# STRATTON PLAYGROUP

**2 Staff Behaviour Policy**

**Policy statement**

The safety and welfare of all our children at Stratton Playgroup is our highest priority. We are committed to provide a secure and caring environment so that every child can learn in safety. In all matters relating to child protection the playgroup will follow the procedures laid down by our Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults (incorporating child protection) policy.

**STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

*Professional relationships*

All staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct for staff at Stratton Playgroup.

* Staff uphold public trust in our playgroup and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside playgroup by,
* treating children with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position
* having regard for the need to safeguard children’s well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
* showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
* not undermining fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
* ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit children’s vulnerability or might lead them to break the law
* Staff must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the playgroup, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
* Early years practitioners must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory framework which sets out their professional duties and responsibilities.

*Professional behaviour within Stratton Playgroup*

* Staff must:
* respect the rights and opinions of others
* demonstrate mutual respect between departments, eg showing respect of different workloads
* act in a fair, courteous and mature manner to children, colleagues and committee members
* co-operate and liaise with colleagues to ensure children receive a coherent and comprehensive education
* be fit for work, eg not being adversely influenced by drugs, etc
* be familiar with the job requirements, including keeping up to date with developments relevant to the job
* be familiar with communication channels and playgroup procedures for staff and families
* endeavour to assist Stratton Playgroup to achieve its aims and objectives

*Professional behaviour outside Stratton Playgroup*

There may be times where an individual’s actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute, and they are required to inform playgroup of any circumstances relevant to their employment in a position of trust, upon and during the course of their employment.

**POSITION OF TRUST**

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a child cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and all members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. Staff should also refer our Staff Handbook and other policies listed on the last page.

**STAFF BEHAVIOUR AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

Staff need to ensure that their behaviour does not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of abuse. They need to treat all children with respect and try, as far as possible, not to be alone with a child or young person. Where this is not possible, for example, when toileting; it is good practice to ensure that others are within earshot. Where possible, the door should remain open so the member of staff should remain visible through the door. Any physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint.

*Physical contact with children*

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with children and should be alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by children, parents or onlookers.

A member of staff can never take the place of a parent in providing physical comfort and should be cautious of any demonstration of affection.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or of the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible, the Designated Person informed and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the children's file.

*Physical Restraint*

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Designated Person, who will decide what to do next.

*Physical education and other activities requiring physical contact*

Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated, extreme caution should be used if the demonstration involves contact with children and, wherever possible, contact should be avoided. It is acknowledged that some staff will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with children in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the children's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

*Confidentiality*

Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to children or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing children or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

Staff members may have access to special category personal data about children and their families, which must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so, and in the interest of the child. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate profession need to see them. The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the General Data Protection Regulations 2017 (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a child or her/his family for their own, or others advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the pupil’s identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

EQUAL TREATMENT

We are committed to equal treatment for all children regardless of sex, sexuality, race, caste, disability, religion or belief. We keep a record of discriminatory incidents.

We aim to create a friendly, caring and perceptive environment in which every individual is valued. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem and safety of each child. Our staff undertake regular consultation activities with our children e.g. through speaking to children about their experiences and in response to problems that arise during.

Staff members should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges; in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when children are excluded from an activity.

Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair, agreed criteria.

BULLYING

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our staff, children and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the playgroup. Any kind of bullying including cyber bullying is unacceptable and the playgroup keeps a record of any incidents.

COMPLAINTS

Copies of the playgroup's complaints procedure can be sent to any parent on request. Any complaint arising from the

WHISTLEBLOWING

1. If a member of staff has concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff towards a child, he or she should report it at once to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) without delay. If that is not considered a viable option, then the member of staff or volunteer (with the concern) must inform the LADO. We understand that it is not our place to investigate any allegations but to contact the LADO in all circumstances.

Our policy - **1.7 Low level concerns and allegations of serious harm or abuse against staff or volunteers**, must be followed.

Contact details for the LADO:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **01872 326536** | *(phone number)* | **lado@cornwall.gov.uk** | *(email)* |

How an allegation may relate to a person who works with children (as stated on the LADO website) – go to: [**https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/lado**](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/lado)

**DAILY CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF**

Attendance and Timekeeping

Should a staff member need to be absent or expect to be late for any reason, he/she should ask the Manager in advance when possible. If this is not possible, he/she is asked to contact the Session Lead at the earliest opportunity.

No Smoking / E-cigarettes / Vaping

To promote a healthy and pleasant working environment and because of the fire risk, smoking (in any form, including the use of e-cigarettes / vapes) is not allowed anywhere on the premises or in the school car-park area.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is not permitted on site, save where, in the case of alcohol, at a playgroup function or otherwise agreed, when modest amounts of alcohol may be consumed. Employees' conduct and performance must not be adversely impacted by alcohol or drugs when undertaking their duties.

Security

Some staff are provided with a key and an entry code which is used for entry into the playgroup building and for access for authorised staff to restricted areas such as the office. The keys and codes should be kept securely and reported to the manager if they are lost; they should not be lent to other colleagues, unless documented on our “Keys list”.

Staff must not remove any playgroup documents from the site nor take any photographs without due permission. The playgroup reserves the right to search the outer clothing, bags, lockers and vehicles etc. of staff members whilst on site. The staff member may have a colleague in attendance on such (rare) occasions.

