

**The Ark Policies****Index**

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## The Ark

### Admissions Policy

The Childcare Provision will comply with its obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, the Sex Discrimination Act 1986, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001), the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Employment Act 2002, the Children Act 1989, the Employment Act 2002 and the Equality Act 2006.

We aim to make the facilities accessible to all families from the local community.

- We welcome children, fathers and mothers, other relatives, other carers and people from ethnic, religious and social groups, with or without disabilities.
- We place notices advertising the group where all sections of the community can see them.
- Demand for places is always high and therefore it may not be possible for us to fit your child into sessions that you require straight away. Within each of the categories of places, we operate an allocation policy in order of application. However, we will give preference to those who need full-time places, children currently attending and their siblings, and children of staff. We will not take firm bookings more than nine months in advance of commencement.
- In order to accommodate emergency admissions we endeavour to keep a place vacant, if this is financially viable.
- A deposit is required on receipt of a firm booking. For under 2s this will be set at four weeks' fees and for older children £50. This will be deducted from the first invoice when the child starts at The Ark. However, if commencement is postponed, a retainer of 50% of fees will be charged, and if commencement is postponed for more than four weeks the deposit will not be refunded. Discretion may be used in regard to the retainer fee in exceptional cases.

## The Ark

### Equal Opportunities Policy

This childcare provision is committed to equality of opportunity and recognises that people are subject to discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, caring responsibilities, religious belief, age, social class, political beliefs, employment status, union membership, place of residence or whether they are HIV positive.

It is the policy of the Childcare provision that no job applicant, employee, trainee, volunteer, member or service user receives less favourable treatment on any of these issues set out above.

The Childcare provision will comply with its obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) regulations 2003, the Sex Discrimination Act 1986, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs Act 2001), The Employment Act 2002, The Children Act 1989 and The Employment Equality Regulations 2003.

It is the Childcare provision's intention to take positive action to ensure that its Equal Opportunities Policy is implemented. The Childcare provisions Management Committee will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

We aim to:

- Acknowledge and value equally each child's individual stage, culture, religion, language, racial background, and family group.
- Actively seek to combat sexism and promote equal opportunities for girls and boys, men and women;
- Encourage equality of opportunity for children with special needs and their families.
- Achieve and maintain, within the framework of the law, a workforce which represents, as far as practical, the composition of the population and recruitment areas, including people with disabilities.
- To achieve the above we will:
  - Plan our programme to extend the children's experience and knowledge of other cultures, language, celebrations and festivals.
  - Ensure that the activities reflect the diversity of our society, not just our group;
  - Encourage children to explore in a positive way the differences and diversity of people ensuring that representatives of people are accurate and realistic;
  - Positively challenge stereotypes and assumptions – racist, sexist or concerning disabilities;
  - Enable adults with disabilities to take part in our group where it is safe and reasonable to so do.

## **The Ark**

### **Care, Learning and Play Policy**

We are committed to meeting the individual needs of all children. The welfare of the children is central to our provision of care, learning and play. All children are respected and valued and we provide experiences to support their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development in a warm, caring and secure environment. Through carefully planned activities, play opportunities and interactions, staff promote children's self-esteem and support them in developing skills, knowledge and understanding as they explore their world. Children are encouraged and supported in making choices and decisions as active learners. Their progress is monitored regularly in order to ensure that individual needs are identified and provided for.

#### **Planning and record-keeping**

Planning for the children's learning consists of:-

- A long-term plan for the year.
- Medium-term plans specifying each term's outline plans. This ensures breadth and balance of the curriculum, as well as a variety of planned and free choice activities.
- Weekly and daily plans for activities.

Key workers make observations on children's interests, schemas, progress and achievements recording these in the children's individual records. This information is used to plan appropriate activities that will aid the children's development, and is shared with other staff to ensure continuity of care and learning.

- Key workers are responsible for making sure that these records are updated regularly, and that the information is shared with parents and carers on a regular basis.

We aim to keep parents and carers fully informed about the provision of care, learning and play for their children.

We provide a wide range of experiences and activities in order that children can learn through first-hand experiences and play.

We have established systems for planning children's experiences which reflect their individual needs.

We monitor the progress of individual children and record this regularly and share this information with parents and carers.

We encourage children to build relationships and develop self-esteem.

We respect and value all the children, whatever their background, and we encourage staff and children to treat each other with respect.

We encourage children in their activities and provide support and reassurance for new experiences. We give appropriate praise to support their efforts and achievements.

We allocate each child a key worker who monitors progress and ensures that the child's needs are met. This member of staff provides the link between The Ark and home. The key worker also manages communication between the Pre-School Centre and the parents or carers, particularly on routine matters, and the child's progress.

### **Learning and play**

We offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum which follows the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We offer a variety of activities, both planned and free choice, which provide opportunities to learn through play.

We offer a mixture of active and quiet times throughout the day, and the children have opportunities to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities.

We take every opportunity to further individual children's communication skills in speaking and listening.

We encourage the children to look at books and seek opportunities to read stories to, and with, them.

We develop early mathematical skills through everyday routines, as well as through planned experiences and games.

We provide activities which engage the children in problem-solving and investigation.

We stimulate the children's imaginative and creative development through a range of activities, including: role play; a variety of painting, modelling and drawing experiences, both planned and free-choice; singing and dancing to music, as well as listening to music and playing instruments.

We encourage the children to make choices and decisions during free play. We also expect them, supported by adults, to take appropriate responsibility for the care and maintenance of resources.

We make resources accessible to the children, wherever possible, in order that they can choose their activities independently.

We label all resources so that children can find and return resources and equipment safely and easily.

We ensure the safe use and storage of resources by the children, but we also support their independence and problem-solving abilities.

## **The Ark**

### **Settling-in Policy**

If the children are to play and learn successfully, they must feel secure and happy in the absence of their carers.

They need to be confident in the knowledge that their carers will return at the end of the session. In order to achieve these aims our policy is to:

- ask carers to visit;
- agree with carers how we will introduce and settle a child into the group;
- ensure that the individual needs of the child and family are met ;
- introduce children new to the group in small numbers over a period of time;
- give each child the adequate time and support needed to settle ;
- encourage carers where possible to separate from their children for brief periods at first then gradually build up to longer absences
- reassure carers who are anxious about their child by giving them information about their child's activities and welfare during the session ;
- recall a carer if the child is distressed or unable to settle.

## The Ark

### Behaviour Management

We aim to provide a stimulating environment in which children develop self-discipline and self-esteem.

We believe in working towards managing behaviour rather than the discipline of a child.

