



Kingston Methodist Church



Fairfield **PLAYBOX** Playgroup Policies and Procedures

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Vision Statement: Children's Rights

Children's Rights within the Playgroup:

Quality care,

a warm and safe environment,

to be treated equally, with no discrimination
(including race, culture, gender or disabilities),

freedom of choice,

respect, to be valued as individuals
(to be listened to, views acknowledged, praised),

to develop at their own pace,

a stable and caring environment.

These rights are in no special order, all are equally important!

Remember that to develop, children must be happy!

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Statement of intent

It is our intention to make our playgroup accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community.

Aim

We aim to ensure that all sections of our community have access to the playgroup through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

Methods

In order to achieve this aim we operate the following admissions policy:

- We ensure that the existence of our playgroup is advertised in places accessible to all sections of the community: in the Kingston Children's Information Service booklet, which supplies information about all the Playgroups, Pre-schools and Parent and Toddler Groups in the borough; at Clinics, Doctors' Surgeries and in Public Buildings.
- We have a Waiting List and children can have their names put on that at any time by the parent filling in a simple application form.
- When we have a vacancy at Playbox – or when we know we are going to have many vacancies, for example in September and in January, when many of our children leave to go on to Nursery Schools – we take the eldest on the Waiting List first.
- There are occasional exceptions to this:

As the Playgroup is owned and managed by Kingston Methodist Church, children whose parent/s attends the church regularly, have priority.

We occasionally give priority to a child with special needs or one referred by Kingston Social Services.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 2.10.06 after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 5.9.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 6.10.09.

SETTLING-IN POLICY

Statement of intent

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in our playgroup and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well being and their role as active partners with the playgroup.

Aim

We aim to make Playbox a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the playgroup, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include our 'Information and Acceptance Letter', the offer letter, the 'Information about our Playgroup' leaflet and a 'new parent talk' by the appropriate leader on the child's first day, when the parent carer stays for the first morning.
- We also provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the playgroup before starting at Playbox. They may also have visited our Parent and Toddler Groups or Play Clubs.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records and to talk about the curriculum and answer any questions.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle. The child's Key Worker is introduced to the child and parent and helps in the settling-in process.
- We have an expectation that the parent or carer will stay for all of the first session and, possibly some of the second but we "play it by ear" with each child, discussing with the parent/carer the best strategy. This may include the parent waiting in another room so that we can call on them should the need arise, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.
- In the second or third week of the terms when we have a lot of new children (the autumn term and the spring term), we hold Coffee Mornings every day, in another room so that the parents have a chance to meet members of the church, the Management Committee, and each other and are on hand for the settling-in process.
- Younger children may take longer to settle in, as may children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their Key Worker, the leader or another member of staff or volunteer ; for example the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child

is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.

- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when. For example: "I'll be back after Song Time".
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left, so we expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first morning.
- We do not believe that leaving a child distressed will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and getting the best from the playgroup. We may try to ring the parent or carer and ask them to return to be with their child.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the playgroup without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 2.10.06, after discussion at a Staff Meeting on 5.9.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 6.10.09

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Statement of intent

Playbox Playgroup believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. We have a policy of POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT – praising children whenever possible – encouraging considerate behaviour and quietly but firmly discouraging unacceptable behaviour.

Aim

We aim to teach children to behave in socially acceptable ways and to understand the needs and rights of others.

Methods

- The two playgroup leaders have overall responsibility for issues concerning behaviour.
- They are required to:
 - keep up to date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
 - access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour.
 - ensure all staff have relevant training on promoting positive behaviour. We require staff to attend regular courses run by the Kingston Early Years Training Unit.
- We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of - and respect - those used by members of the playgroup.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the playgroup's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.

- We expect all members of our playgroup - children, parents, staff, volunteers and students - to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by the Leader or their Key Worker. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable and why, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- We try to ensure that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
- We acknowledge and praise considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We support each child in developing self esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We try to avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- We never send children out of the room by themselves.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or damage to property. Details of such an event are brought to the attention of the Leader or Key Worker who informs the child's parent on the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour but we try to communicate by our expression and tone of voice that we are not pleased with their behaviour.

Children under three years

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- We recognise that very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them do this. Distraction is often used to help defuse difficult situations.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting, pushing or fighting. Staff should remain calm and patient and try to help children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.

Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes - such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.

- We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or 'aggressive'.
- We try to develop strategies to contain play that are within acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios.

Hurtful behaviour

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

- We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- We will help them manage these feelings as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- We understand that self management of intense emotions, especially of anger is difficult for the two and three year old child. Therefore we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour.

- Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through holding and cuddling. Verbal children will also respond to cuddling to calm them down, but we offer them explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings experienced. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. 'Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when he took it, did you? It made you feel angry, didn't it, and you hit him'.
- We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. 'When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn't like that and it made him cry'.
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. 'I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn't crying any more. Let's see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one.'
- We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for the cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories, in small and large groups and we use the Kingston Early Years STARS social skills programme. We build self esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we encourage children to say or to show they are sorry, where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together.

