers and parent's suggestions, when we can and when suggestions facilitate Nursery developments in partnership.

The Nursery offers open invitations for carers and parents to make appointments with their child's Key Worker and, or the Nursery Manager to discuss their child, raise any concerns or to make suggestions. Parents or carers who have work, or personal commitments and are unable to spend time in the Nursery are welcome to speak to their child's key worker or the Manager over the phone for a discussion about their child's progress, development dietary requirements, sessions or any other topic.

The Nursery contacts parents and carers immediately by phone in cases of concern, incidents, or accidents, unless this would otherwise put the child at risk of harm. This enables carers and parents to be actively involved in resolution and decision making regarding their child. Relevant information about children that is shared with parents and carers is also shared with other providers or services who care for the child if the child requires treatment, such as food causing an allergic reaction, when the child has had no allergic reaction before.

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Occasionally carers, parents or Nursery have concerns about a child's development, allergies, behaviour, health or learning. Robust partnership and discussions about a child's needs are essential to ensure that the best interests of the child are provided for at all times. With agreement, on the basis that parents know their children best, Nursery works alongside professionals including: consultants, specialists, medical professionals and LA advisors. This ensures the child's needs are met and the best possible outcomes for the child.

Parents and carers have rights under Data Protection law and our Policy to see all written records on their child, visual data and other data that Nursery has. Relevant information about children that is shared with parents and carers is also shared with other providers or services who care for the child. In cases of sensitive or highly confidential information, the Nursery Director may require written requests, such cases may include child custody issues. Please refer to Data Protection Policy and Documentation - Policy 14.

#### **Section 4:**

##### **What restrictions are in place at Nursery for parents and carers?**

The common-sense restrictions that we have at Nursery are for safeguarding children, behaviour management and data protection reasons. These restrictions are:

- Parents and carers are prohibited from engaging in any form of physical communication with a child that is not their own. Parents and carers are not allowed to kiss, cuddle, hug or pick up any children other than their own.
- If a child is in need of reassurance or affection and a staff member has not yet seen this, parents and carers should alert a staff member as quickly as possible.
- Parents and carers are prohibited from any negative verbal communication with a child that is not their own.
- Parents and carers are not able to comment on another child in the Nursery or speak to a child or children in a negative way. If a situation arises where a child's behaviour requires adult intervention, then the parent or carer who observes the concern must inform a staff member who will then address the situation appropriately in line with our Behaviour Management Policy – Policy 11
- If a child is in need of reassurance and a staff member has not yet seen this parents and carers must alert a staff member as quickly as possible. In these instances, the Nursery asks the parent or carer to refer back to a staff member to provide this.
- Parents and carers are not able to visit the Nursery with their children on an ad-hoc basis without prior arrangement or for special reason. This includes the Nursery gardens.
- Parents and carers are not able to access personal data about another child, family, or staff member without prior written agreement being given to the Nursery from the other person or family.
- Carers and parents must not smack their child in Nursery or use any form of corporal punishment on their child in Nursery.
- It is not acceptable for parents or carers to shout, be aggressive, rude or offensive to any persons in the Nursery, or to speak about another person in an aggressive, rude or offensive way. If a parent or carer is involved in any minor form of unacceptable communication or behaviour in Nursery, this will be recorded, and a formal email will be sent to the parent including a copy of this Policy and other relevant documents. The Nursery Director must be informed of any incidents.
- Children-First operates a zero-tolerance policy, without exception, to grossly inappropriate conduct by a parent or carer. Unacceptable forms of communication include swearing, racist comments, prejudice towards any person or group, sexist comments, comments that convey any form of prejudice, shouting, inappropriate tone of voice, physical actions, degrading comments, sexual behaviour, grossly inappropriate or offensive language towards any member of staff or other parent or carer, intrusion into

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the privacy of other parents, carers or children or intrusion into staff privacy. This causes a breach in trust and children must be safeguarded. Such conduct causes breakdown of the relationship between the Nursery and a parent or carer. It may not in the best interests of the child, other children, staff and parent or carer to continue at the Nursery. In such instances the Nursery Director will be involved. It may be in the best interests of the child for the carer or parent to make alternative arrangements for their child. Support from outside agencies may be sought, including the Local Authority, Children's Services, our legal advisors, the NDNA, PHE, or The Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Nursery will endeavour to resolve all concerns and issues before such a decision is made. Once made, the decision is final and irreversible.