- Clear, consistent boundaries are set regarding behaviour, taking into account the age and stage of development of the child.
- Children are made aware of the need for goals and boundaries and specific expectations for their behaviour in ways appropriate to their levels of understanding.
- Positive methods of guidance are used. We reward good behaviour and encourage respect for others.
- We encourage responsibility such as helping to tidy up
- Adults intervene and redirect, if necessary, to prevent disagreements developing that children cannot handle.
- Physical punishments are never used, nor are practices which humiliate or frighten children.
- Physical punishment is never resorted to, and where restraint is unavoidable, the minimum amount is used consistent with maintaining the safety of the child and others.
- Any incidents of unwanted behaviour are handled in a calm and controlled manner
- Persistent problems with unwanted behaviour are promptly and accurately recorded, then reported to parents/carers, colleagues or professionals, as appropriate, and advice sought. In extreme cases, children may be excluded from The Ark.
- It is always made clear that it is the behaviour, not the child, which is unwelcome.

Training and support in behaviour management is compulsory for all staff.

**The nominated person responsible for behaviour management is Pauline Pinkney.**

We believe in:

- Praising and rewarding positive behaviour
- Adults demonstrating a good role model prompting acceptable behaviour
- Discussing issues with other children
- Giving children the language with which to express themselves
- Providing a stimulating and developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Providing equipment and materials through which children can play out their feelings
- Giving attention on a one to one basis

### **Bullying**

DfES has published guidance for schools under two headings – ‘Don’t Suffer in Silence’ and ‘Bullying – A Charter for Action’. Our policy reflects this guidance. Bullying is defined as actions that are meant to be hurtful, and which happen on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (for example, being ignored or not spoken to). Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing an ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. We aim, as a childcare setting, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can play and learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

This policy aims to produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We aim to make all those connected with the childcare setting aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our setting.

All the staff take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place. Staff keep a record of all incidents that happen in the setting. If staff witness an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the Manager. Staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then after consultation with the Manager, the member of staff informs the parents. In the office there is an incident logbook in which staff record all incidents of bullying that occur.

If parents think their child is being bullied, they are requested to inform the Manager, noting if possible who, what, where and when the bullying occurred. If bullying is taking place, responses will vary from short periods of exclusion from activities to a withdrawal of privileges.

## The Ark

### Safeguarding Children Policy

A Safeguarding Children Policy is required by law for all nurseries, playgroups and childcare providers.

The Ark and its entire staff have a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be taken if we have reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to either emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

Our primary responsibility is the welfare and well being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/main carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention.

The Ark has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to Social Services whether this stems from allegations against staff, volunteers, carers or the general public. The Children Act 1989 (Section 47(1)) places a duty on Social Services to investigate such matters. The Ark will follow the procedures set out in the Social Services Safeguarding Children Documents and as such will seek their advice on all steps taken subsequently.

The Ark will notify Ofsted if Social Services are investigating a safeguarding children matter related to the group. Our local Social Services office is the North Dorset Local Office at Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1DR, tel. 01258 472652.

**The designated member of staff for safeguarding children is Pauline Pinkney.**

Pauline will take the lead in dealing with any concerns raised initially, and will then decide whether to take advice from outside agencies such as social services, and the police. If it is decided to discuss such issues with the parents/carers of the child this staff member will facilitate the discussions (although no discussions will take place if it is believed this would place the child at risk of significant harm).

An allegation of child abuse or neglect could lead to a criminal investigation so staff will not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, for example, ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse.

Social Services takes the lead role in enquiring about safeguarding children issues related to the child whilst the employer retains the responsibility for disciplinary actions related to their staff member, volunteer or carer.

#### **1. Physical Abuse**

Action will be taken under this heading if the staffs have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is a definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

##### Procedure

- a. Any sign of a mark/injury to a child when they come *into* Pre-School/Nursery will be recorded by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison, discussed with the parent, and the parent will be asked to countersign a record.
- b. The incident will be discussed with the parent/main carer.
- c. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.  
(Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm)
- d. If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury Social Services and/or the police will be notified

## 2. Sexual Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play and drawing or had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

### Procedure

The observed instances will be reported by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison to Social Services and /or the police.

## 3. Emotional Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection or bullying.

### Procedure

- a. The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison
- b. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.  
(Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm)
- c. If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to Social Services and /or the police.

## 4. Neglect

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including unexplained failure to thrive.

### Procedure

- a. The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison.
- b. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.  
(Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm)
- c. If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances Social Services and /or the police will be notified.

## 5. Unauthorised Collection of Children

If a parent who does not have custody arrives to collect a child the procedure below should be followed:

### If the child is inside the building

Administrator/other staff member should use the intercom to talk to the parent. If the parent has succeeded in entering the building, the child should be escorted to the school premises via a door other than the main front door.

The parent with custody should be alerted by telephone to come and collect. If any aggression is displayed the police should be called.

If the child is outside the building

One staff member to take the child inside the building, closing the door behind them, and leaving the remaining children outside with other staff members. The parent with custody should be alerted by telephone to come and collect. If any aggression is displayed the police should be called.

If the parent remains outside the building, the children outside should be escorted back in via the school.

**Allegations against member of staff or volunteer**

Action will be taken under this heading if allegations of child abuse/neglect are made against a member of staff or volunteer working at the Group. Please also see Complaints Procedure on page 23.

## Procedure

- a. The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the designated member of staff for safeguarding children liaison, unless that is the member of staff concerned, in which case the deputy will act as designated member.
- b. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent /main carer will have access to such records.
- c. The designated staff member will report the incident to their employer (e.g. owner, committee).
- d. The employer will need to decide how far to discuss it with the accused member of staff/volunteer without involving outside agencies, bearing in mind that an allegation of child abuse or neglect could lead to a criminal investigation. Therefore they should not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, for example, ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse.
- e. The employer may decide to contact Social Services for guidance and follow their advice.
- f. The employer will need to decide whether to suspend the member of staff/volunteer pending Investigations.
- g. If there appear to be any issues or concerns regarding the circumstances Social Services and /or the police will be notified. The matter will also be reported to Ofsted and the Local Authority Safeguarding Children unit.

**Confidentiality**

The aim of this childcare setting is to promote an environment of respect with reference to confidential information relating to the children, families or group users and the groups business (please see our confidentiality policy.) However, if it becomes necessary to disclose information concerning a child and/or member of staff (if the allegation is made against a staff member/volunteer) to an outside agency, the following procedure will be followed:

- a. The consent of the parent/main carer of that child and/or the consent of the staff member to the disclosure will be sought first (unless it is believed that obtaining such consent would place the child at risk of significant harm).
- b. If it is believed that obtaining such consent would place the child at risk of significant harm, the disclosure will be made without obtaining consent (bearing in mind the public interest in safeguarding the child's welfare overrides the need to keep information confidential).

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE PROCEDURES. IF ANY CHILD IS THOUGHT TO BE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, PRE-SCHOOL STAFF WILL CONTACT SOCIAL SERVICES AND/OR THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.**

## **The Ark**

### **Under 2's Policy and Procedures**

Staff will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, in order that all babies' and children's learning needs are met. Daily activities will consist of lots of sensory play, both indoors and out. These will be carefully planned and appropriate for the age and development of the babies and children. When possible and with parents written consent, staff will take the babies/children for outings around the village and to the park.