Bullying

Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour.

A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress to another therefore it is unlikely that a child of two or three is a bully.

However, we do find that occasionally one child does seem to pick on a particular child and this has to be watched and we intervene to stop a child from being harmed. We often find that the child who is 'bullying' seems to particularly like or admire the other child and is not able to 'make friends' in an appropriate way. We have to try to show the child how to be friendly without being over enthusiastic in their attention making behaviour. We also have to try to explain the situation to the other child, who is often more able to make friends in an appropriate manner.

- The Leader or Key Worker discusses what has happened with the parents of the child who did the 'bullying' and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour; and
- The Leader or Key Worker shares what has happened with the parents of the child who has been 'bullied', explaining that the child who did the 'bullying' is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 30.1.06 after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 5.1.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on: 23.2.10.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Statement of intent

Playbox Playgroup believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our playgroup and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate Playgroup Leader. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

Aim

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our playgroup to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Methods

To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure. All settings are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage 2 or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of Playbox's provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the appropriate Leader.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the appropriate Leader or the chairperson of the management committee, c/o Kingston Methodist Church, Fairfield South, Kingston, Surrey KT1 2UJ.
- The playgroup stores written complaints from parents in a separate file designated for this purpose.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the playgroup Leader or chairperson of the management committee meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the substantive points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the playgroup leader and the chairperson of the management committee. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required and the leader should have the chairperson

of the management committee, and, possibly, the other playgroup leader, present. There may also be an additional person to take notes.

- An agreed written record of the discussion is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the substantive points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

Stage 4

- If at the Stage 3 meeting the parent and playgroup cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- The mediator keeps all discussion confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the playgroup personnel (playgroup leader/s and chair of the management committee) and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the leader and the chair of the management committee is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.
- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Area Safeguarding Children Committee.

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the playgroup's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare Requirements are adhered to.

The address and telephone number of our Ofsted regional centre are:

**Ofsted, National Business Unit, 2nd Floor,
Royal Exchange Buildings, St. Ann's Square,
Manchester M2 7LA
Telephone: 08456 40 40 40
Our Ofsted Registration Number is: 131796**

These details are displayed on the playgroup's notice board.

- If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee in our local authority, as shown in the publication on Child Protection produced by

the Kingston Children's Information Service (CIS). A copy of this booklet is included in our Policies and Procedures File.

- In these cases, both the parent and the playgroup are informed and the playgroup leader works with Ofsted or the Area Safeguarding Children Committee to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Records

- A record of complaints against our playgroup and/or the children and/or the adults working in the playgroup is kept. This includes the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints Summary Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Fairfield Management Committee held on 30.1.06 after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 5.1.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 6.10.09

STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Statement of intent

We provide a staffing ratio in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare Requirements to ensure that children have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality. Our staff are appropriately qualified and we carry out checks through the Criminal Records Bureau in accordance with statutory requirements.

Aims

To ensure that children below school age and their parents are offered high quality early years care and education.

Methods

- To meet this aim we use the following ratios of adult to child:
 - children aged two years of age: 1 adult : 4 children; and
 - children aged three – four years of age: 1 adult : 8 children.
- A minimum of two staff/adults are on duty in the upper or lower hall at any one time.
- We hold weekly staff meetings, to undertake planning and to discuss our observations on children's progress, their achievements and any difficulties that may arise.
- We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- All staff have job descriptions which set out their staff roles and responsibilities.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by our imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.
- The playgroup Leaders and Deputy have a level 3 qualification in Childcare and a minimum of half of our staff have a Childcare qualification at level 2 or above.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff, through the Kingston Early Years Service.

- Our annual budget allocates resources to training.
- We provide staff induction training during the first weeks of employment. This induction includes looking at our Health and Safety Policy, Child Protection Procedures and Behaviour Management Policy.
- We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings and appraisals, including a Probationary Period review meeting.
- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.
- We use Ofsted guidance on obtaining references and criminal record checks through the Criminal Records Bureau for all staff and regular volunteers who work with the children in the playgroup.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Fairfield Playbox Playgroup Management Committee on 30.1.06, after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 5.1.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on: 23.1.10.

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by Alan Clatworthy (Chairperson)

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE

Statement of intent

Playbox Playgroup will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm when in our care.

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (dept. of health publication 2005) and in the Guidance provided by Kingston Children's Information Service in their Child Protection booklet for Childcare Providers.

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues by ensuring that our staff are adequately trained and are aware of their own responsibilities promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children in our care.

The two Leaders are the designated staff responsible for Child Protection. It is our duty of care to report any child protection issues to Kingston Social Services if we suspect any case of abuse or non-accidental injury.

