

Little Angels Preschool Code of Conduct



Purpose

This code of conduct is designed to set out required standards and help employees understand the working relationship between themselves, their managers, colleagues, children and members of the public to whom they deliver a service.

Employees must comply with this Code as it forms part of their terms and conditions of employment. The preschool believes that employees are responsible for their actions. The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that staff are fully briefed on the content and have access to a copy of the Code of Conduct, it is however the responsibility of all employees to read the Code.

If any of the provisions contained within the Code of Conduct, related Codes of Practice or Policies are not fully understood, then the employee must, in their own interest, seek clarification from the Senior Leadership Team.

Senior Leadership must ensure that the current Staff Handbook for the Pre-School is accessible for all staff employed within the Pre-School. This may be via a hard copy, or an electronic version.

If an employee's actions or behaviour fall below the standards set out in this Code, then the preschool may take formal disciplinary action which may include the full range of disciplinary sanctions. Serious misconduct, criminal offences or other acts committed outside of working hours, which bring the preschool into disrepute or impact on the employee's ability to carry out their role, may also result in formal disciplinary action being taken, in accordance with the preschool procedures. Please see the Disciplinary Procedure for details.

General Principles

All employees are expected to perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity in order to give the highest possible standards of service and avoid any conduct which could compromise them and the preschool.

Employees should comply with the rules and procedures set by the preschool in relation to their actions and behaviours. A copy of all policies and procedures can be found on the Little Angels Preschool website and hard copies can be obtained from the senior leadership team.

Employees working with young people or vulnerable adults are in a position of great trust. Serious breaches of that trust; assault or sexual misconduct or deliberate disregard of policies and procedures meant to safeguard vulnerable service users will be regarded as potential gross misconduct.

Employees have a responsibility for ensuring a safe learning environment for children within the preschool. Any employee who believes that a colleague is acting in a way which might be harmful to the preschool or individual children, should raise the matter with the Senior Leadership Team.

Employees should have regard to the preschool's Behaviour Management Policy to provide guidance and support in dealing with behaviour issues as they arise.

Employees should not demean or undermine children, their parents, carers or colleagues or display any discriminatory behaviour.

Employees should not bring the reputation and standing of the preschool into disrepute.

Working Relationships

All employees have a right to be treated with dignity at work. Staff should always respect their colleagues, the pupils and the reputation of the preschool.

All employees are expected to follow the equal opportunities policy. All forms of harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, and harassment on the grounds of disability, religion, sexuality, age, gender, or political affiliation are unacceptable.

All forms of bullying, including threats or verbal aggression towards colleagues is unacceptable and will be dealt with seriously by the preschool. Please refer to the preschool's Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Complaints Procedure.

If there are work related issues, which cannot be resolved informally with another colleague, a member of the Senior Leadership Team should be advised. Also refer to the preschool's Complaints Procedure.

Employees should not be involved in decisions relating to any discipline, promotion, performance development review, or pay progression of any employee who is a relative, or with whom they have a close personal relationship. If an employee develops a close personal relationship where a conflict of interest might arise they should notify a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Employees should maintain an effective and professional working relationship with their colleagues and Leaders.

Employees should participate in initiatives designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Preschool policies, procedures and codes of practice should be followed at all times.

An employee should never conceal a matter that should be reported, or damage, alter or falsify any document, form or record.

It is the responsibility of the employee, that if their personal circumstances change, i.e. change of address or home telephone number, they should inform the Preschools Administrator.

Working with Children and Young People

Social Contacts

Employees should not seek to have social contact with a child or their families unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with the Senior Leadership Team. If a parent or child seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the employee should exercise their professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with the Senior Leadership Team. Such examples could be related to Internet social networking sites (i.e. being asked to be a 'friend' on 'Facebook')

Employees should gain permission from the Senior Leadership Team if there is a need for them to give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or email address to a child or their family.

Under normal circumstances this would be discouraged because of the potential implications from such an action. The process of gaining permission examines the reason for the need and allows it to be 'noted' in the interest of seeking to protect the employee.

Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for employees to have some physical contact with the child with whom they are working, for example those who teach PE, Games, Drama or who offer music tuition. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, employees should only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.

When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

In all circumstances where a child or young person initiates inappropriate physical contact, employees should sensitively deter the child and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries and must always report such circumstances to the Senior Leadership Team.

Sexual Contact

It is a criminal offence for a person over 18 to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship

is consensual. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact it may also include non-contact activities.

Any sexual activity between an employee and a child will be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.

Working and Contact with the Media

Employees should refer requests for this type of 'information' to the Senior Leadership Team in the first instance.

Employees who write or give interviews must ensure that they make it clear that they are not representing the School's view and do not bring the preschool into disrepute.

They should not publicise material which is confidential or against the preschool's or any employee's interest.

Working with Councillors and Political Neutrality

Employees should never directly or indirectly seek the support of any Councillor when they are making an application for further employment within the Parish or City Council.

Employees must not use members to bypass formal Council procedures in any way.

If an employee develops a close personal relationship where a conflict of interest might arise they should notify the Senior Leadership Team.

Employees must not allow their personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

Working and the Law

Employees have a duty at all times to uphold the law.

Offences involving a risk of harm to children or to vulnerable adults are considered by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

An employee should inform the Senior Leadership Team if they are charged with any offence, including driving offences and if they receive any criminal conviction. The Senior Leadership Team will then consider if any follow up action is necessary and decide if the matter should be referred and considered for disciplinary action. Some offences would be classed as serious and would fall under the definition of gross misconduct.

Working Safely

It is the duty of all employees to take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of others who are affected by what they do or do not do. They should also ensure that they

keep up to date with health and safety guidance as provided by the employer. (Also refer to the Health and Safety Policy and Hygiene Regulations within the preschool).

Employees working in one to one situations with children may be more vulnerable to allegations. They should therefore assess the need to have another adult present, and consider the location and facilities to ensure their own security and safety and that of the child.

An employee should use any safety clothing and equipment provided by the employer that is needed in their role and ensure that the equipment is not misused, neglected or damaged.

An employee must report any accident or "near misses" they have at work as soon as possible and accurately complete an accident report form, this includes verbal and physical assaults.

Employees must take reasonable care of children under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their health and safety. (refer to the Health and Safety Policy).

Alcohol should not be consumed during the working day. Employees should make sure that if they do drink alcohol at any time when they are off duty, it does not affect their ability to carry out their work or in any way damage the reputation of the preschool.

Employees should not take any non-medical substance, such as drugs, that may affect their performance at work. Prescribed drugs may be taken but if a GP gives an employee any medication that may have a negative effect on their performance, they should tell the Senior Leadership Team in confidence. The use of illegal substances may not only result in formal action, including the possibility of dismissal, but may also be reported to the police.

Meriden Methodist Church operates a No Smoking Policy on its premises.

Gifts

An employee's actions must not be influenced by offers of gifts or hospitality and must not give the impression to another member of staff, parent, pupil or service user that they are influenced in this way.

Employees should only accept gifts of a modest and token value (i.e. less than £10).

Employees should not accept a gift of hospitality from anyone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the preschool or may be seeking employment with the preschool. Employees should decline any offer of hospitality if they think the giver has an ulterior motive.

Employees should inform the Senior Leadership Team if anyone tries to bribe them or if there is evidence of improper behaviour by others.

The giving of gifts or rewards to children or young people should be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. The giving of a personal gift for a specific reason is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the employee has first discussed this with the Senior Leadership Team.

Employees should be cautious when selecting children for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

Working with Integrity

If a school wishes to sponsor an event or service, no employee, relative or friend should benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to, and prior approval by the Senior Leadership Team.

Employees are required to declare to the Senior Leadership Team, any pecuniary interests which could conflict with the preschool's interests, including any Directorships or equivalent position, which they may hold.

Deliberately giving false information on claims such as mileage, travel/subsistence allowances, self-certification forms or attendance records will be deemed as fraud. All documents/forms/records should be completed honestly.