All outdoor shoes will be removed before entry to the Baby room.

Our staffing levels will ensure that babies and children will interact at regular intervals with a familiar adult throughout the day.

There is a separate base room for babies and children under two. Once children reach the age of eighteen months they will be given the opportunity to play and socially interact with an older group, if it is appropriate for their individual development.

Nappies will be checked and changed regularly, using each baby or child's own nappies wipes and creams. Nappy changes will be recorded in baby's individual books. Nappy changing facilities are provided meeting environmental health standards.

Cots, sleep mats and bedding are provided for babies and children to rest or sleep. Babies and children will not be prevented from sleeping and will be allowed to wake naturally. Each baby or child will have their own bedding, kept in a named cotton drawstring bag. Bedding will be washed weekly or when soiled. Cots will be cleaned after each use. Individual sleep patterns will be adhered to. Sleeping babies will be frequently checked, every ten minutes, and this will be recorded in the 'Sleep record book'.

Babies will be held whilst bottle feeding by the same carer.

Feeding will follow each baby's individual needs, in detailed consultation with parents when weaning babies. All babies' bottles will be clearly labelled and stored in the small fridge in the kitchen. All feeds will be prepared in the kitchen. Steam sterilization will be used for babies and children's feeding equipment and dummies.

When in low chairs babies will be restrained in safety harnesses. The Ark will provide beakers, bowls cutlery and bibs. Staff will ensure babies and children are well cared for, keeping faces and hands clean at all times.

Toys and equipment will be cleaned weekly or as necessary.

A daily system of exchange of information will take place both verbally, and in the form of individual books, between parents/carers and Ark staff.

## The Ark

### Special Needs Policy

#### **Aim**

The Childcare Centre will offer a place at the Childcare Centre for any child with special needs, provided we can offer a positive experience of learning through play. Our aim is for all children to be included in all activities wherever possible. We aim to have regard to the DFES Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and also the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs Act 2001.) We will modify the Curriculum as necessary to take account of the child's needs and this will be decided on an individual basis in consultation with carers.

#### **Procedures**

- a) Access, we will:
- Make every reasonable attempt to provide access for children with special needs.
  - Assess each child's needs in terms of access and adapt our facilities as appropriate as far as possible.
  - We will discuss each case on an individual basis with parents and relevant professionals.
  - Please see our Admissions Policy for further information.
- b) Assessment, we will:
- Observe all the children attending in order to identify any special educational needs that they may have, including those who are gifted.
  - We will ask for relevant detail from the Parents/Carers about any special educational needs they have identified in their child on the registration form.
  - Talk to the Carer and child about what they want.
  - Ascertain the needs of the child, including medical requirements.
  - Discuss abilities.
  - Analyse our ability to offer positive care, both in the physical environment, as well as staff and their suitability.
- c) Support and expertise, we will:
- Contact the relevant professionals with the parent's permission, for advice and support.
  - Ensure staff will work together with Parents/main Carers as partners to give day to day care and education for the child and support the Parents/Carers.
  - Ensure that all children are treated individually and are encouraged to take part in every aspect of the settings activities.
  - Promote positive images of those with special needs.
  - Endeavour to appoint staff with experience and knowledge.
  - Investigate opportunities for training of staff and volunteers, and encourage the staff team to attend training where appropriate.
  - Provide support in following the stages of Early Years Action, Early Years Action Plus and Statementing. (Please see Appendix attached)
  - We will pass any records drawn up by us in respect of a child to any Pre-school/school that a child moves on to. Providing that the child's parents have given their consent prior to the records being passed on.

## **Resources**

We have the following resources to help provide for special educational needs:  
Specialist resources are available on loan from the Dorset Sure Start Unit and other professional and charitable services.  
We have a total communication environment and a wide range of indoor and outdoor toys.

## **Funding**

Funding for children at Action plus level who are 2 years 9 months or over and those with statements may be available from the Special Education team in Dorset County Council's Education Department for up to 9 hours per week. This might be used to fund a member of staff to observe and support the child, for training, and as laid down in the SEN Code of practice.

## **Roles and responsibilities of various members of staff**

**The Special Educational Needs Co-Coordinator is Pauline Pinkney.**

The Key worker and Manager will liaise with the parents/carers of the child.  
The role of the SENCO is to take responsibility for the day- to-day operation of the Group's SEN policy and to co-ordinate provision for children with SEN, particularly through Early Years Action and Early Years Action Plus.

## **External Support**

The Group can access support from the following list of professionals although this list should not be seen as exhaustive:  
Speech Therapist, Health Visitor, Portage, Educational Psychologist, DCC's Special Needs Adviser, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapy and support groups for particular cases.

## The Ark

### Intimate Care Policy and Procedure

Intimate care involves areas of personal care, which most people normally do for themselves but some are unable to do because of developmental stage, impairment or disability. We provide intimate care to babies and children with a special need, which acknowledges the responsibilities and protects the rights of everyone involved. We believe that children have the right to be treated with sensitivity and respect, and in such a way that their experience of intimate care is a positive one. We acknowledge that it is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. We also believe that every child should be encouraged to have a positive image of their own body. We aim to provide guidance and reassurance to staff, and protect the rights and well being of children.

#### **Procedure**

We will liaise closely with parents/guardians of children with special needs to obtain as much information as possible in order to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible. We will endeavour to take all of their individual concerns into account. We are conscious that this is a sensitive issue and will ensure all of our staff are aware of our confidentiality policy. We believe that information on intimate care should only be communicated by sealed letter, personal contact or telephone between parents/guardians and the member of staff concerned.

We will ensure that all staff are familiar with the normal precautions for avoiding infection and that they are aware of our hygiene policy and procedure.

We will encourage our staff to take part in any appropriate training whether that is internal or external training, and we will endeavour to provide supervision and induction of all staff.

We will endeavour to ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation when carrying out intimate care.

We will allow the child to care for themselves as far as they are able to, and encourage our staff to promote appropriate use of toilets and associated skills.

We will be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions, and provide reassurance whenever this is required.

It is not normally practical from the point of view of staffing resources, for there to be two members of staff involved in intimate care of one child, and also this will not assist the privacy of the child. We will, wherever possible though, advise our staff to inform another member of staff when they are going to undertake intimate care of a child. We will also ensure that all of our staff are aware of our child protection policy.

The above policy will be reviewed annually and the procedure monitored and evaluated.