#### **Section 5:**

##### **How must parents, carers and staff communicate with each other and children?**

All the staff at the Nursery are committed to the highest quality care for the children who attend Nursery by working closely with parents and carers. This is essential to provide outstanding care. Staff have an exceptional mutual respect for parents and carers. Appropriate forms of communication from staff, parents and carers is an essential part of the ethos of the Nursery. The Nursery has clear conduct requirements in the Staff Policy – Policy 1. It is essential to ensure that any form of unacceptable communication does not occur.

#### **Section 6:**

##### **How are parents consulted on the Nurseries decisions, quality of provision, learning and care?**

Parents are consulted and involved in many areas of Nursery life, unless they are Government directives or requirements. This involves many areas including:

- General consultations in Spring and Autumn,
- Menu consultations when we review menus,
- Changes to biodegradable nappies and wipes,
- Changes to environmentally Cheeky wipes for faces,
- Changes in Specialist teachers,
- Changes and developments in trips and outings,
- Moving towards the Curiosity Approach,
- The purchase of tablets and computers for educational purposes,
- Weekly satisfaction surveys where parents can give their feedback on aspects of care and learning. Parents can confidentially tick yes or no and add a comment if necessary. We put it at the gate or porch. This means that parents and carers can remain anonymous if they choose.
- Our Covid-19 response including when we should re-open, what else we could put in place, our risk assessments and whether to reintroduce outings to local parks and visitors.
- We regularly consult parents on competitions such as pumpkin and Easter bonnet competitions.
- We consult parents for educational visitors such as wild science, the chicks and ducks and caterpillar life cycles.
- Parents are consulted for employee of the month.
- There is also an open suggestion form within this policy.

#### **Section 7:**

##### **What is the procedure for settling new children?**

##### **What does the Nursery need?**

Children are able to start settling into the Nursery once we have the completed Enrolment Form and Parent and Carer Contract, with all the information required and documentation required. Please refer to Data

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Protection and Documentation Policy. We do not accept partially completed Enrolment Forms or Parent and Carer Contracts, unless the data that is missing is due to the parents being pregnant.

#### **How do the Nursery and parents and carers work together to settle a child?**

During the Covid-19 Pandemic settling will vary due to changing Government guidance which reflects tier levels and the levels of infection. We always endeavour to settle children into the Nursery as quickly and smoothly as possible. The child's Key Worker and Nursery Manager are always pleased to discuss children's progress at dropping off, collection or over the phone or by email. The majority of children at the Nursery settle with great ease. We understand that each child is an individual and will need an individual approach to settling.

After the initial visit parents and carers may stay with their child for as long as required during each session of attendance. Children soon learn to establish new relationships with their friends and nursery staff and in particular their key worker and enjoy Nursery activities and routines.

For a small minority of children, it is distressing for parents and carers when their child cries on parting. We encourage parents and carers to ring during the session or day to update themselves on their child's progress and we can upload videos on the EYlog. This helps ease parents and carers minds and prevent concern. Key Workers can take photos, videos, and audio clips through Children-First online learning journals to show how a child is doing during the session.

If, after the first week the child is experiencing difficulties in settling the Nursery Manager must discuss further strategies with the Key worker and the parents or carers. Very occasionally children do not settle in Nursery. If it is agreed after two weeks that this is the case, children can cease attending without the required notice period by agreement with the Nursery Director. After this period standard Terms and Conditions and Parent and Carer Contracts apply and one month's written notice of leaving or reduction of sessions is required. Fees are payable even if the child does not attend Nursery during this time. If a child is withdrawn during their first two weeks for any other reason, such as alternative childcare, then one full months' notice is required.

#### **Section 8:**

##### **Do carers and parents need to inform us about holidays and other absences?**

##### **Do parents and carers need to inform the Nursery about occasional absences?**

Occasional absences include, illness, medical appointments, visits to school, and day trips with family and so on. To accurately plan at Nursery, it is required that parents inform us of absences and keep us updated about a diagnosis which could affect the health of another member of the Nursery Community. Emails, phone calls and speaking to the Manager are all acceptable ways to let us know children's plans.