Activities/private interests/outside employment, which employees may participate in when they are not at work, must not bring the preschool into disrepute. Employees should not put themselves in a position which could result in public confidence in the preschool being weakened.

Working with Money and Property

Employees should ensure that they use preschool funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner.

Financial and Accounting procedures within the preschool should be followed at all times.

The preschool's property such as stationery, photocopiers etc. may be used for preschool business only, unless permission has been given for other use. Facilities such as telephones, mobile phones, Internet, e-mail and other ICT facilities can only be used in accordance with the preschool IT policy and/or with the permission of the Senior Leadership Team. (Refer to Acceptable Use of ICT Policy)

A computer virus, which is maliciously hidden in a programme, can corrupt and damage computer files and discs. Employees need to be made aware that if they knowingly introduce a computer virus, this is not just a contravention of expected behaviour within their employment, they are breaking the law.

Employees should ensure that they follow the preschools security procedures in relation to the use of computers and the proper management of computer held information. Particular

care must be taken to observe established procedures when using passwords and logging on and off. (Refer to the preschool Data Protection Policy).

Employees should never share a password or similar security device that may lead to unauthorised access to the Schools systems or property.

Employees should gain proper prior approval from the owner of the copyright before copying computer programmes (software) and other literature for personal use as it is an offence (Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988). Refer to the Acceptable Use of ICT Facilities Policy.

Employees should return any property or equipment which they have been allowed to borrow by the school as soon as they leave their job or when requested by their Senior Leadership Team.

Recruitment and Selection and Other Employment Matters

If employees are involved in recruitment and selection they are expected to ensure that all appointments are made strictly on the basis of merit in accordance with the preschool's recruitment and selection process. Employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him/her.

Any reference provided by the Senior Leadership Team in relation to another employee on behalf of the preschool, whether it is written or verbal, should be factual and give an honest representation of the experience, skills, abilities and/or other qualities of that employee.

Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their professional position, qualifications or experience, nor should they falsify a reference.

Outside Commitments and Private Work

Employees should notify the Senior Leadership Team before taking up any outside employment. The Senior Leadership Team should assess if the nature of the work might be seen to conflict with the interests of the preschool and advise accordingly.

Any secondary employment cannot be carried out by employees during the time the preschool employs them (i.e. when they should be in attendance at the preschool/undertaking work for the preschool under their contract of employment for those specific hours), which includes periods of sickness absence.

Employees should follow the appropriate on the ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during their employment.

Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

Employees may have access to confidential information about children in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times

and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so. They should gain the permission of the Senior Leadership Team before disclosing this information to any unauthorised party, in order to protect the employee from any accusations of inappropriate use.

Information held by the preschool in relation to staff and pupils may be subject to the provision of the Data Protection Act. Employees should never put themselves in the position where the disclosure of information puts themselves, a colleague, a child or the reputation of the preschool at risk.

Employees should respect the confidentiality of preschool meetings and the contents of any confidential preschool documents.

Being a Member of an Organisation

Employees should ensure that their membership or involvement with any external organisation does not lead to an actual or perceived (maybe because of its nature and maybe because it is in the 'public domain') conflict of interest with their position as an employee of the preschool, or conflict with the preschool's policies/objectives or damage to the preschool's reputation. It is important to avoid any perception that advice, guidance, or decisions for which they are responsible could be influenced by their membership of a particular organisation. This does not apply to membership of a trade union.

Professional Accountability

(Whistleblowing)

Under this policy and procedure, if an employee believes that there has been any fraud, irregularity, improper behaviour towards a child, corruption or the law has been broken, they should report such incidents under this policy. Refer to this within the preschool.

This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns safely and without fear of retribution within the preschool rather than overlooking a problem. The preschool will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect any employee when they have raised a concern in good faith. Similarly no employee must treat another employee less favourably on the grounds that that employee has, intends, or is suspected of doing anything under these procedures. (Refer to Equal Opportunities policy)

Review

This code of conduct will be kept under review in the light of recommendations and guidance issued nationally in relation to standards of conduct in public life and revised as necessary.

For further support or information contact The Education Support Partnerships confidential helpline: 08000 562 561