## The Ark

### Personal, Social & Emotional Policy

We give guidance to children about personal, social and emotional development in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development, as follows:

#### Ages 2 – 5 years

- Identifying and naming feelings
- The importance of keeping clean
- Awareness of similarities and differences between people
- The consequences of children's words and actions on others and recognising that bullying is wrong
- Social skills such as sharing, taking turns, playing, helping others, resolving conflict, as well as recognising and resisting bullying

#### Ages 5 – 7 years

- Themselves as individuals and as members of their communities
- The basic rules and skills for keeping healthy and safe
- Their feelings, views, needs and rights. They learn to recognise those of others
- Taking responsibility for themselves and their environments

#### Ages 7 – 11 years

- Themselves as growing and changing individuals with their own experiences and ideas, and as members of communities
- Staying healthy and safe, managing risk
- The wider world and the interdependence of communities within it
- Social justice and moral responsibility
- How their own choices and behaviour can affect local, national or global issues and political and social institutions
- How to make more confident and informed choices about their health, behaviour and environment
- Taking more responsibility, individually and as a group, for their own learning
- Defining and resisting bullying

#### Sex and Relationships

We aim to answer children's questions as honestly as possible according to their ages, emotional development and level of understanding with regard to:

- The physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults
- Respect for their own bodies
- The importance of family life and building relationships with others, involving trust and respect
- The importance of self-control
- Moral questions
- Appreciation that people are not all the same
- Respect for the views of other people

Within this context we will challenge inappropriate language and behaviour.

## The Ark

### Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

#### **Health and Safety Policy**

The Management Committee of the childcare setting in acknowledging their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 have produced the following Health and Safety statement:

The Management Committee will ensure as far as practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all staff, students and volunteers and all persons within the premises for which the Management Committee is responsible.

#### **Safety Procedure**

The nominated Health and Safety officers are Maggie Granlund and Pauline Pinkney.

Nominated Health and Safety officers to carry out a Risk Assessment annually, but with action points to be reviewed termly to ensure target dates have been achieved, making a written record of any action required. Also being responsible for reporting to North Dorset District Council under the duties imposed by The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) contact phone number 0845 3009923

#### **Security procedure**

The building can only be accessed by entering a code in the external keypad adjacent to the main entrance, or by release of the lock from inside. Ark staff will let parents and visitors into the building, and parents are requested not to let others in, even if those others are known to them. (See Parental Agreement.) Other adults authorised by parents to collect children should be recorded in the children's Admission Forms, and staff should be informed whenever anybody other than the regular person(s) are to collect a child.

Visitors must sign in on arrival, and out on departure, and are required to wear visitor badges while in the building. ID will be checked by staff.

#### **Fire Policy**

We aim to ensure the safety of staff and children against the risk of fire and will do all in our power to prevent such an occurrence.

#### **Fire Procedure**

The nominated Fire officer is Pauline Pinkney

The nominated Fire officer to ensure that fire drills are carried out every 6 weeks (1/2 termly) The nominated Fire officer from County Hall to check smoke detectors and fire control equipment and record this in a logbook. Carried out alongside St Nicholas School check.

The procedure to be followed in the event of a fire to be displayed where staff, parents and children can read it.

## No Smoking Procedure

Smoking is prohibited on the premises, including all outside areas.

## Health Policy

The Ark aims to provide a healthy and safe environment for the children and for the staff to work in. The Ark will do all in its power to prevent the spread of infection and to promote good health.

## Health Procedure

Infection in a Childcare setting can spread rapidly, not only amongst children, but also staff.

Parents are required to keep their children at home if they have any infection and to inform the Childcare Manager as to the nature of the infection to enable other Parents to be alerted.

Any child who is obviously unwell on arrival at the Childcare Centre will not be accepted. If a child becomes unwell during the course of the day the parent/carer will be contacted and, if necessary, asked to collect. If The Ark is unable to contact the parent/carer personally the other numbers that have been given as alternatives will be telephoned and the child will be made as comfortable as possible until somebody is able to collect them. **It is therefore essential that our emergency contact numbers are kept up to date by parents/carers.**

The following procedures and exclusion periods, where specified, must be adhered to:

- **Gastric Upsets – Excluded until 48 hours after the last attack of diarrhoea or sickness.**
- **Fever / Throat Infections – Excluded until 24 Hours after the temperature has gone down.**
- **Head Lice – All parents are requested to check their child's head weekly and to treat accordingly.**
- **Impetigo – Excluded until all lesions crusted or healed**
- **Chicken Pox – Minimum period of exclusion is 5 days after the onset of the rash.**
- **Verrucae – Children do not need to be excluded, but the verruca must be covered with a rubber sock, waterproof plaster or clear nail varnish when the foot is going to become wet or damp.**
- **Measles – Minimum period of exclusion is 5 days from the onset of rash.**
- **Meningitis – Children can return to the Childcare Centre as soon as they feel well enough.**
- **Mumps - Minimum period of exclusion is 5 days following onset of swelling to glands.**
- **Whooping Cough - Children can return to the Childcare Centre 5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days from onset of illness if there is no antibiotic treatment required.**
- **German Measles – Minimum period of exclusion is 5 days from the onset of rash.**

**It is essential to report German Measles as this can be extremely harmful to expectant mothers.**

All infectious illnesses must be reported to the Childcare Manager who will advise on the exclusion period necessary, and inform other parents. (This also applies to all staff)

If you would like more information on symptoms and incubation periods of any infectious illness please speak to staff.

In case of an emergency the Childcare Centre reserves the right to remove a child to Hospital. Please refer to Parent Contract.

### **Medicines Procedure**

We will administer medicine to control the effects of a non-serious illness or where a doctor has prescribed medication but only after receiving prior written instructions and consent from the parent.

Each time medication is given to a child a written record will be kept of this together with a witness' signature. Parents/carers will be asked to sign this record on collection of a child.

### **First Aid Policy**

We aim to minimise any pain or discomfort suffered by a child or member of staff whilst in our care and will do all in our power to make them comfortable as quickly as possible.

### **First Aid Procedure**

The appointed persons for First Aid are Anne Gunning and Pauline Pinkney.

Anne will ensure that the First Aid box is kept well stocked is checked and re-filled every half-term.

First Aiders will attend an appropriate course every 3 years so as to ensure they remain up-to date on first aid methods. There is at least one First Aider per room.

An appointed person for First Aid will ensure a written note is made of any accidents in the accident book and that parents sign against this when collecting children to confirm they have been informed. Accident books are stored in the office.

Parents to provide written detail of any illnesses or conditions, which the children suffer on a permanent basis together with, appropriate medication and instructions on how to administer e.g. asthma inhalers.

Parents to provide a list of any medication the child is allergic to.

### **Food and Drink Policy**

All snacks and meals provided will be nutritious and as varied as possible. We also aim to reflect the multicultural and religious backgrounds of the children, and where possible to comply with parent's wishes. We try to make snacks and meals sociable occasions with the children sitting down together in small groups.

### **Food and Drink Procedure**

All staff are required to complete a Foundation Food Hygiene course.

Staff and children to wash hands before touching food

Children not to swap food with others in case of food allergies or dietary restrictions. Food brought in to share on special occasions such as birthdays will be risk assessed.

Parents to provide written detail of any food allergies or dietary restrictions relating to their child.

Water is available for each individual child's needs.

Kitchens to be kept clean and tidy

Rubbish bins to be emptied regularly

### **Hygiene Policy**

We aim to provide a clean and hygienic environment for the children and staff, which minimises the spread of infection.