Playbox Playgroup is also committed to empowering young children, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Aims

Our aims are to promote children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by:

creating an environment in Playbox Playgroup that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.

- encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enabling children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches;
- helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults; and
- working with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

Sources of Guidance

What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused (dept. of health publication)

Methodist Church publication: Safeguarding.

Kingston Children's Information Service publication: Child Protection.

The London Child Protection Procedures

(all contained in our Policies & Procedures File)

Liaison with other bodies

- We work within the Area Safeguarding Children Committee guidelines.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you a worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, which include keeping the telephone numbers of ASKK (Advancing Services for Kingston Kids: 020 8547 5888) and of any social workers who may be involved in working with one of our children, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for our playgroup and social services to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social services department, we act within the Area Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.
- Advice can be sought from ASKK without necessarily making a formal referral.

Key Commitment 1

Playbox Playgroup is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm when in our care.

Methods

Staffing and volunteering

- Our designated members of staff who co-ordinate child protection issues are the leaders: Julie Carroll and Sheila Moore. Sheila Moore has also undertaken CAF (Common Assessment Framework) training and is now a Leading CAF Professional.
- Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is:
Nigel Spalding
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Criminal Record Bureau checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised and our regular volunteers are also required to have 'enhanced disclosure' checks.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the playgroup.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the playgroup so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Key Commitment 2

Playbox Playgroup is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (DoH 2005.)

Methods

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the member of staff makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the Playgroup leader who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored in the log book and the Chairperson of the Playgroup Management Committee and the designated Committee Member (Nigel Spalding) is informed.
- Staff in the playgroup take care not to influence the outcome, either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- One of the Leaders may discuss these concerns with ASKK.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child;

- listens to the child; and
- gives reassurance that she or he will take action.

The member of staff does not question the child.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff make a record of:

- the child's name;
- the child's address;
- the age of the child;
- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- an objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
- the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
- the names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the log book

All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local Area Safeguarding Children Committee does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee.

Support to families

- Playbox Playgroup believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.

- The playgroup makes clear to parents its role and responsibilities in relation to Child Protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local social services department.
- The playgroup continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the social services department in relation to the playgroup's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteers within the Playgroup, which may include an allegation of abuse. (See Complaints Procedure).
- We follow the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to Kingston's social service department and Ofsted to investigate.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social services in conjunction with the police.
- Our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full basic pay for the duration of the investigation; this is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the playgroup or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Key Commitment 3

Playbox Playgroup is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues by ensuring that our staff are adequately trained and are aware of their own responsibilities promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children in our care. We are also committed to empowering young children, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Methods

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all Playbox staff to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one to one situation without being visible and/or audible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be 'strong, resilient and listened to' and so that they develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the playgroup a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Mobile Phones

- We aim to make Playbox a "mobile-free zone". We explain this policy to parents and encourage them not to talk on their mobile phones when they are dropping off or collecting their children.
- Staff should leave their mobile phones securely stored in their bags while the children are on the premises and should not carry them with them. Staff members should give the playgroup telephone number to their families or anyone else who may need to contact them urgently, so that they can be called to the telephone in case of emergency, rather than relying on their mobile phones.

Photography

- We take photographs of the children as part of the process of observation and assessment of their progress, and to share what they have been doing at playgroup with their carers. Parents are asked to consent to photographs of their child being taken and being used to assist with their child's education and development, when their child joins the playgroup. Photographs may only be taken with a camera belonging to Playbox, and photographs taken on those cameras may only be downloaded and printed by Julie Carroll or Sheila Moore. Staff may not bring their own cameras into playgroup, or take photographs for any purpose other than those specified above.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Fairfield Playbox Playgroup Management Committee on 30.1.06 after being discussed at a Staff Meeting on 5.1.06 .

This policy was last reviewed and revised on: 23.2.10

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by Alan Clatworthy (Chairperson)

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Statement of intent

We believe that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We will make our playgroup a safe and healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers.

Aim

We aim to make children, parents and staff aware of health and safety issues and to minimise the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

Methods

All the members of staff are responsible for health and safety. The Leaders, Sheila and Julie, are the designated persons for ensuring that the policy is adhered to.

We display the necessary health and safety poster in the downstairs kitchen.

Risk assessment

Our risk assessment process includes:

- A daily checklist for hazards and risks in the halls downstairs and upstairs, the outside area, toilets, kitchen and all other rooms used for small groups; also we check daily our activities and procedures. Our assessment covers adults and children;
- deciding which areas need attention and developing an action plan that specifies the action required, the timescales for action, the person responsible for the action and any funding required.
- We discuss risk assessment issues at our staff meetings and planning meetings, held weekly.

Insurance cover

Kingston Methodist Church has public liability insurance and employers' liability insurance.

