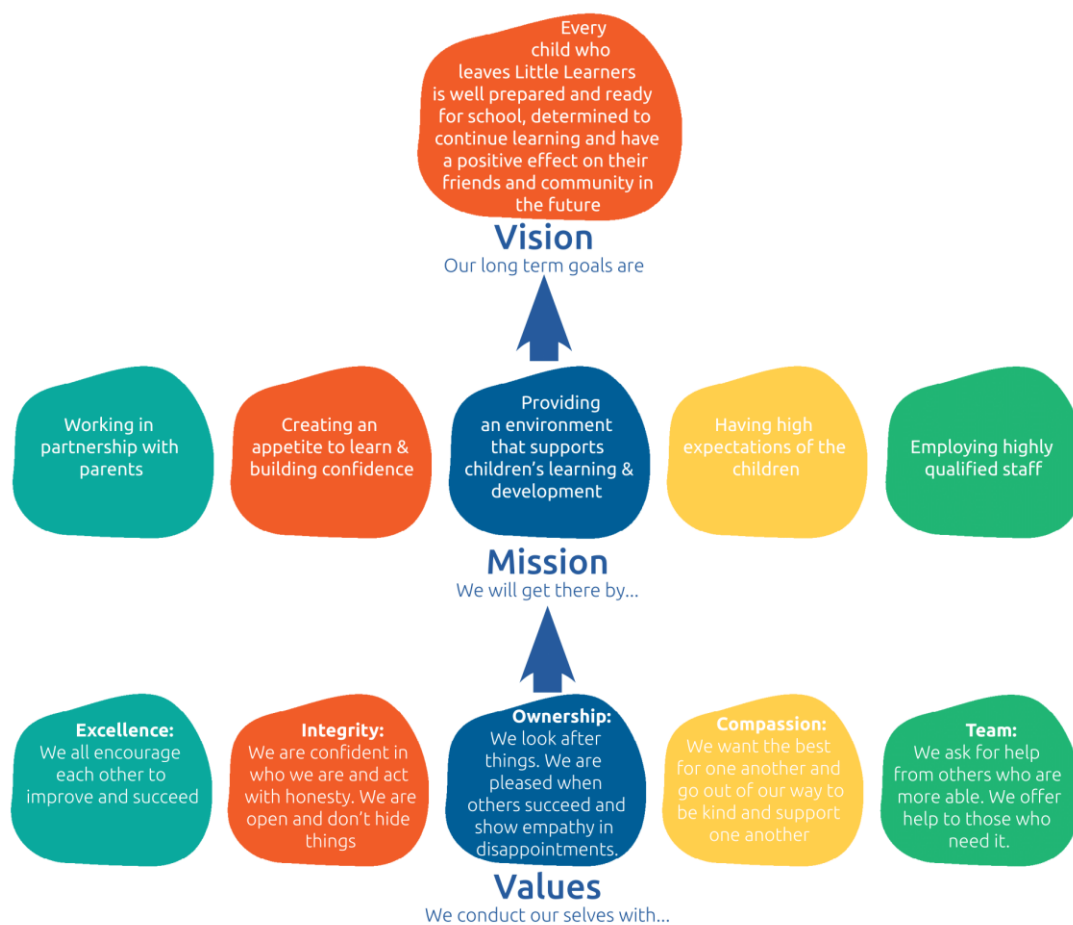


## Staff Code of Conduct Policy



Our Vision at Little Learners is 'every child who leave Little Learners is well prepared and ready for school, determined to continue learning and have a positive effect of their friends and community in the future'.

So that we can achieve our Vision, and meet statutory requirements in safeguarding the welfare and best interests of the children in our care, it is expected that all Little Learners staff adopt our core values of excellence, integrity, owner, compassion and team, as detailed above.

This staff code of conduct details the standards of behaviour expected of all staff.

### 1. Accepting gifts

Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation, such as a box of chocolates or bunch of flowers, to staff as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or money or of anything significant value.

Staff are not permitted to give personal gifts to children.