### **Hygiene/Nappy changing Procedure**

When changing babies/children's nappies or soiled garments, staff will wear disposable aprons and gloves. Disposable paper roll will be used to cover the changing mat. Soiled nappies, gloves etc will be placed directly into nappy sacks. Each baby or child's own nappies, wipes and creams will be used. After each use changing mats will be cleaned with antibacterial spray. All nappy sacks will be placed in the nappy bin. Indoor nappy bins will be emptied daily, into the outdoor clinical waste bins. Children's nappy changes will be recorded either in their individual books, or on the Nappy Changing/Toileting Record Sheet.

Children who are potty training will be regularly toileted, and this will be recorded on the Nappy Changing/Toileting Record Sheet. Potties will be cleaned after each use, washing in the sluice then wiping with antibacterial solution, or spraying with antibacterial and wiping clean using disposable paper.

Toilets will be checked regularly and cleaned using disposable paper. Records of times will be recorded on the daily risk assessment sheets.

Staff and children will wash their hands after going to the toilet, and before handling food.

Staff will wash hands after wiping babies or children's noses.

Regular checks will be carried out on any sandpits and the sand changed when appropriate.

A cleaning routine will be followed throughout the day to ensure the premises and equipment are kept hygienic.

## The Ark

### Dress Code

Clothes worn at work should encourage public trust and confidence. They should be clean, smart, safe, practical and reflect the type of work undertaken. What is worn should take account of the requirements of the job role and promote the mobility and comfort of the wearer. Clothing should fit the wearer correctly and meet moving and handling requirements of the job role.

Jeans may be worn; shoes should be smart, clean, fit for purpose and of good appearance. They should not have heels higher than two inches.

Excessive and elaborate jewellery is not appropriate. Furthermore, tongue studs, eyebrow piercing, nose studs (other than when worn for cultural or religious reasons) and visible body artwork are not considered to be consistent with portraying a professional image.

Hair should be clean and worn off the face and shoulders if catering or domestic work is undertaken.

If corporate T-shirts, polo shirts and/or sweatshirts have been provided, they should always be worn. No clothing should have inappropriate logos or compromise modesty. Clothing should not restrict movement in any way.

See the tables below for details of the Dress Code which will be observed. Failure to comply with this code could result in disciplinary action being taken.

#### **General dress code for all staff working with children**

| <b>CODE</b>  | <b>RATIONALE</b>  |
|--|---|
| Jewellery must be discreet, and worn at own risk.  | In order not to injure children and for staff safety, necklaces and large earrings could be grabbed. Rings can be a source of infection if the surrounding area is not washed properly. To present a professional image and general public acceptability. |
| Hair must be clean, and preferably worn off the face and collar.   | To present a professional image and to reduce the risk of spreading hair lice.  |
| Fingernails must be kept short and clean.<br>Coloured nail polish should not be worn.  | To reduce the risk of scratching children. Nails need to be visibly clean in order to ensure good hand hygiene.   |
| Shoes must be supportive to the foot and have heels of no more than two inches. They must be clean. Sturdy slip-on shoes are acceptable. No stilettos. | To present a professional image and to ensure they protect the foot from falling items or ankle injuries.   |

### Dress code for catering and domestic staff

| <b>CODE</b>  | <b>RATIONALE</b>   |
|--|--|
| Catering staff must wear trousers and tops approved by the Manager.<br>A hat and/or hairnet shall be worn which covers all hair.                         | To prevent food contamination.   |
| Clothing must be kept clean at all times   | To present a professional image and to prevent food contamination.                   |
| Aprons/tabards must be changed daily.  | To present a professional image and to prevent food contamination.                   |
| Fingernails must be kept short and clean.<br>Cuts and abrasions must be covered with plasters.<br>Nail polish and false/acrylic nails are not permitted. | To promote good hand hygiene.<br>To prevent food contamination.                      |
| Non-slip footwear with closed toes must be worn.   | To reduce risk of slips. To protect feet from scalds or damage from falling objects. |
| Hair and jewellery as detailed in above table.   |  |

## The Ark

### Contingency Policy/Procedure

#### Evacuation

In the event of fire, flood or any other emergency requiring evacuation, all children will be escorted to the Community Centre, which is located on the recreation field adjacent to The Ark.

The Manager or, in her absence, her deputy, will take with her the register, parent/guardian contact list and The Ark mobile phone. On arrival at the Community Centre all children will be checked off against the register, and parents/guardians contacted by telephone to arrange for them to collect their children as soon as possible.

If the premises continue to be unusable, The Ark will endeavour to provide childcare in temporary premises for working parents.

#### Major Staff Absences

In the event of major staff absences, eg. due to a sickness epidemic, the Manager, or, in her absence, her deputy, will first call on other members of staff not normally working at that particular time, to stand in.

Secondly, the Staff Bank operated by Dorset SureStart will be contacted for suitable persons to be employed at short notice.

If neither of the above produces enough staff to operate normally, children will be turned away on arrival, unless sufficient parents/guardians volunteer to stay and help.

If several staff fall sick, or are otherwise forced to leave during the course of a day, parents/guardians will be contacted by telephone to arrange to collect their children as soon as possible.

#### Closure due to Extreme Weather/Loss of Utilities/Fire/Flood

If The Ark is unable to open, an announcement regarding closure will be made on local radio stations 2CR and Orchard FM. At least one member of staff will remain on the premises until all parents of children due to attend that day have been contacted or met in order to advise them not to attend. If St. Nicholas School is closed due to extreme weather, then The Ark will also close.

Parents will not be charged if The Ark closes.

If the closure is due to adverse weather conditions then:

Staff who attend to carry out any duties possible without the presence of the children, will be paid.

Staff who do not attend must take the time as annual leave, or unpaid leave if all annual leave has been taken; or time must be made up later, in agreement with the Manager.

If the closure is part way through their working day and staff then go home, they will be paid for their full working day.

The above applies for up to two weeks, after which time no wages will be paid.

If the closure is due to loss of utilities, fire or flood, then The Ark's insurance policy will cover any loss of income. Therefore staff will be paid as normal and would be expected to stay away from the premises.

## The Ark

### Nutrition Policy

We aim to promote healthy eating within the Nursery through projects we do with the children, through communication with the children's parents/carers and the structure of the day at the Childcare Centre.

We are committed to equality of opportunity (please see our Equal Opportunities policy), and plan our programme to extend the children's experience and knowledge of other cultures, celebrations and festivals, to include the different foods eaten.

We try to make the children aware of the different food groups and the need for a balanced diet through play and discussion.

Our registration form, which is completed by parents in respect of every child, asks the parents to record if the child suffers from any allergies (including food intolerance) and whether the child has any special dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, religious, cultural, medical).

We provide healthy snacks and milk for the children at snack time and water is available for whenever the children are thirsty (the children are made fully aware of this when they join us.) On special occasions such as birthdays, cake may be made available.