##### **Do carers and parents need to inform us about holidays and longer absences?**

All parents and carers must inform us if their child is going to be absent from Nursery. This helps us plan staffing and ratios. We are legally required under the Government legislation surrounding child safeguarding, the Prevent Duty 2015 and The Serious Crime Act 2015 to notify the Local Authority of any absences that we are not informed about as these create a cause for concern. This is to ensure each child in our care is safeguarded from harm. If you do not inform us of long term absences of four days or more we are required to contact Children's Social Care Team for advice.

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#### **What should carers and parents do if they have a compliment, suggestion, concern or complaint?**

##### **What is the complaints procedure?**

Carers and parents can give compliments, make suggestions, raise concerns or complaints in person, by email or anonymously, by using the methods outlined in this Policy. By ensuring an open door and consultative policy at Nursery, Nursery aim is that parents and carers will raise a concern as soon as possible. Carers and parents can ask to review the complaints records on request. Data Protection must be protected.

There are Suggestion Forms and a box in the Nursery lobby so that carers and parents can leave comments, either anonymously or by providing contact details, a formal response will be given.

It is essential for parents and carers to feel free to discuss any issues or concerns they have about their child or the Nursery. These discussions must take place in a quiet area where confidentiality can be maintained; normally the best place for this type of discussion is the office or a room that is not being used. All concerns are reported to the Nursery Manager who reports these to the Company Director. Where possible, the Nursery suggests that parents refer concerns or queries to their child's Key Worker if is regarding day-to-day care or their child's routine.

A Complaints Log Form must be completed for any formal complaint made about the Nursery or a staff member. This must be reported to the Company Director and Nursery Co-ordinator immediately for further follow up. There is a Complaints Concerns and Compliments folder in each office, where copies of these forms are stored.

##### **How do we deal with concerns or complaints?**

We follow these guidelines:

- We deal with all concerns or complaints with priority and urgency. From time to time, other Nursery matters may take a precedence over a complaint, such as an urgent child protection matter. If this delays the response times agreed on the complaint, we will ensure contact is made with the parents and carers to update them of this. Confidentiality must be maintained during this time to ensure no details are divulged of the alternative urgent matters arising.
- We inform parents and carers as soon as possible of all outcomes, usually within 14 days of the original complaint. Parents and carers MUST be notified of outcomes within 28 days at the latest.
- If a member of the public makes a complaint or raises a concern, the senior staff member must take the complainants contact details, and always get back to them within 48 hours of the complaint being raised where applicable. If the complainant refuses to give details, Nursery will urge them to so that we can respond, however they must know that the complaint will be dealt with, forms completed and potentially disciplinary investigations.
- The Company Director must always be informed of every complaint, whether verbal, written, formal or informal.
- A minor concern can often be dealt with by the child's Key Worker. In this instance, they must report the concern to the Room Leader and Nursery Manager. Key workers should ensure they feedback to the parent fully, before confirming with the parent that they have no further queries.
- A more serious concern must be passed on to the Room Leader or Nursery Manager who will deal with the concern or complaint.
- Unresolved concerns or serious concerns must be resolved by the Company Director as soon as possible.
- All complaints, actions and outcomes must be logged in the Complaints Concerns and Compliments file in the office. Data protection and due diligence must be adhered to at all times.

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- In cases of serious complaint, the Nursery Manager must contact Ofsted when the complaint is made. In certain cases, the Local Authority or the LADO will provide guidance and support.
- Nursery Director, who is the lead Parent partnership coordinator will contact carers and parents in some instances.
- Carers and parents can contact OFSTED by phone 0300 123 1231 or 0300 123 4666 or email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk if their concern is serious or unresolved. Parents should contact Ofsted if their concern relates to a breach of statutory regulations.

#### **What are the possible outcomes of parents and carers raising concerns and issues?**

Carers and parents are always informed as soon as possible of the outcomes of the issue raised. If fed back verbally, this will always be followed up in writing by email. The Nursery may make a change to policy or procedure, amend a routine or duties in the room, trigger a full policy review, inform Ofsted or the Local Authority, provide parents with further information on a stage of development concern, such as biting, send parents a copy of a policy, or take disciplinary action against a staff member, if applicable. Other actions may also be taken depending on the complaint, this will be agreed with the Nursery Director on a case by case basis.