## 2. Alcohol, drugs and other substances

Staff must ensure that they are not unfit for duty as a result of the effects of alcohol or drugs. Staff should be aware of the lasting effects of alcohol and drugs, both prescription and illegal, and ensure that any consumption of these substances does not impair their ability to discharge their duties. The following applies to all staff:

- a) Staff are not permitted to be under the influence of alcohol, or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children.
- b) If staff are seen to be under the influence alcohol or any other substance they will be escorted off the premises immediately.
- c) If staff are on medication they must inform the manager/deputy manager about what medication they are taking, the date it was issued and the date they should no longer need it.
- d) Staff will only be allowed to work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly.
- e) If medication seems to be impairing the ability of staff to look after children medical advice will be sought from a medical professional by the manager or deputy manager.
- f) Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored, and out of reach of children, at all times.
- g) Staff medication is not allowed in the children's room.
- h) Staff who do not adhere to this will be in breach of the staff code of conduct and will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Failure to meet the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

## 3. Communication with Children and Parents (including the Use of Technology)

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Staff should not share personal information with a child or parent other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child or parent, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Staff should also be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to children and parents including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with the Nursery Manager and parents/carers. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a child outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites. Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the LifeLine's Data Protection policy.

## 4. Confidentiality

As a member of the Little Learners staff team you will have access to confidential information. You may also have access to or be given highly sensitive or personal information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so.



If you are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential you must seek guidance from the Nursery or Deputy Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, staff must treat personal and sensitive personal information as follows:

- a) Written records and correspondence should be kept securely at all times.
- b) Information relating to staff, parents or children public must not be disclosed either orally or in writing to unauthorised persons.
- c) Information relating to staff, parents or children must not be given over the telephone unless the caller has given details of their right to ask for such information. Staff should check on the caller's right to information by obtaining their telephone number and calling back to check their identity or by asking for a written request for information.
- d) Confidential matters relating to staff, parents and children should not be discussed in areas where they may be heard by passers-by, for example corridors, reception.
- e) Staff are not permitted to make statements or write letters to the media about Little Learners business.

## 5. Contact with children and parents outside the nursery

While Little Learners encourages positive relationships between staff and families, these need to be of a professional nature for as long as the staff member has a professional responsibility towards that child.

Staff should be aware that social contact with children and families who use our nurseries may leave them vulnerable to allegations and staff are strongly advised to inform the Nursery Manager of social contact with children or their parents. Social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.

To prevent any misunderstandings, staff should be aware of the following guidance and good practice:

- Children and/or parent visits to your home should not occur, unless the reason for this has been clearly established and agreed with the Nursery Manager.
- In no circumstances should children and parents assist with chores or tasks in your home or the homes of your friends and family.
- It is good practice to approve any planned social contact with children or parents with the Nursery Manager.
- Contact with children and families may leave staff vulnerable to allegations. In order to prevent this, staff are strongly advised to notify the Nursery Manager of any contact with families.
- There may be situations in which children or parents seek to establish social contact where it is not possible to notify the Nursery Manager in advance (i.e. coincidental meetings in a social setting). In these cases staff should exercise professional judgement and are advised to notify the Nursery Manager at the earliest opportunity.
- When social contacts occur through interests outside of work or through personal or family networks staff are advised to take care in maintaining appropriate personal and professional boundaries.



- If staff believe that any social contact with a child or parent may give rise to concern they are must report this to the Nursery Manager.
- It is recognised that in some cases staff may need to support a parent in particularly difficult circumstances. In these situations, staff should be aware of the potential for the parent to become dependent on the staff member outside of their professional role. In such situations staff should discuss with the Nursery Manager, and if appropriate a referral will be made to the appropriate support agency.
- Staff must report and record any situation that they believe may place a child at risk, compromise the centre, or their own professional standing.
- Staff are not permitted to babysit children who attend Little Learners.

## 6. Differences of opinion

Inevitably there will be times when a difference of opinion occurs between individual staff members. If this happens the individuals will discuss the issue away from the children at an appropriate time having arranged cover if necessary. The discussion will take place in a respectful manner with both parties aiming to listen as much as they talk. In most cases staff should be able to resolve any difficulties with each other and reach a conclusion that is satisfactory to both parties.

If the meeting does not resolve the situation the matter will be referred to the Deputy or Nursery Manager.