All meals are home cooked using fresh ingredients where possible. No artificial colours, flavours or preservatives are used in foods. No salt is added during cooking.

We request that parents support us in our healthy eating aims when providing packed lunches for their children in the following ways:

- Lunch boxes must be clean and clearly named, inside and out.
- Any items requiring refrigeration should be labelled with child's name and placed in the fridge by staff.
- Pack drink in a non-breakable container with your child's name on it
- Avoid any foods such as crisps, chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks or any other foods with high levels of additives/colourings (some children are highly sensitive to these ingredients which can severely affect their behaviour and/or make them sick)
- Avoid any foods with a nut content as children with a severe allergy to nuts can suffer extreme reactions even via indirect contact.
- Fruit or vegetable and dairy snacks are encouraged

We are of course conscious of parental choice and where possible will comply with parent's wishes regarding the above.

We aim to promote hygiene by getting the children to wash their hands before snacks or meals (for further information please see our Health and Safety policy). We try to make snacks and meals sociable occasions with the children sitting down together in small groups. We also ask our staff when eating with the children to adhere to this policy. We endeavour to inform parents how well children having hot meals provided by The Ark have eaten.

For those having packed lunch, any uneaten food will be left in the children's lunch boxes in order that parents can then see what the child has or has not eaten.

## The Ark

### Complaints Procedure

If a parent /carer has an issue either involving their individual child or the Childcare facility as a whole, they should in the first instance raise the issue with the Childcare Manager.

If the parent/carer feels unable or unwilling to raise the matter in this way, they can approach either:

- a. the Parent representative on the Management Committee or
- b. the chair or other officers of the Management Committee or
- c. contact Ofsted on 0845 6014772 or write to the following address - Early Years Ofsted, National Business Unit, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA or
- d. Dorset SureStart, Grove House, Millers Close, Dorchester, DT1 1SS, tel 0845 355 2099

In the first instance every effort will be made to resolve any matters within the Childcare setting.

**A formal complaint should be received in writing then the issues raised will be dealt with within the following appropriate framework and a record of the complaint and outcome will be kept. The Ark will endeavour to resolve formal complaints within 28 days.**

- a. A matter relating to an individual child should be discussed between the parent/carer and the Childcare Manager.
- b. Should the matter not be resolved, the issue will be brought to the attention of the Management Committee and a member of the Committee will meet with all parties involved.
- c. If the matter raised concerns a general or policy issue, it should first be raised with the Childcare Manager, who will report it to the Management Committee for consideration.
- d. Should an approach on general or policy matters be made via the Parent Representative or Officers it will be reported to the Management Committee for consideration.
- e. Should the matter remain unresolved following the above procedures it should be referred to a specially convened panel consisting of a member of the Management Committee, the Childcare Manager, and an independent expert (e.g. a representative of the Dorset Sure start Unit if appropriate). The complaint should be submitted in writing to the panel and the person who has complained should be given the opportunity to address the panel with any additional information. The panel may also require others to submit written information for consideration.

During this process all parties involved will be kept informed of progress and the group will inform Ofsted of the outcome if they have been involved.

A record of all complaints received is available on request for parents/carers.

## The Ark

### Confidentiality Policy

#### **Policy**

The aim of this childcare setting is to promote an environment of respect with reference to confidential information relating to the children, families or group users and the groups business.

#### **Procedure**

##### **Committee Members will be reminded that: -**

- All committee members are required to sign a confidentiality clause annually and are reminded that during their term in office as a committee member, they may be party to confidential information concerning the children, families or group users, and the group's financial business. Any information which is received as a result of their position as a committee member must remain confidential to them.
- Confidential issues must not be discussed with parents, or any other individual not connected with the organization.
- During and after their term of office, they must not disclose or allow the disclosure of any confidential information (except in the proper course of their membership of the committee)

##### **Staff, volunteers and students**

- A confidentiality section is included in all staff employment contracts
- A confidentiality poster is displayed on the notice board
- Staff, volunteers and students are given details about issues of confidentiality during their staff induction.
- Hard copies of children's and staff's records, and all financial information relating to children and staff, are kept in locked cupboards. Soft copies are held on password protected computers.

##### **Parents and Carers**

- Parents will have access to files and records of their own children
- Information given by parents/ carers to the Childcare Manager will not be passed on to others without permission

## The Ark

### Delivery & Collection of Children and Lost Children Policy

#### **Delivery & Collection of Children**

All parents must complete a registration form before their child starts at the organisation giving two/three emergency contact telephone numbers **which must be kept up to date.**

Parents/carers must sign the register on delivery and collection every time and must notify the staff if someone different is to collect.

**Updating information on the registration form: it is essential this important information is kept up to date.**

Parents must inform the organisation in writing immediately of any important changes to:-

- domestic arrangements which could affect collection of the child e.g. a court order in respect of the residence of the child or who the child is able to have contact with.
- parental responsibility agreement
- home/ work telephone numbers

These details need to be amended on the registration form.

It is essential that children be collected promptly after each session. In the unlikely event that a parent is more than half an hour late, all contact telephone numbers will be tried. In the case of no response the supervisor/ leader will contact Social Services' Out of Hours Service (01258 472652).

#### **Lost Children procedure**

If a child goes missing whilst in our care the premises and surrounding area will be thoroughly searched immediately. If the child cannot be found at this point, then telephone calls will be made, first to the parents and thereafter to the police if necessary.

## **The Ark**

### **Procedure for Outings and Events**

#### **Policy**

The childcare setting aims to provide outings and events in a safe, well planned and organised manner, which provides opportunities for children to learn through play.

#### **Procedure**

- The organisation will consult with children, parents/carers and staff before planning an event or outing.
- The children's age, ability and stage of development will be considered when organising an event.
- Health and Safety, including staff ratios will be maintained during the event.
- The organisation will carry out a risk assessment identifying potential hazards on the journey and at the location.
- Detailed information about the event will be distributed to all Parents/carers.
- The organisation will ensure that all necessary consent forms and relevant documentation are completed and returned to the group.
- If appropriate, the organisers may do a pre-visit to the location.
- The organisation will ensure that the staff involved have the appropriate experience to organise an event.

## The Ark

### Equality Policy for Employers

This Childcare provision is committed to equality of opportunity and recognises that people are subject to discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, caring responsibilities, religious belief, age, social class, political beliefs, employment status, union membership, place of residence or whether they are HIV positive. We aim to eliminate discrimination and encourage diversity amongst our staff team. We will endeavour to ensure that our staff team is truly representative of all sections of society and that each employee feels respected and able to give their best

It is the policy of the Childcare provision that no job applicant, employee, trainee, volunteer, member or service user receives less favourable treatment on any of these issues set out above.