#### **What is Ofsted's role in complaints?**

Ofsted will investigate complaints made to them by a parent if it relates to the EYFS. OFSTED may take different forms of investigatory approaches, including contacting the Nursery to see how the complaint has been dealt with. Ofsted may carry out a visit to the Nursery to carry out an on-site investigation. Ofsted inspectors review parent complaints at Nursery in the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Folder and can request to see a list of all complaints made within certain time frames, and actions and outcomes of such complaints. These comply with the Nursery data protection policy.

## **Section 10:**

### **Can carers or parents ask staff to care for children out of Nursery hours?**

#### **Are staff allowed to care for children out of nursery hours?**

Staff are able to care for children out of nursery hours by means of a private agreement. Company insurance does not cover staff during this time. The Nursery reserves the right to remove this agreement without notice if required if a relationship compromises the safe and effective running of the Nursery. Carers and parents entering into any private arrangement for childcare with a member of staff out of nursery hours must be made aware of this Policy. Parents and carers must complete the form provided in this Policy before they enter into any out of hour childcare arrangements with a team member.

Carers and parent's responsibility to their child and the off duty, team member includes ensuring that their household insurance policy covers all such arrangements. Should a parent or carer expect staff to drive their child on any occasion, they must satisfy themselves that the drivers insurance covers ad-hoc childcare arrangements. Many staff members work full time and have family, social or educational commitments and are not always able, or would wish to enter into such arrangement for ad hoc care of children. If a carer or parent arranges for their child to be collected by a member of staff after the child's Nursery day, an authorised collector form for that member of staff must be completed in advance. Staff and parents must know that any concerns or allegations occurring out of Nursery will be dealt with follow the normal Nursery allegations procedures.

#### **Who is not allowed to care for children out of Nursery hours?**

Students are not permitted to care for children out of Nursery hours. Breach of this will result in immediate

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termination of the placement. The Nursery Manager will inform the student's educational establishment and the carer or parent. Staff are not permitted to care for children out of hours until we are in receipt of references and a DBS clearance on file.

#### **What issues may arise from caring for children out of Nursery hours?**

Staff may not care for children out of nursery hours at any time if the care or relationships conflict with the interests of the nursery, its children, other members of staff, or Children-First. Concerns must be brought immediately to the attention of the Nursery Manager so that a decision can be made as to whether there is a conflict of interests. The Nursery Director must be informed of all concerns. Where there has been a conflict of interests, staff are not permitted to baby sit. If the conflict continues then disciplinary proceedings may follow.

#### **Section 11:**

##### **Does the Nursery have a waiting list and how is it managed?**

###### **What is a waiting list?**

When parents and carers complete the Nursery Enrolment Form, Parent and Carer Contract, the child is generally placed on Nursery waiting list until a place is available.

###### **How are waiting lists managed at Nursery?**

Places are offered to children as soon as possible. Due to demand and the number of children on the waiting list we are unable to keep spaces open for a child who does not wish to take up an offer when it is made. Waiting lists are highly complex to manage due to the following factors:

- Different ages of children,
- Variety of sessions required,
- Sessions available on different days during the week,
- Staff ratios,
- Child occupancy numbers in each room, regulatory requirements on room sizes dictated by age of child,
- Several children potentially due to start on the same day, affecting quality of care for others.
- Managers invest a great deal of time working to place children as fairly as possible. Nursery Managers consider the following factors:
  - Availability of places, days and sessions,
  - Length of time the child has been on the waiting list,
  - Age of the child and age appropriateness of place available,
  - Whether the child has a sibling in the Nursery,

#### **Section 12:**

##### **What do parents and carers need to know about Nursery fees?**

###### **How are fee payments made to Nursery?**

To ensure fairness and that the process of fee collection is not burdensome and time consuming for Managers we have introduced a structured and time managed policy. This ensures that the process is smooth and time is not wasted chasing a very small minority of parents and carers. The Nursery Manager's key responsibility is to ensure the highest quality of childcare and education; time spent on this small minority of parents and carers is a distraction from the care of the children. Adherence to the policy is in the very best interests of the children and the Nursery Community, unpaid fees from one family can place a burden on budgets.