Awareness raising

- Our induction training for staff and volunteers includes written guidelines and a clear explanation of health and safety issues so that all adults are able to adhere to our policy and understand their shared responsibility for health and safety. The induction training covers matters of employee well-being, including safe lifting and the storage of potentially dangerous substances.

- Health and safety issues are explained to the parents of new children so that they understand the part played by these issues in the daily life of the setting. (eg. Door/gate for security, the wearing of jewellery being a safety hazard, etc.)
- Health and safety is discussed regularly at staff meetings.
- We have a no smoking policy.
- Children are made aware of health and safety issues through discussions, planned activities and routines.

Children's safety

- We ensure all staff and regular volunteers have been checked for criminal records by an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- All children are supervised by adults at all times.
- Whenever children are on the premises at least two adults must be present.

Security

- Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. The times of the children's arrivals and departures are recorded.
- The arrival and departure times of adults - staff, volunteers and visitors - are recorded.
- Our systems are designed to prevent unauthorised access to our premises and to prevent children from leaving our premises unnoticed, during playgroup hours.
- The personal possessions of staff and volunteers are securely stored during sessions.

Windows

- Low level windows are made from materials that prevent accidental breakage or are made safe.
- Furniture is arranged to ensure that children cannot climb up to any of the windows on the first floor.

Doors

- We take precautions to prevent children's fingers from being trapped in doors.

Floors

- All surfaces are checked daily to ensure they are clean and not uneven or damaged.

Kitchen

- Children do not have access to the kitchen.
- All surfaces are clean and non-porous.

- There are facilities for washing up.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
- When children take part in cooking activities in the lower hall, they:
 - are supervised at all times;
 - are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water; and
 - do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment.

Electrical/gas equipment

- All electrical/gas equipment conforms to safety requirements and is checked regularly.
- Our boiler/electrical switchgear/meter cupboard is not accessible to the children.
- Fires, heaters, electric sockets, wires and leads are properly guarded and the children are taught not to touch them.
- There are sufficient sockets to prevent overloading.
- Children are supervised when using hot water to wash hands.
- Lighting and ventilation is adequate in all areas including storage areas.

Storage

- All resources and materials from which children select are stored safely.
- All equipment and resources are stored or stacked safely to prevent them accidentally falling or collapsing.

Hygiene

- Our daily routines encourage the children to learn about personal hygiene.
- We have a daily cleaning routine for the playgroup which includes lower hall, kitchen, toilets and nappy changing area.
- We regularly clean resources and equipment, dressing-up clothes and furnishings.
- The toilet area has a good standard of hygiene including hand washing and drying facilities and the disposal of nappies.
- We implement good hygiene practices by:
 - cleaning tables between activities;
 - checking toilets regularly;
 - wearing protective clothing - such as aprons and disposable gloves - as appropriate;
 - providing sets of clean clothes;

- providing tissues, wipes and paper towels.

Activities

- Before purchase or loan, equipment and resources are checked to ensure that they are safe for the ages and stages of the children currently attending the setting.
- The layout of play equipment allows adults and children to move safely and freely between activities.
- All equipment is regularly checked for cleanliness and safety and any dangerous items are repaired or discarded.
- All materials - including paint and glue - are non-toxic.
- Sand is clean and suitable for children's play.
- Physical play is constantly supervised.
- Children learn about health, safety and personal hygiene through the activities we provide and the routines we follow.

Food and drink

- Staff who prepare and handle food receive appropriate training and understand - and comply with - food safety and hygiene regulations.
- All food and drink is stored appropriately.
- Adults do not carry hot drinks through the play area(s) and do not place hot drinks within reach of children.
- Snack times are appropriately supervised and children do not walk about with food and drinks.
- Fresh drinking water is available to the children at all times.
- We operate systems to ensure that children do not have access to food/drinks to which they are allergic.

Outings and visits

- Are undertaken only when the parent/carer accompanies their child.
- A risk assessment is carried out before an outing takes place.
- One or two staff may accompany children and parents on outings and a minimum of two should remain behind with the rest of the children.

Missing child

If a child goes missing from the Playgroup:

- The Leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside area.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- If the search fails to find the child the police are contacted and the parents informed.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Leader talks to staff to establish what happened
- A full investigation will be carried out by the Management Committee Chairperson taking written statements from all the staff present at the time.
- The Leader writes an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the report;
 - what staff/ children were in the group.
 - when the child was last seen.
 - what has taken place in the group since then;
 - the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injury, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) arrangements and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- OFSTED is informed.
- The Insurance Department of the Methodist Church is informed.

Animals

- Animals visiting Playbox are free from disease and safe to be with children, and do not pose a health risk.
- Children wash their hands after contact with animals.