All staff are requested to sign out any such paperwork, on our data tracking form.

Personal Appearance

The playgroup regularly receives visits from parents, potential parents and others, and naturally wishes to convey an impression of efficiency and organisation. Therefore, whilst not wishing to impose unreasonable obligations on staff they are, nonetheless, required to look smart in appearance. We expect staff to wear appropriate clothing for working with children (ie no short shorts or skirts, no strappy or vest tops).

A uniform is provided for staff to wear.

Flexibility

Due to the demands and nature of the playgroup, staff should be prepared to transfer upon request to different days / session; either temporarily or permanently, or to undertake work of a different nature, providing it is reasonable and safe to do so and the staff member is adequately trained.

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

*Mobile phones*

* Personal mobile phones are not used by our staff on the premises during working hours. They will be stored in the office filing cabinet, and are signed in and out, as required.
* In an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in an area where there are no children present, with permission from the manager.
* Our staff and volunteers ensure that the setting telephone number is known to family and other people who may need to contact them in an emergency.
* If our members of staff or volunteers take their mobile phones on outings, for use in case of an emergency, they must not make or receive personal calls, or take photographs of children.

*Cameras and videos*

* Our staff and volunteers must not bring their camera phones, personal cameras or video recording equipment / devices into the playroom, other than those playgroup approved devices, which are used solely for the purposes of recording the learning and development of children for their learning journeys.
* Photographs and recordings of children are only taken for valid reasons i.e. to record their learning and development, or for displays within the setting, with written permission received by parents (see the Registration form). Such use is monitored by the manager.
* Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, general permission is gained from all parents for their children to be included. Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else’s child or to upload photos of anyone else’s children. We also gain agreement from parents to abide by strict privacy rules when sharing photos of other children from their child’s E-Learning Journal.
* If photographs of children are used for publicity purposes, parental consent must be given and safeguarding risks minimised.

*Social media*

There are many more disciplinary proceedings now re social media often due to “brining playgroup into disrepute”

Please follow- common sense guidelines

* Staff are advised to manage their personal security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with. Which means making sure your social media settings are switched to private – including Tick Tock, Instagram, Facebook etc.
* Staff avoid personal communication, including on social networking sites, with the children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity. If a practitioner and family are friendly prior to the child coming into the setting, this information is shared with the manager prior to a child attending and staff are reminded of the online safety policy and procedures. Be very careful if you do have any parents as friends or followers (genuine relationship outside of playgroup)
* Think – how would a comment about playgroup look on social media? In the event that staff name the organisation or workplace in any social media they do so in a way that is not detrimental to the organisation or its service users.
* Be mindful about photos and videos you post and whether your settings allow others to “tag” you in photos and videos.
* Think carefully about whether you use your own recognisable name for your social media.

Our use of any social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

* Staff observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work.
* Staff should not share information they would not want children, parents or colleagues to view.
* Staff should report any concerns or breaches to the designated person in their setting.
* Staff should understand that it is not appropriate to share playgroup information whether written or pictorial on social media, unless approved (the authorised facebook users of the Stratton Playgroup name are the Manager, Chairperson and Administrator).
* All people associated with the playgroup should respect the privacy and the feelings of others.
* All members of the Management Committee, Staff or Students are in a professional position and are responsible for the care and education of children. Therefore, they must not engage in activities on the internet which might bring the playgroup or its associated staff into disrepute.
* We encourage no uploading of photos of staff, or children and their families on any site, but understand that we live in a small local community, where staff can already be friends with parents/families. We ensure that staff read and sign to acknowledge our permissions & agreements for appropriate internet / social media use.

*Use and/or distribution of inappropriate images*

* Staff are aware that it is an offence to distribute indecent images. In the event of a concern that a colleague or other person is behaving inappropriately, the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy, in relation to allegations against staff and/or responding to suspicions of abuse, is followed
* Staff are aware that grooming children and young people online is an offence in its own right and concerns about a colleague’s or others’ behaviour are reported (as above).

Special Leave

Our first thought is always to the continual care of the children. Time taken off by staff in term time can be extremely disruptive to them. All staff do have 14 weeks of holiday each year, of which 5.6 weeks are paid.

*Other than in exceptional circumstances*, staff are aware that we cannot accept any requests for time off in term time.

If a member of staff wishes to apply for time off, they must follow the procedure below:

*Special Leave Request Procedure:*

All time off must be requested in writing, with as much notice as possible (if required, staff must use our Special Leave Request form - in the staff time sheets folder).

Only requests that are deemed “*in exceptional circumstances”* will be considered, providing that cover can be put in place; and that acceptable levels of attendance have already been met.

The management’s decision will be final. We will have no alternative than to follow our disciplinary procedures, if the holiday entitlement procedure is abused.

**Changes to these Procedures**

Changes to these procedures can only be made by the management committee of the playgroup.

This policy was adopted at an open committee meeting of Stratton Playgroup

Held on

**28/02/2023**

Signed on behalf of the committee

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

1.6 Online Safety (including use of mobile phones and cameras)

1 Intimate Care and Nappy Changing

1 Substance Abuse

1 Use of Social Networking Sites, Computers & Data

1 Whistleblowing

2.1 Employment (including suitability, contingency plans, training and development)

2 The Staff Handbook

8 No Smoking