###### **When are fees reviewed?**

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Fees are reviewed annually and can be reviewed without notice to ensure the safe, smooth and effective running of the Nursery. When children are absent from Nursery during the fee due date payment fees MUST still be paid by the due date. Fees are payable for 52 weeks per annum during the time children attend the Nursery including our annual festive closure for Christmas and new year and Bank Holidays. Further clarification of Terms and Conditions can be found in the prospectus for each Nursery, the Parent and Carer Contract. We are usually unable to consult on changes in fees, terms, attendance patterns and conditions that facilitate the safe and effective running of the Nursery.

#### **What is the parent and carers responsibility for fees?**

Parents and carers entering into any arrangement of childcare with Children-First.info are liable for fees of a child attending Nursery. Parents and carers must understand that all financial arrangements must be met and adhered to as policy states. The overdue fee collection process will be actioned according to policy for all parents and carers.

#### **When and how are fees payable?**

Fees are payable on 24<sup>th</sup> of each month by standing Order or faster payment directly into the nursery bank account. The 24<sup>th</sup> is the payment date to allow for weekends and Bank Holidays and ensure that credits for accounts are cleared into the Nursery bank account by 1<sup>st</sup> working day of each month. Payment of fees via childcare vouchers must also reach the Nursery bank account by 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. As this involves co-ordination of a third-party supplier Nursery understands that these payments may take slightly longer; however, the payment date of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month provides a period of time between the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup>. Any vouchers received later than this date will be used towards the following month's fees. Cash payments can be made for ad-hoc bookings, or for enrolment on the waiting list. Cash payments towards fees can be made as a one-off solution if other methods are not available. The Nursery cannot accept regular cash payments for standard Nursery fees. The Nursery does accept cheques.

#### **What happens if fees are not received in full by 1<sup>st</sup> working day of the month?**

If fees are not received in full by 1<sup>st</sup> working day of the month a fee of £10 per working day will be applied to all late fees. Children can be excluded without notice if this is a regular occurrence. Children will only be allowed to return to Nursery once fees have been settled in full by cleared funds. This can be standing orders, faster payment, childcare vouchers, or cash. Nursery places will be kept open for five working days before being offered to the next family on the waiting list, during which time fees are payable whether or not the child returns to the Nursery.

#### **What is the overdue fee collection process?**

If fees become overdue, the child will be excluded with immediate effect via an email to the carers or parents from the Company Director. head office flags accounts which are overdue with Amber or Red flags. Once flagged these accounts are monitored closely by Managers and head office. Parents will be informed if their account has been flagged up with a red or amber flag concern. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month a late payment fine will be added on to the account, the first late day will be a fee of £25 with an additional £10 for each other working day until the full payment has been made. Parents or carers whose child leaves Nursery without notice with unpaid fees, including two month's written notice or fees in lieu will be referred to the Nursery Solicitor five days before the last day of booked attendance. If a deposit has been paid when starting at the Nursery this will be used against the overdue fees and legal fees. In any case of non-payment of fees, legal action is always taken as per the Terms and Conditions. Parents and carers should note their liability for interest, solicitor's letters and legal charges detailed in the Terms and Conditions and Parent Contract. These will vary from time to time and it is parent's and carers responsibility

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to keep themselves informed of these details.

#### **Do fees have to be paid during children's absences and holidays?**

Fees are payable during children's absences and holidays as Nursery overheads remain the same. This includes absence for appointments, sickness, or any other reasons. Swaps of sessions are NOT offered at any time. Additional sessions will be charged at the standard ad-hoc day rate, as per the Terms and Conditions of the Nursery. If a child goes away for longer than one calendar month, the parents and carers are able to reduce their child's booking pattern for this time frame. This is not an automatic change; it must be requested by the parent and carers at least two months' ahead of time by email. Reduction in sessions must last for longer than one calendar month. The minimum attendance requirements per week are still in operation during this time frame. If a child reduces their sessions to cover a long-term absence, we cannot hold their place open for the days that are deregistered from the child's account. Carers and parents must bear this in mind as it may mean that their sessions are no longer available when they return.