The Grievance procedure may be followed if it is not possible to resolve a difference of opinion after talking to Deputy and/or Nursery Manager.

## 7. Dress code

While dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression, at work we should dress in ways which are appropriate to our role at work and this may need to be different to how we dress when not at work. The clothes we wear should be appropriate for the tasks and the work we need to undertake at the centre. Dressing in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render us vulnerable to criticism or allegations.

At Little Learners we provide a uniform, consisting of polo shirts and cardigans, which should be worn on a daily basis unless stated otherwise by the manager. Smart suitable trousers also form part of the uniform which you are expected to provide for yourself.

Shoes are not to be worn within the nursery. Suitable footwear must be worn that enables staff to be active with the children. All sandals must have a strap at the back of the heels and shoes must be suitable to run in. High heels are not appropriate and open toed shoes, sandals and flip flops are not permitted.

All body piercings (except studded earrings) and tattoos are expected to be covered at all times. Staff are not permitted to wear hooped earrings at work.



## 8. Holidays

Our nurseries are closed on all weekends and bank holidays. Annual leave must be booked in advance and approved by the Nursery Manager.

## 9. One to one situations with children

For most of the time staff will be working alongside colleagues. There may be occasions when staff need to work with children one to one e.g. when changing a child.

One to one situations have the potential to make children more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Staff working one to one with children may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them.

For these reasons it is essential that staff follow the following procedures:

- No member of staff should be working with children in an area where they are not visible to others. Staff must not work in rooms which have doors and windows which do not allow other staff and adults to see in. Glass panes must not be covered.
- Your room leader and colleagues must be aware of where you are going before you leave your allocated room, conservatory or garden to go to another part of the nursery.
- Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry during 1:1 situations to the room leader, Deputy or Nursery Manager and document the incident.

## 10. Physical Contact

Staff need to be aware of sensitivities about physical contact with children. Contact between staff and the young children we work with is appropriate for a variety of reasons, including:

- Providing calming/reassuring/comforting contact.
- Offering support by holding hands.
- A gentle touch on the arm to re-focus attention.
- Guiding (without force) a child away from a situation or location.

We need to ensure that physical contact is appropriate and leaves neither child nor adult vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Factors to consider might include:

- Knowledge of the child, e.g. history/background.
- Age (and age difference) – of child and adult.
- Context – where, when, why.
- Relationship between staff member and child.
- Gender.

## 11. Physical Intervention

On occasions we may need to use planned physical intervention to keep children and adults safe in our nurseries.



Physical intervention is where practitioners use reasonable force to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damaging property.

Physical intervention is an action of last resort and is not a substitute for strategies which promote positive behaviour as outlined in our 'Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy'.

Physical intervention involves actions in which one restricts the movements of another against resistance. It is not the same as other forms of physical contact such as manual prompting, physical guidance or simply support which might be used in play or for reassurance. It is always a good idea to have the support of a colleague if needing to support children using physical intervention. When calling for support use the language 'support please', not help as this may cause undue distress for the other children.

If circumstances arise that require physical intervention, if at all possible ask for help from a colleague who can:

- Reduce the risk of injury (to staff or child).
- Act as a witness to the situation (for the protection of adult and child).
- Diffuse the situation – your colleague may not be the focus of anger and could take over.
- Remove other children from the situation.

The types of intervention which may be appropriate:

- Holding a child without injury until they calm down.
- Controlling the child's movements which pose a danger (e.g. holding the arms against the side of the body).
- Standing by the side of the young person is likely to minimise the risk to adult and child.
- The holding of a child's arms or legs to prevent/restrict striking/kicking that is causing injury to themselves or another.
- The use of sufficient physical force - without causing injury - to remove a dangerous object from a child's grasp.
- Physically preventing a child from exposing themselves to possible danger by leaving the premises.

### 11.1 Corporal Punishment

It is illegal to use corporal punishment. Corporal punishment may be defined as any act or threat of an act, such as hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, poking, prodding, biting, throwing an object, rough handling etc, which causes or threatens harm.

Any use of physical restraint must be recorded. The Nursery Manager will monitor incidents.

Different staff respond in different ways to psychological stress. Support following incidents where physical intervention has been used should reflect the individual needs and strengths of each member of staff including, where necessary, time for the member of staff to have a breathing space and de-brief after an incident.