The Childcare provision will comply with its obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) regulations 2003, the Sex Discrimination Act 1986, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs Act 2001), The Employment Act 2002, The Children Act 1989, The Employment Equality Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

It is the Childcare provision's intention to take positive action to ensure that its Equal Opportunities Policy is implemented. The Childcare provision's Management Committee will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

#### **Service Delivery**

Services and activities will be advertised in a range of places to try to reach as many people as possible, particularly those subject to discrimination.

#### **Employment and Training**

The Childcare provision is committed to equality of opportunity in its recruitment and employment practices and aims to ensure that employment and progression within its organisation are determined solely by application of objective criteria and personal merit. No job applicant, trainee applicant, employee, or trainee will be treated less favourably than another. Recruitment, selection, employment procedures and practice will be kept under review to ensure that individuals are recruited, selected, trained and promoted on the basis of their ability, merits and the requirements of the job. The Equal Opportunity Monitoring Forms received from each job applicant will be reviewed annually with this policy to help ensure compliance.

We wish to create a workplace in which individual differences and contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.

We aim to provide a working environment free from harassment and bullying (please see our separate Bullying and Harassment policy).

A copy of this policy will be given to all job applicants and employees. All employees will be given guidance on the policy during their induction, and any breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

For more detailed guidance on the above you can contact ACAS on 0845 7474747 or visit [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

## **The Ark**

### **Recruitment and Selection Policy**

This childcare provision will evaluate and review every vacancy and is committed to equality of opportunity and non-discrimination in its recruitment and employment practices and aims to ensure that employment and progression within its organisation are determined solely by application of objective criteria and personal merit.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

No job applicant, trainee applicant, employee or trainee will be treated less favourably than another.

If appropriate checks reveal that a person has a previous conviction, this childcare provision will comply with the CRB Code of Practice when receiving such information. We will consider all of the circumstances before making a recruitment decision including our duties under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and the Rehabilitation of offenders Act 1974, The Education Act 2002, and the Race Relations Act 1976 (amended) Regulation 2003, the Employment Equality Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

#### **Advertising**

In the interests of Equal Opportunities the childcare provision will ensure that all job vacancies are advertised in a wide variety of places within the local community and Press to attract applicants from all of the community.

Wording of the advert will communicate clearly the organisations specific requirements and will not use discriminatory language, unnecessary jargon or superfluous details.

#### **Interviewing**

The organisation will shortlist candidates against the job specification, inviting them to attend for an interview. It will do all in its power to provide any special facilities at the interview requested by a candidate, prior to that date, to prevent any discrimination. The childcare provision will avoid making biased judgements and select the best candidate for the job, based on the recommendations from the interview panel.

#### **Employing Staff**

The Ark will instigate checks and references, notifying Ofsted about staff appointments and prepare an induction package. All staff are Criminal Records Bureau checked and these checks are renewed three yearly

#### **Reviewing the policy**

Recruitment, selection, employment procedures and practice will be kept under review annually to ensure that individuals are recruited, selected, trained and promoted on the basis of their abilities, merits and the requirements of the job.

## **The Ark**

### **Recruitment and Selection Procedure**

- Assess the vacancy and compile the job description and person specification for the position.
- Advertise and shortlist applicants against the job description and person specification.
- Interview for the vacancy in line with the organisations recruitment and selection policy.
- Ensure the applicant has the relevant training, qualifications and experience.
- Apply for references, personal references and health reports.
- Notify Ofsted and undertake Criminal Records Bureau checks.
- Check applicants' identity with appropriate documents, e.g. Birth Certificate, Passport, recent (last 3 months) utility bill to confirm address.
- Establish applicant's identity, if the name has changed e.g. Marriage Certificate, divorce details, deed poll documentation
- Confirm that the person is eligible to work in the UK by checking one of the following:-
  - National Insurance Number or NI card (not a temporary card)
  - P45, P46, P60
  - Work permit
  - Evidence, such as a letter from the home office, confirming someone's right to live in the UK and take employment
  - A full British passport or another passport with a stamp confirming the holders right of abode in the UK
  - A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen
  - A birth certificate issued in UK or Republic of Ireland
  - A passport or identity card confirming someone is a citizen of the European Economic Area
- Where practicable, await clearance from the registering authority and have copies of the relevant references, before setting the start date.
- Ensure the new employee is aware of the 12 week probationary period and manner of review during this time.
- Prepare an induction programme for the new staff member.

## The Ark Staffing & Student Policy

### **Staffing Policy**

It is the aim of the Ark to provide the highest standard of care and we therefore employ staff with a range of qualifications and experience, and from a range of backgrounds. The Ark is fortunate in having experienced and qualified staff, many of whom have been with us for several years. The staff are the most important resource of any nursery. They do a very demanding job and continually try to improve the standard of the service. In charge of every group is a Group Leader, all of whom are qualified to NVQ3 level. They are supported by other staff most of whom are trained to NVQ3, a minority to NVQ2. We encourage nursery staff to develop their knowledge and skills through further training and education. All staff will have regular supervision meetings to review their practice and training needs.

We believe that continuity of care is very important for children in day-care and do everything we can to minimise changes for your child. We always try to keep children with the same peer group, and as much as possible with the same staff. This gives the children a very stable and secure pre-school experience, and enables them to form strong relationships with peers and staff.

All new staff have checks from the Criminal Records Bureau, and are closely supervised for a period of time before they are allowed to work unsupervised. Following this period, the member of staff may work without close supervision.

### **Students on Placement**

We seek to support the education and training of people who are studying or may wish to study childcare and education. We therefore offer placements to students on various childcare and education courses.

Students also provide a valuable additional resource for the Nursery. Because they are training, they always work under the supervision of Nursery staff. Some students are on degree or postgraduate course, and have assignments to undertake at the Nursery. For this, students must have permission from the Nursery Manager, who will ensure that there are no negative effects for the children, and ensure that students seek parental permission appropriately.

### **Staff Supervision Policy**

No member of staff will be left unsupervised until their competence and suitability has been established through a period of close supervision. Following this period, staff will work without direct supervision at some times. All staff are under general supervision.

Volunteers and students all work under supervision.

### **The Ark** **Training Policy**

It is our aim to provide opportunities for training for all our staff and volunteers. The Ark aims to financially help and support all staff access training whenever possible.

The training may be:-

- in-house training, keeping current with information on a wide variety of issues
- informal workshops to update knowledge or skills
- working towards a recognised qualification e.g. National Vocational Qualification.
- other training

Appropriate training will be paid for by The Ark.

Staff will be paid for the time spent attending any mandatory courses outside working hours, but not for voluntary courses. Travelling expenses will be paid at the maximum rate allowable under HMRC regulations without incurring a tax liability, and, where appropriate and subject to availability, any necessary childcare will be provided free of charge.