Fire safety

- Fire doors are clearly marked, never obstructed and easily opened from inside.
- Smoke detectors/alarms and fire fighting appliances conform to BSEN standards, are fitted in appropriate high risk areas of the building and are checked as specified by the manufacturer.
- Our emergency evacuation procedures are approved by the Fire Safety Officer and are:

- clearly displayed in the premises;
 - explained to new members of staff, volunteers and parents; and
 - practised regularly once a term.
- Records are kept of fire drills and the servicing of fire safety equipment.

First aid and medication

At least one member of staff with current first aid training is on the premises at any one time. The first aid qualification includes first aid training for infants and young children.

Our first aid kit:

- complies with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981;
- is regularly checked by a designated member of staff (Sheila Moore) and re-stocked as necessary;
- is easily accessible to adults; and
- is kept out of the reach of children.

At the time of registration, parents are asked to sign for permission for emergency medical advice or treatment to be sought, including allowing staff to take their child to the nearest Accident and Emergency unit to be examined.

Administration of medication

- Only prescribed medication may be administered. It must be in-date and prescribed for the current condition.
- Children taking prescribed medication must be well enough to attend the playgroup.
- Children's prescribed drugs are stored in their original containers, are clearly labelled and are inaccessible to the children.
- Parents give prior written permission for the administration of medication. This states the name of the child, name/s of parent(s), date the medication starts, the name of the medication, the dose and times, or how and when the medication is to be administered.
- The administration is recorded accurately each time it is given and is signed by staff. Parents sign the record book to acknowledge the administration of a medicine.
- If the administration of prescribed medication requires medical knowledge, individual training is provided for the relevant member of staff by a health professional.

Our accident book:

- is kept safely and accessibly;

- all staff know where it is kept and how to complete it. A record of an accident to a child is shown to the parent/carer, who signs it and keeps a copy.
- is reviewed at least termly to identify any potential or actual hazards.

Ofsted is notified of any injury requiring treatment by a general practitioner or hospital doctor, or the death of a child or adult.

When there is any injury requiring general practitioner or hospital treatment to a child, parent, volunteer or visitor or where there is a death of a child or adult on the premises, we make a report to the Health and Safety Executive using the format for the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations. (RIDDOR)

Dealing with incidents

We meet our legal requirements for the safety of our employees by complying with RIDDOR. We would report to the Health and Safety Executive:

- deaths;
- major injuries
- over-3-day injuries – where an employee is away from work or unable to perform their normal work duties for more than 3 consecutive days;
- injuries to members of the public or people not at work where they are taken from the scene of an accident to hospital;
- some work-related diseases;
- dangerous occurrences – where something happens that does not result in an injury but could have done.

Any dangerous occurrence is recorded in our Incident Book. See below.

Our Incident Book

- We keep an incident book for recording incidents including those that are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive as above.
- These incidents include:
 - break in, burglary, theft of personal or the setting's property;
 - fire, flood, gas leak or electrical failure;
 - attack on member of staff or parent on the premises or near by;
 - any racist incident involving a staff or family on the centre's premises;
 - death of a child, and
 - a terrorist attack, or threat of one.

- In the incident book we record the date and time of the incident, nature of the event, who was affected, what was done about it - or if it was reported to the police, and if so a crime number. Any follow up, or insurance claim made, should also be recorded.
- In the unlikely event of a terrorist attack we follow the advice of the emergency services with regard to evacuation, medical aid and contacting children's families. Our standard Fire Safety Policy will be followed. The incident is recorded when the threat is averted.
- In the unlikely event of a child dying on the premises, the emergency services are called, and the advice of these services is followed.

Sickness

Our policy for the exclusion of ill or infectious children is discussed with parents. This includes procedures for contacting parents - or other authorised adults - if a child becomes ill while at Playbox. We ask parents to inform us, by telephone, if their child is unable to attend playgroup for any reason, including illness.

- We do not provide care for children who are unwell, have a temperature, or a contagious or infectious illness, including conjunctivitis. A child who has had sickness or diarrhoea should be clear of the symptoms for 48 hours before returning to Playgroup.
- Children with headlice are not excluded, but must be treated to remedy the condition.
- Parents are notified if there is a case of headlice in the playgroup.
- Parents are notified if there is an infectious disease, such as chicken pox.
- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) may affect children or families attending the setting. Staff may or may not be informed about it.
- Children or families are not excluded because of HIV.
- Good hygiene practice concerning the clearing of any spilled bodily fluids is carried out at all times.
- Staff suffering from sickness and diarrhoea or any other infectious illness, do not attend playgroup.
- Ofsted is notified of any infectious diseases that a qualified medical person considers notifiable.

Safety of adults

- Adults are provided with guidance about the safe storage, movement, lifting and erection of large pieces of equipment.
- When adults need to reach up to store equipment or to change light bulbs they are provided with safe equipment to do so.
- All warning signs are clear.
- Adults who remain in the building on their own have the door locked.

- The sickness of staff is recorded in our log book and their involvement in accidents in our accident book. The records are reviewed termly to identify any issues that need to be addressed.