#### **What if Student Finance pay for childcare?**

Any agreements with Student Finance to pay for a child's Nursery space are made separately from the Nursery. All fees must be paid according to the Nursery procedure detailed above. Parents and carers are welcome to pay for multiple months in advance as funding is received if they wish to. Payments delayed by Student Finance do not affect the fee due date set by the Nursery. It will be the responsibility of the parent or carer to pay their child's fees on time regardless of Student Finance payment dates. Failure to pay fees on time will result in exclusion as detailed above. The Nursery will not agree any other Student Finance arrangements in any circumstances.

#### **What if the Local Authority pay for childcare?**

The Local Authority can offer or agree to pay for sessions for certain children. Arrangements can be made as soon as we have an email confirming details and an undertaking from the Local Authority. Nursery must have a signed undertaking by email from the Local Authority Officer who is responsible for managing the account before the child can attend.

#### **What happens to the Free Early Years Entitlement or FEEE for 3 and 4 year old children?**

A child's entitlement for the funding begins from the term after they turn 3 – either 1<sup>st</sup> of September, January or April. Funding is applied to a child's account as a discount for the hours entitled to. Funding is spread out over the year at Nursery. If an eligible child starts at Nursery after the 'census day' the Nursery is unable to claim the funding retrospectively for the child. This means the child will have to wait for the following half term before funding is claimed. Similarly, if a child leaves before the 'census day' in a term, they are not eligible for funding. This is a requirement of Local Authority terms and conditions for FEEE. Due to Local Authority requirements, funding for Hackney and Essex is applied for differently depending due to the different working of the scheme by these boroughs.

#### **What about session bookings and fees?**

Sessions must always be booked for a minimum of one month's attendance. Changes to sessions must always be put in writing and emailed to the nursery office. Changes are not confirmed until the Nursery Manager has responded with confirmation of changes by email. Variation to session times, costs, booking length, etc... must be put in writing to the Nursery Manager and approved before these are made. Nursery Managers are not authorised to make these changes without the Nursery Directors approval.

## **Section 13:**

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Updated January 2021

#### **Where can the Parent and Carer Contract and copies of forms be found?**

##### **Does Nursery have a Parent and Carer Contract?**

Nursery provides a copy of the Parent and Carer Contract if parents and carers are considering enrolling their child. This can also be found on the Nursery website [www.children-first.info](http://www.children-first.info) in the Policies section. Copies of other forms follow below that are part our partnership procedures. In addition to completing a form for suggestions, compliments, concerns or complaints, carers and parents are welcome to speak to the Nursery Manager or email, if it is more convenient. Forms for caring for children out of Nursery hours must be completed prior to any arrangements being confirmed.

##### **Parent Suggestion Form:**

Thank you for taking the time to make this suggestion, comment on the Nursery or raise a concern. You can also email the Nursery with suggestions or speak to the Nursery Manager. All comments will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

We are always pleased to respond to your suggestion if you wish. We will do this within 5 working days of receiving your comment. Please ensure you complete contact information if you would like a response.

##### **Suggestions, compliments comments concerns or complaints:**

Please use this space to communicate your views.

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If you require a response please complete the following information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime mobile number \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime email address \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE STATE PREFERRED METHOD OF CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_

Please state preferred time of contact \_\_\_\_\_

#### Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Form.

<b>Date of complaint, concern or compliment:</b>	
<b>Source of complaint, concern or compliment:</b>	
<b>Please tick:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent or carer in writing</li><li>• Parent or carer email</li><li>• Parent or carer in person</li><li>• Parent or carer by phone</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff member</li><li>• Another person known to Nursery</li><li>• Anonymous</li><li>• Ofsted include complaint number</li><li>• Other – please note source</li></ul>
<b>Nature of complaint concern or compliment in relation to EYFS requirements. Please tick:</b>	<b>Any other information:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Learning &amp; development</li><li>2. Child protection</li><li>3. Suitable people or staffing</li><li>4. Health</li><li>5. Safety or premises, environment and equipment</li><li>6. Information and records</li></ol>	