## The Ark

### Parent Partnership Policy

The Ark is committed to a genuine and meaningful partnership with the parents/carers of children in our care, and recognises that working in partnership with parents is of major importance in enabling The Ark to provide a caring and stable environment for the children. We aim to form a good relationship with parents so that information regarding their children (be it developmental, social or health related) can be exchanged easily and comfortably by Ark staff and parents. Moreover, this partnership policy reflects the duty on The Ark and its staff to protect the rights and promote the interests of those who use The Ark. This is manifested in different ways:

#### **The Management and Running of The Ark:**

- The Ark is a company limited by guarantee, managed by a voluntary Board of Directors and Management Committee, and is run by staff with support from the Management Committee. The Ark is also a registered charity. Alongside the staff who play a vital role, the Management Committee/ Board of Directors has overall responsibility for everything The Ark does and is drawn from parents/grandparents who are entitled and encouraged to put themselves forward for election to the Management Committee/ Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting.
- The AGM takes place in January each year. Directors/members of the Management Committee are elected at this meeting (although vacancies may be filled throughout the year). Committee meetings take place throughout the year. The Ark circulates several newsletters each year to all parents/carers, with a minimum of one per term.

#### **Understanding of, and Involvement in, Life at The Ark**

- To familiarise children with the setting before they start, we hold
- An induction/familiarisation visit for each child to meet staff and children

#### **Offering Places, Settling In and Welcoming Families**

- A welcome pack (including a Prospectus or parent's handbook) is circulated to all parents/carers before their child starts. It includes a number of forms (including a Parental Agreement Form) and policies to enable families to become familiar with The Ark's practices and procedures.
- Information provided by parents about their children will be kept confidential and treated on a strict need to know basis. Parents are requested to inform staff of any changes to personal circumstances which may have an effect upon a child, emotional or otherwise e.g. bereavement, separation or illness in the family, change of address.
- Parents/carers are welcome to stay with their child until he/she has settled at The Ark.

- If there are any concerns about a child's well-being during the day every effort will be made to contact parents or their emergency contact.

### **The Ark Activities, Parental Involvement and Your Child**

- A member of staff is always available, either informally or by appointment, to discuss any concerns or queries you may have.
- We aim to hold at least two Parent Consultations each year at which you can discuss your child's progress with staff.
- The plans for each room are displayed above the signing in book in the foyer. Photographs are displayed daily in the digital photo frame just outside the office window in the foyer so you can see which activities your children have taken part in. We occasionally make video recordings of the children and will send these home for you to watch as a DVD.
- The Ark issues regular newsletters (at least one a term) to keep you informed of curricular themes and activities in The Ark. Activity/topic plans will be on show in The Ark for parents to view/read Information regarding children's activities throughout the day is always available to parents on a daily basis either by verbal communication or in the child's own book. We also have our own website at [www.thearkchildokeford.co.uk](http://www.thearkchildokeford.co.uk) on which all our term dates and special events are displayed and from which you can download our prospectus, policies and newsletters.
- Parental visits are greatly encouraged at The Ark. You are invited to come in and participate in, or observe, any session your child attends. This is to build closer home-nursery links - if you can observe The Ark's practice and routines, it gives you a better idea of your child's experience. Whilst we do not have a parent rota, we very much welcome parents/carers who wish to come in and help on an occasional, voluntary basis. We have a volunteer policy which states that occasional volunteers will not be put in sole charge of any children, nor can they take children out of the sight of a member of staff (this includes to the toilet or to a separate room).
- Annual social events - the Welcome Evening, the Christmas Nativity, Summer Barbecue, fundraising events - are a further opportunity for home-nursery links to be forged.

### **Record Keeping and Assessment**

- Every child is unique, has different interest and develops at different rates. Each child is assigned a key worker who regularly observes, making notes, taking photographs and occasionally videos. The observations are used to plan learning experiences to enable each child to develop their potential.
- Records are kept of the children's development; each child has their own book, in which examples of their drawings, paintings and other achievements recorded by photographs are kept. The children are able to look at these whenever they like and parents are welcome to look at any time too.

- If your child attends another setting or a child minder, we will arrange for his/her key worker to visit. This begins the process of information sharing about your child's development.

### **Policies and Procedures and Paperwork**

- We have a number of policies to which we would especially like to draw to your attention: this Partnership with Parents Policy; the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy; the Child Protection Policy; the Complaints Policy and Procedure. These will be included in the Welcome Pack or circulated to you soon after the start of the Nursery year.
- Parents/carers have the opportunity to complete formal Parental Questionnaires once per year. Questionnaire comments will be considered in forward-planning for The Ark. However, we welcome parent comment and suggestions all year round.

### **The Wider Community**

- As a community nursery, we place great importance on a sense of community involvement. To this end, we organise local visits, build relationships with other local establishments (especially St. Nicholas CEVA Primary School) and through this, help the children to develop a sense of their place in a wider context.

## The Ark

### Parental Agreement

Agreement between the childcare provider and staff working with parents and carers to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group.

Information given to parents:

The Ark is open from 8.00am – 6.00pm to children between the ages of 0 and 11 years, and has the following policies available for inspection by the parents.

- Admissions Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Care, Learning and Play Policy
- Settling In Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Under 2s Policy & Procedure
- Special needs Policy
- Intimate Care Policy and Procedures
- Personal, Social and Emotional Policy
- Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
- Contingency Procedure
- Nutrition Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Confidentiality Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children and Lost Children
- Procedure for Outings and Events
- Equality Policy for Employers
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure Document
- Parent Partnership Policy
- Training Policy

All fees will be paid monthly in advance to The Ark; if fees are unpaid for 2 weeks then a reminder will be issued requesting payment within 7 days, and parents are advised to discuss the situation in confidence with either the Manager or Administrator and a more flexible payment plan can be arranged. If fees remain unpaid and contact has not been made within the 7 day time frame, then the committee will ask for complete payment, and the child may be excluded from the group, other than for government funded sessions, until payment is received.

We require a months notice to reduce sessions, and booked sessions must be paid for, even if your child does not attend e.g. due to sickness. For those children who attend year round only, a reduction of 75% to the fees is applicable for the first 10 days holiday per year, and thereafter 50%, provided holiday is booked at least one month in advance.

Parents are invited to participate on the Management Committee.

Children should be collected promptly at the end of a session. Parents/carers are requested not to open The Ark's doors to other parents/carers. Instead they should alert a staff member who will give access to that person.

Children must be signed in and out each day by their parent/carer. Children are not allowed to leave The Ark, unless accompanied by their parents/guardian or nominated other adult.

If a parent/guardian is unable to collect their child/children, they must inform the Manager of the nominated other responsible adult. No child will be allowed to leave the premises with person or persons unknown.

Parents are requested to behave in a polite and appropriate manner when dropping off their children. Failure to do so could lead to their children being excluded from the group.

Any problems which cannot be satisfactorily resolved between parents and staff may be referred to the Management Committee, in line with the organisations complaints procedure.

All staff are aware of the need to maintain confidentiality about matters concerning families and children.

**Please complete and return this page only.**

I have read the Parental Partnership agreement and acknowledge the information.

Name of child.....

Signed.....

Date.....

**The above policies are reviewed and updated yearly and meet government recommendations**

**Signed..... Dated .....**  
**Chairperson**