Records

In accordance with the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, we keep records of:

Adults

- names and addresses of all staff on the premises, including temporary staff who work with the children or who have substantial access to them;
- names and addresses of all members of the management committee;
- all records relating to the staff's employment with the playgroup, including application forms, references, results of checks undertaken etc.

Children

- names, addresses and telephone numbers of parents and adults authorised to collect children from playgroup;
- the names and telephone numbers of emergency contacts in case of children's illness or accident;
- the allergies, dietary requirements and illnesses of individual children;
- the times of attendance of children, staff, volunteers and visitors;
- accidents and medicine administration records;
- consents for administration of medication, emergency treatment;
- incidents

The following procedures and documentation in relation to health and safety are in place:

- Risk assessment.
- Record of visitors.
- Fire safety procedures.
- Fire safety records and certificates.
- Administration of medication.
- Prior parental consent to administer medicine.

- Record of the administration of medicines.
- Prior parental consent for emergency treatment.
- Accident record.
- Sick children.
- No smoking.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 6.6.06 after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 20.4.06

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 25.5.10

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by Alan Clatworthy (Acting Chairperson)

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PROCEDURES IN CASE OF FIRE

1. On discovering a fire, raise the alarm by activating one of the fire alarms situated near the entrance doors or in the upstairs hall.
2. Children in the Lower Hall should be lined up, be told – and helped – to hold hands and then led out by the safest door – the one furthest from the fire. Sing “Follow my Leader” or another familiar song to keep them calm. The Leader should pick up the daily register on the way out.
3. Assemble in the Church car park if this is safe, otherwise in the private car park opposite. The Leader will then call the register.
4. If any children are in the toilets, in the Vestry, or in the hall upstairs (which has a fire exit leading to the car park) the member/s of staff with them should take them out of the building following the procedure as above i.e. holding hands and singing to keep them calm, and assemble with the others. If you are trapped in the toilets by flames or smoke – keep calm. The doors are fireproof for 30 minutes. Place wet paper towels at bottom of door to prevent smoke coming in.
5. Once the children are out of the building the Leader will ensure that the Fire Brigade is called.

THE PRIORITY IS TO GET EVERYONE OUT OF THE BUILDING QUICKLY, CALMLY AND SAFELY.

Last reviewed: 25.5.10

SPECIAL NEEDS STATEMENT

At Playbox we welcome all children including those with special needs, such as language and communication difficulties, developmental delay, visual or hearing impairment, challenging behaviour and/or physical disabilities.

Staff are not qualified to diagnose medical problems, but after years of relevant training and experience, we can recognise areas of development that may need help or investigation and may suggest a visit to Health Visitor or G.P.

Occasionally we may, with parental consent, arrange for Ann Macpherson, Pre-school Support Service Co-ordinator for Special Needs, to visit the child at Playgroup or at home.

We work in partnership with parents and other agencies such as physiotherapists and speech and language therapists in order to meet individual children's needs.

If you have any worries about your child's development please do not hesitate to talk to your child's Key Worker, or one of the Playgroup Leaders.

Statement reviewed: 25.5.10

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY POLICY

Statement of intent

We will provide an environment in which all children are supported to reach their full potential.

Aims

- We have regard for the DCSF Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.
- We welcome children of all abilities at Playbox Playgroup.
- We provide practitioners to help support parents and children with special educational needs (SEN)/disabilities.
- We identify the specific needs of children with SEN/disabilities and meet those needs through a range of strategies.
- We work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual children's needs.
- We monitor and review our practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments.

Methods

- We have a designated member of staff who is the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO): Julie Carroll. She attends regular Network meetings with other SENCOs in the borough and regular training courses provided by Kingston Early Years.
- We provide a statement showing how we provide for children with SEN/disabilities.
- We ensure that the provision for children with SEN/disabilities is the responsibility of all members of the playgroup.
- We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity.
- We ensure that our physical environment is as far as possible suitable for children with disabilities.
- We work closely with parents of children with SEN/disabilities to create and maintain a positive partnership.
- We ensure that parents are informed at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their children's education.
- We provide parents with information on sources of independent advice and support.
- We liaise with other professionals involved with children with SEN/disabilities and their families, including transfer arrangements to other settings and schools.
- We provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all children with SEN/disabilities.
- We provide a differentiated curriculum to meet individual needs and abilities.

- We keep records of the assessment, planning, provision and review for children with SEN/disabilities.
- We provide appropriate resources (human and financial) to implement our SEN/disability policy.
- We ensure the privacy of children with SEN/disabilities when intimate care is being provided.
- We provide in-service training for practitioners and volunteers.
- We raise awareness of any specialism the setting has to offer, e.g. Makaton trained staff.
- We provide a complaints procedure.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 6.6.06, after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 20.4.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 25.5.10

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by Alan Clatworthy (Acting Chairperson)

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Statement of intent

We believe that children benefit most from early years education and care when parents (or person in loco parentis) and playgroup work together in partnership.

Our aim

Our aim is to support parents as their children's first and most important educators by involving them in their children's education and in the full life of the playgroup.

Method

In order to fulfil these aims we:

- are committed to ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families;
- inform all parents about how the playgroup is run and its policies. This is done through access to written information: on our website; through our 'New Parent Talk' and regular informal communication, including half termly newsletters and information on the white board in the entrance hall. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them;
- encourage and support parents to play an active part in the management of the playgroup by encouraging them to become parent representatives on our Management Committee or to talk to the Parent Reps at regular coffee mornings, open evenings etc. or to help occasionally as a parent volunteer.
- inform parents on an informal, regular basis about their children's progress;
- involve parents in any record keeping about their children - either formally or informally.
- provide opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of Playbox Playgroup and to welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take;
- inform parents about relevant support groups, conferences and training courses.
- hold meetings in venues that are accessible and appropriate for all;
- inform all parents of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions and check to ensure these are understood. All parents have access to our written complaints procedure.
- provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in Playbox and about young children's learning, in the playgroup and at home. This includes the use of special books called 'Learning Journeys' which show the child's progress with photos and comments which are passed to parents on a regular basis.

In compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage - Welfare Requirements, the following documentation is in place:

- admissions policy;
- complaints procedure;
- record of complaints; and
- activities provided for children.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 6.6.06, after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 20.4.06

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 25.5.10

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by Alan Clatworthy (Acting Chairperson)

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STUDENT PLACEMENT POLICY

Statement of intent

We recognise that qualifications and training make an important contribution to the quality of the care and education provided by early years settings. As part of our commitment to quality, we offer placements to students undertaking early years qualifications and training, including those studying for levels 1, 2 and 3 in Childcare.

Aim

We aim to provide for students on placement with us experiences that contribute to the successful completion of their studies and that provide examples of quality practice in early years care and education.

Methods

- We require students to meet the 'suitable person' requirements of Ofsted.
- We require schools placing students under the age of 17 years with the setting to vouch for their good character.
- We supervise students at all times and do not allow them to have unsupervised access to children.
- Students who are placed in our playgroup on a short term basis are not counted in our staffing ratios.
- We have employers' liability insurance and public liability insurance, which covers students and voluntary helpers.
- We require students to keep to our confidentiality policy.
- We co-operate with students' tutors in order to help students to fulfil the requirements of their course of study.
- We provide students, at the first session of their placement, with a short induction on how our playgroup is managed, how our sessions are organised and our policies and procedures and provide them with written guidelines.
- We communicate a positive message to students about the value of qualifications and training.

- We make the needs of the children paramount by not admitting students in numbers that hinder the essential work of the playgroup.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 6.6.06 after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 20.4.06

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 25.5.10

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by Alan Clatworthy (Acting Chairperson)

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FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

Statement of intent

We regard snack times as an important part of Playbox Playgroup's session. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating and making choices.

Aim

At snack times, we provide fruit and a plain biscuit, with milk or water to drink, according to the children's individual dietary needs. We aim to meet the Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare Requirements on Food and Drink.

Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the Playgroup, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.

We record this information on her/his registration card and on the daily Register and ensure that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.

- On some occasions, such as religious festivals and Teddy Bears' Picnics, we include foods from the diet of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.

- We use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and feeding themselves.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the session.
- For children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 6.6.06 after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 20.4.06

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 25.5.10

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by Alan Clatworthy (Acting Chairperson)

STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Statement of intent

We provide a staffing ratio in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare Requirements to ensure that children have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality. Our staff are appropriately qualified and we carry out checks for criminal and other records through the Criminal Records Bureau in accordance with statutory requirements.

Aims

To ensure that children below school age and their parents are offered high quality early years care and education.

Methods

- To meet this aim we use the following ratios of adult to child:
 - children aged two years of age: 1 adult : 4 children; and
 - children aged three – four years of age: 1 adult : 8 children.
- A minimum of two staff/adults are on duty in the upper or lower hall at any one time.
- We hold weekly staff meetings, to undertake planning and to discuss our observations on children's progress, their achievements and any difficulties that may arise.
- We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- All staff have job descriptions which set out their staff roles and responsibilities.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by our imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.

- The playgroup Leaders and Deputy have a level 3 qualification in Childcare and a minimum of half of our staff have a Childcare qualification at level 2 or above.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff, through the Kingston Early Years Service.
- Our annual budget allocates resources to training.
- We provide staff induction training during the first weeks of employment. This induction includes looking at our Health and Safety Policy, Child Protection Procedures and Behaviour Management Policy.
- We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings and appraisals, including a Probationary Period review meeting.
- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.
- We use Ofsted guidance on obtaining references and criminal record checks through the Criminal Records Bureau for all staff and regular volunteers who work with the children in the playgroup.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Fairfield Playbox Playgroup Management Committee on 30.1.06, after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 5.1.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on: 26.1.09.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Statement of intent

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers.