## 12. Policies and Procedures

A full set of Little Learners operational policies and procedures are available to all staff at each nursery.

Policies and procedures relating to employment are provided to staff in a Staff Handbook during the induction period. These policies are also made available to staff on SharePoint.

Staff have a responsibility to familiarise themselves all policies and procedures that apply to their job and the area in which they work.

## 13. Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all staff should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

All staff are required to follow the child protection procedures where they have a concern about a child or raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice by colleagues.

It is a mandatory requirement that staff attend safeguarding and child protection training. Little Learners provides safeguarding and child protection training to all staff through induction, regular internal and external refresher training and through updates and information provided at staff meetings.

## 14. Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any part of the nursery or grounds at any time.

Staff accompanying children outside the nursery are not permitted to smoke.

Staff must not smoke while wearing nursery uniform as it is essential that staff are positive role models to children and promote a healthy lifestyle. If staff choose to smoke during breaks they are asked to change into their own clothing and smoke away from the main entrance.

## 15. Use of mobile phones, personal devices and cameras

We take steps to ensure that there are effective procedures in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from the unacceptable use of mobile phones, other personal devices such as tablets, smart watches, e-readers, electronic dictionaries and cameras in the setting.

### 15.1 Personal mobile phones and other electronic devices

- Personal mobile phones and other personal devices belonging to members of staff are not to be used in the children's rooms during work hours.
- Use in the staff room/office is permitted on breaks.



- At the beginning of each shift, personal mobile phones and other personal devices must be stored in the area allocated at each nursery.
- In the event of an emergency, personal mobile phones and other devices may be used in the staff room/office, with permission from the Nursery Manager.
- Members of staff must ensure that the telephone number of the nursery is known to immediate family and other people who need to contact them in an emergency.
- If members of staff take their own mobile phones, or other personal device on outings for use in the case of emergency, they must not take or receive personal calls as this will distract them.
- Members of staff are not permitted to use their personal mobile phones or other personal device for taking photographs of children on outings.

### 15.2 Cameras and videos

- Members of staff must not bring their own cameras, video recorders or other personal recording device into the nursery.
- 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.
- Photographs or recordings in the centre are only taken on equipment belonging to the setting. Camera and video use is monitored by the Nursery Manager.
- Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, permission will first be gained from all parents for their children to be included.
- Photographs and recordings of children are only taken of children if there is written permission to do so (found on the individual child's Registration Form).

### 15.3 Photography and Videos

As part of our work with children we take or record images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well-being of children. Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from the child, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose. Staff can check that the parent has given consent by checking the child's confidential file.

All images and recordings will be made using Little Learners equipment which must not be taken off the premises. It is not acceptable for staff to use personal equipment.

Staff are not permitted to take photographs of children for their personal use.

### 15.4 Social Media

Staff must not post anything on to social networking sites such as Facebook that could be construed to have any impact on Little Learner's reputation or relate to the our nurseries or any children attending the nursery in any way. This includes:





- Staff must not post anything on social networking sites that could offend any other member of staff or parent using the nursery.
- If staff choose to allow parents to view their page on social networking sites this relationship must remain professional at all times
- No member of staff is permitted to discuss or post on social media any information relating to any part of their work at Little Learners Nursery, including but not exclusive to, comments on other staff, children, the working day and practices. This includes but is not exclusive to Facebook and Twitter and is in line with our Safeguarding and Data Protection policies.

## 16. Staff development

We have regular inset days. These are normal working days and attendance is mandatory by all staff.

Staff are required to participate in professional development through attendance at internal and external training events, attendance at staff meetings and other professional development activities.

## 17. Working with parents experiencing stress

On occasions parents may be distressed and behave in an inappropriate fashion. Staff should respond in an understanding way to ensure the well-being of the children, other parents, themselves and their colleagues and seek help from the Deputy or Nursery Manager.

It is important that we do not act in a judgmental fashion or make assumptions based on class, gender or biased assessment of parenting or professional skills.

Date policy last reviewed/updated	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	Reviewed by	Julia Ward, Head of Support Services
Date of next review/update	September 2023		