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7. Financial, fees, funding	
<b>Please give full details of complaint, concern or compliment:</b>	
<b>Tick all actions taken in response:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal investigation</li><li>• Risk assessment, actions and review</li><li>• Disciplinary investigation and/or action</li><li>• Investigation by other agencies</li><li>• Investigation by Ofsted</li><li>• Other - please list:</li></ul>	<b>Tick other documents attached to this form:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ofsted letter</li><li>• Letter or email to parent</li><li>• Risk assessment</li><li>• Investigation notes</li><li>• Other – please list:</li></ul>

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<b>Please describe actions and outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal actions, e.g. staff disciplinary</li><li>• Action plans</li><li>• Risk assessment review and changes</li><li>• Policy review and changes</li><li>• Actions agreed with Ofsted</li><li>• Changes in registration</li><li>• Other - please list:</li></ul>	<b>Name of person responsible for dealing with complaint or compliment and for recording information:</b>
<b>Please describe how outcomes have been shared with person who complained, shared concerns or complemented:</b>	
<b>All outcomes dealt with within 14-28 days. Please specify timescales:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Position:</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Nursery Coordinator sign off:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Nursery Director sign:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

### Caring for children out of Nursery hours – Parent, carer form

When an arrangement of babysitting or care out of Nursery hours has been made between a carer or parent and member of Children-First.info staff, this agreement must be signed by the parent, staff member and Nursery Manager prior to the arrangement date. A copy must be filed in both the child's file and staff member's file respectively.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (parent or carer) would like \_\_\_\_\_ (staff) to care for my child \_\_\_\_\_ (child) outside of Nursery hours and not on the premises of a

Children-First.info Nursery.

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I understand that all actions, behavior, conduct, incidents and other such occurrences during the time at which a member of staff provides care for my child during a babysitting arrangement is not a reflection of Children-First.info Policy and conduct.

I understand that Children-First has no liability for accidents, damage to property or any other issues should these occur. I understand that the staff member must ONLY be contacted on their personal phone number or by email for the sole purpose of babysitting or ad-hoc care.

I am aware that I must fill in an 'Authorised Collectors Form' if the child is to be collected by the member of staff from Nursery.

Should I wish for this member of staff to transport my child home at any time I understand it is my responsibility to ensure my house insurance covers all eventualities and I confirm I have checked the staff members car insurance policy covers all eventualities if my child is to travel in the Staff members car.

**I understand I can access the company policies on [www.children-first.info](http://www.children-first.info) , and also via email to the Nursery office, which provides further details on conduct requirements and procedures.**

Signed by parent or carer :

Date:

Signed by Nursery Manager:

Date:

#### **Caring for children out of nursery hours – Staff form**

When an arrangement of babysitting or care out of nursery hours has been made between a parent and member of Children-First.info staff, this agreement must be signed by the parent, staff member and setting manager prior to the arrangement date. This must be filed away in the child's file and staff member's file respectively.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (staff) am willing to babysit outside of nursery hours and off of the premises of Children-First.info Nursery for \_\_\_\_\_ (child) and have made the arrangement with \_\_\_\_\_ ( carer or parent).

I understand that all actions, behavior, conduct, incidents and other such occurrences during the time at which I provide care for this child during the babysitting arrangement is not a reflection of Children-First.info policy and conduct.

I understand that the company is not liable for any accidents, damage to property or child protection concerns, should these occur. I understand that any allegations arising out of the nursery must still be investigated following the allegations procedure as required by government procedures (LCPC).

I understand that I must ONLY contact the parent on their personal telephone number for the sole purpose of babysitting.

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I am aware that an 'Authorised Collectors Form' needs to be completed by the parent, should I be required to take the child home from nursery.

I will ensure that my relationships with parents/carers remain professional at all times and understand that my conduct and communication with parents or carers must be appropriate. I will not discuss confidential nursery matters with any parent at any time.

**I understand I can access Children-First Policies on the Nursery website [www.children-first.info](http://www.children-first.info) , and can be sent a link by the Nursery Manager if I request it by email. Policies provide full details of procedures also the safe and effective running of the Nurseries, which change periodically. Details of conduct requirements can be found in many Policies but most importantly the Staff Policy- Policy 1**

Signed by staff:

Date:

Signed by Nursery Manager:

Date: