

Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises.

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS STAFF BY PARENTS, CARERS AND VISITORS.

Policy Statement

The playgroup actively encourages close links with parents/carers and the community. We know that children benefit when the relationship between home and playgroup is a positive one, and we welcome visitors to our playgroup and encourage parents to communicate with us by phone, Tapestry or via email. If a parent or carer has concerns, we will always listen to them and seek to address them as quickly and positively as possible. We will always act to ensure the playgroup remains a safe place for children, staff and all other members of our community and therefore abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs, we will follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Types of behaviour

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff, and other members of the community are:

- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- swearing, either in person or over the telephone
- emails which are sarcastic, combative or aggressive in tone and language
- constant emails and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the playgroup's best efforts to address a situation
- inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards to the playgroup staff, children or parents on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter or in email communication
- any form of physical violence, such as pushing or hitting
- physical intimidation, e.g., standing unnecessarily close to her/him
- the use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist or finger towards another person

Procedure to be followed when behaviour is inappropriate

Informal complaint

If a parent, carer or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the playgroup community, the Lead Practitioner and/or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. Such discussion will highlight how the behaviour of the parent/carers did not meet the playgroup's expectations and a request will be made that future communications with the playgroup are modified in the light of this. A letter will be sent to the parent/carers to confirm this request.

Formal complaint

Following any interaction with a parent/carer or visitor, a member of staff reserves the right to submit a formal complaint about the incident to the Lead Practitioner. Should such a formal complaint be made then the Lead Practitioner or designated member of the leadership team will investigate the complaint, by speaking with the parent/carer and the member of staff. During the investigation, any contact with the playgroup will be through a designated member of staff and by prior appointment only. The parent/carer will be informed of this by letter. The Lead Practitioner will determine any action to be taken in response to the findings of the investigation.

Action which could follow such an investigation

- A request to meet with the Lead Practitioner to discuss events
- A letter clarifying to the parent/carer what is considered acceptable behaviour by the playgroup
- The designation of one member of staff to act as the conduit for communication between the parent/carer and the playgroup
- As a last resort, withdrawing permission for the parent/carer to enter the playgroup site and/or buildings without prior appointment

Acceptable communication by telephone

Dealing with abusive telephone calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse and this guidance has been produced to assist parents to understand conduct which the playgroup expects parents to follow during phone calls and to staff if they are faced with a difficult situation.

Guidance for parents/carers

- When you call Maidenbower Pre-school Playgroup you will speak initially to a member of staff. They will do their very best to connect you with the person you wish to speak to
- Please do not become frustrated with the staff member if they cannot attain an answer to your concern or connect you to the person you wish to speak to straight away
- At any time when speaking to a member of staff at Maidenbower Pre-school Playgroup please do not raise your voice or use aggressive or threatening language

Guidance for staff

To reduce the likelihood of callers becoming abusive staff should conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner and make every attempt to meet the needs of the caller. Staff should also have the confidence that it is acceptable to end an abusive telephone call.

Always:

- remain calm and polite
- stay in control of the situation
- actively listen – repeat information back to the caller to test understanding of the issue and gain their agreement
- inform the caller they are trying to help them
- be positive and say what you can do
- be clear and avoid using jargon
- if necessary, apologise for an error and take action to put it right
- make notes of the conversation
- follow the procedure below and if appropriate refer the caller to the Lead Practitioner

Never:

- respond in the same manner as an abusive caller
- take it personally
- allow yourself to be bullied
- slam the phone down.

Script for abusive telephone calls when the caller starts to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms.....please do not raise your voice/swear at me, I am not raising my voice/being rude to you. If you continue to raise your voice/be rude to me then I will be forced to terminate the call.

When the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms..... I understand you are upset/frustrated however I am not prepared to continue to be shouted/sworn at so you can either call back when you have calmed down or if you prefer you can put your views in writing.

If, despite the two warnings above, the caller continues to raise their voice/be abusive:

Mr/Mrs/Ms.... I advised you earlier during this call about raising your voice/swearing and you have continued to do this, so I am afraid I am going to have to terminate this call. Hang up.

Further actions

Make a written note of the telephone call or use the incident report form and title of policy or procedure

This policy was adopted by _____ *(name of provider)*

On _____ *(date)*

Date to be reviewed _____ *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory (e.g., chair, director or owner) _____