Aim

We aim to ensure that all parents, carers, Social Workers and other professionals can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of the children.

Methods

We keep records on children attending Playbox Playgroup as follows:

- Personal records including registration and admission forms, signed consents, and other personal details recorded on a card index system.
- We keep observations and planning records on all children, written by their Key Workers.
- In some cases we also keep correspondence concerning the child or family; reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
- These confidential records are stored in a lockable cupboard by the Leader at the end of each session.
- Parents can have access to the files and records of their own children but cannot have access to information about any other child.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with anyone, except other staff, professionals, or members of the Management Committee, and then only when it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality.
- Volunteers, and students studying for NVQ3 or other recognised training courses, are advised of our confidentiality policy, and required to respect it.

Other records

- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions (the Leaders and members of the Management Committee and the Church's Safeguarding Co-ordinator).

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 2.10.06 after discussion at a Staff Meeting held on 5.9.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 6.10.09.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Statement of intent

Playbox Playgroup is committed to valuing diversity by providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families.

Aim

We aim to:

- provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and people with disabilities;
- improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity; and
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting.

The legal framework for this policy is:

- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986;
- Children Act 1989; and
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Methods

Admissions

Our playgroup is open to all members of the community.

- We advertise our service widely.
- We reflect the diversity of members of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We base our admissions policy on a fair system.

- We ensure that all parents are made aware of our Equality and Diversity policy.
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our playgroup, on the basis of colour, ethnicity, religion or social background, such as being a member of a travelling community or an asylum seeker.
- We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our setting because of any disability.
- We develop an action plan to ensure that people with disabilities can participate successfully in the services offered by the playgroup and in the curriculum offered.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents. Displaying of openly racist insignia, distribution of racist material, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the premises and will be dealt with in the strongest manner.

Employment and Staff Training

- Applicants to work at Playbox Playgroup are welcome from all background.
- We provide training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish.
- We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Curriculum

Our playgroup encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. We encourage children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

We do this by:

- making children feel valued and good about themselves;
- ensuring that children have equality of access to learning;
- recognising the different learning styles of girls and boys, making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities;
- positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources;
- avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials;
- celebrating a range of festivals;
- creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
- helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;

- ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities;
- ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning; and
- ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages.

Valuing diversity in families

- We recognise the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the playgroup and to contribute fully.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion.
- We offer a flexible payment system for families of differing means and offer information regarding sources of financial support.

Food

- We work in partnership with parents to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met.
- We help children to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 2.10.06, after discussion at a Staff Meeting on 5.9.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 6.10.09

NON-COLLECTION OF CHILDREN POLICY

Statement of intent

If a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session, the playgroup puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner who is known to the child.

Aim

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult, we will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

Methods

- Parents of children starting at Playbox Playgroup are asked to provide specific information which is recorded on our Registration form, including:
 - home address and telephone number - if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbour or close relative;
 - place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable);
 - mobile telephone number (if applicable);
 - names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the playgroup, for example a childminder or grandparent (local contact in case of emergencies);
 - information about any person who does not have legal access to the child; and
 - who has parental responsibility for the child.
- On occasions when parents are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they should tell the Leader, who will make a note of how they can be contacted on a card in our Box File.
- On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect the child, they should tell the Leader or member of staff responsible for the register that day, who will record the name and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child on our Daily Register clipboard. We agree with parents how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child.

- Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take back-up procedures. We provide parents with our contact telephone number. We also inform parents that - in the event that their children are not collected from Playbox by an authorised adult and the staff can no longer supervise the child on our premises - we apply our child protection procedures as set out in our child protection policy.
- If a child is not collected at the end of the session, we follow these procedures:
 - The Daily Register Clipboard is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
 - If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
 - If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the playgroup - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Card - are contacted.
 - All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
 - The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Card or on the Daily Register Clipboard.
 - The Leader and one other member of staff stay with the child until he/she is collected by an authorised adult.
 - If no-one collects the child after one hour and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we contact Kingston Social Services (Askk) Telephone number 0208 547 5888
 - The child stays at playgroup in the care of the two members of staff until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social worker;
 - Social services will aim to find the parent or relative if they are unable to do so, the child will be admitted into the care of the local authority.
 - Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent, nor will they take the child home with them.
 - A full written report of the incident is recorded in the Incident Book.
 - Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.
 - Ofsted may be informed (telephone number: 08456 40 40 40).

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Fairfield Playbox Management Committee held on 2.10.06 after discussion at a Staff Meeting on 5.9.06.

This policy was last reviewed and revised on 6.10.09