



Staffing Policy

Churchill Preschool is committed to placing the best interests of children's welfare, care and development at the centre of all staffing matters. We believe a high adult-child ratio is essential in providing good quality pre-school care.

- We have at least one member to each eight children over 3 years of age, and one member of staff to every four children under 2 years of age. Graduate Lead Ratios are applied only in case of emergency to prevent setting closure.
- Our key person system ensures each child and family has one particular staff member who takes a special interest in them.
- The Playleader/s will arrange regular staff meetings where all staff are able to discuss and contribute in a positive manner. The Playleader/s encourage staff to contribute to the development and quality of the programme of activities provided. All staff attend regular Quality Improvement training.
- Members of staff are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a professional, courteous, helpful, warm and consistent manner.
- Members of staff are expected to display both knowledge and understanding of multi-cultural issues and inclusion, and a commitment to treating all children as individuals and with equal concern and respect.
- Members of staff will ensure that their dress and personal appearance are appropriate for working with children and have an awareness of health and safety issues.
- Personal mobiles must not be used during working hours and must be stored in the lockable tin in the kitchen area. If staff need to receive an emergency call, the person calling them should use the main preschool number.
- The playleader/s will ensure that space is made during the working day for staff to take regular breaks as necessary.
- Regular in service training is available to all staff, both paid and volunteer members, through the Pre-School Learning Alliance.
- Members of staff including the Preschool Management Committee are expected to maintain confidentiality and professionalism in connection with their role at all times, in both their personal and professional dealings.

Terms and Conditions

Churchill Pre-School is committed to promoting family friendly employment practices to help staff balance work and family commitments. We will make every effort to be flexible with staff and to promote harmonious working relations, through trade unions and other organisations.

We will work with staff and their representatives to ensure that all employment legislation and regulations – including Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay, Parental Leave, Statutory Sick Pay and Working Time Regulations – are abided by.

In return, Churchill Pre-School expects honesty, loyalty and diligence from its staff.

All staff will have written employment contracts, including rates and levels of pay and other terms and conditions, which are the responsibility of the Management Committee.

All staff have job descriptions, which set out their staff roles and responsibilities.

We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection. We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by the Nursery imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.

We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings and annual appraisals.

Qualifications, Experience and Safety Checks

The Playleader/s/Manager/s and all staff (including students and volunteers) will be suitably qualified, have relevant experience and have undergone an identity check and a Criminal Records Bureau/Disclosure Barring Service full disclosure.

Churchill Pre-School will not employ staff or volunteers who have been convicted of an offence or have been the subject of an order that disqualifies them from registration under regulations made under schedule 9A of the Children Act 1989. A person who has not undergone a Criminal Records Bureau/Disclosure Barring Service full disclosure, but who is on the premises (such as a member of staff awaiting the result of a CRB check) will not be left unsupervised with a child.

The Playleader/s/Manager/s will have an appropriate qualification to the post along with at least two years' experience of working with children. At least half of the rest of our staff will hold a relevant level 2 qualification or higher qualification. All qualifications will be 'Appropriate Qualifications' as defined by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).

Standards of Behaviour

- Under no circumstances should any arguments or disagreements between members of staff occur in the presence of children or parents/carers.
- No smoking, alcohol or drug use is allowed at Churchill Preschool.
- No bullying, swearing, harassment or victimisation will be tolerated by preschool staff.
- Offensive behaviour such as sexist or racist language or harassment will not be tolerated.
- All staff are expected to treat everyone respectfully at all times and inappropriate behaviour may lead to disciplinary action.
- These expectations apply to both the staff team and the Preschool Management Committee.

Staff Disciplinary Procedures

Minor disagreements

Minor disagreements among Churchill Pre-School staff, or between staff and Management Committee, can usually be resolved at the regular staff meeting or management committee meeting or informally by discussion.

Disciplinary procedure

A more serious situation arises when a dispute cannot be resolved, or when the Management Committee is dissatisfied with the conduct or activities of a member of staff. Any disciplinary matter will normally be dealt with using the following procedure:

At every stage the member of staff should be given reasonable notice (5 days) that a disciplinary hearing is due to take place to give her/him the opportunity to prepare her/his case, and s/he should be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a colleague or union representative if s/he wishes. The disciplinary panel in a Committee-run group should consist of the Pre-School Management Committee Chair, Fran Yandell, and one member of the management team, who should ensure that confidentiality is maintained within the panel.

Whilst these 3 steps apply to dismissal and action at the start of dismissal, it is good practice to follow these steps when dealing with all disciplinary issues. The procedure will consist of the following three steps.

Step 1 – details of grounds for action and invitation to meeting

The Management Committee/Chair person as lead representative of the Management Committee must prepare a statement of the member of staff's alleged conduct or characteristics, or other circumstances, which have led to the contemplation of dismissing or taking disciplinary action against the member of staff.

The statement and date of the disciplinary meeting must be sent to the member of staff prior to the meeting.

The member of staff should be provided with a reasonable amount of time to consider his/her response to the statement.

Step 2 – the disciplinary meeting

A disciplinary meeting must take place before action is taken, (except where the disciplinary action in question consists of suspension, or in the case of gross misconduct). At the meeting, the Management Committee representative should ensure that the circumstances of the complaint against the member of staff are discussed.

The Management Committee/Chair person as lead representative of the Management Committee must write to the member of staff to explain the conduct or capability, which may result in dismissal or other disciplinary action.

The outcome of the disciplinary meeting must be confirmed in writing, to include the member of staff's right of appeal against the decision.

Step 3 – appeal

At each stage of the disciplinary procedure, the member of staff must be told s/he has the right to appeal against any disciplinary action, and that the appeal must be made in writing to the Playleader/s or Chair person within 5 days of a disciplinary interview.

The member of staff will have the opportunity to appeal against any penalty issued at the disciplinary meeting. If the member of staff wishes to appeal then s/he should submit the appeal in writing within a set time period (5 days) of receiving the letter confirming the outcome of the disciplinary meeting, giving full details of the grounds for appeal.

Modified statutory procedure

In very exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to dismiss a member of staff without holding a disciplinary meeting i.e. where instant dismissal is justified and necessary. Such cases will be rare (because even in most cases of gross misconduct, investigation is usually justified, coupled with suspension) and will normally only apply to cases of gross misconduct, where the conduct or breach of duty brings the Pre-School into disrepute.

In such circumstances the following procedure will apply:

Step 1: statement of grounds for action

The Management Committee/Chair person as lead representative of the Management Committee must set out in writing the member of staff's alleged misconduct which has led to the dismissal, what the basis was for thinking at the time of the dismissal that the member of staff is guilty of the alleged misconduct, and the member of staff's right to appeal against dismissal within a limited time period (5 days). This statement or a copy of it should be sent to the member of staff.

Step 2: appeal

If the member of staff wishes to appeal, s/he must inform the Pre-School in writing.

If the member of staff informs the Pre-School of her/his wish to appeal, the Management Committee must invite her/him to attend a meeting. The member of staff must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. After the appeal meeting, the Management Committee/Chair person as lead representative of the Management Committee must inform the member of staff of the final decision.

Disciplinary penalties

Churchill Preschool Management Committee can issue a range of penalties depending on the circumstances of the case. However, a member of staff should not be dismissed for a first offence unless it constitutes gross misconduct.

1. First formal warning

- i. The member of staff will be interviewed by the disciplinary panel who will explain the complaint.
- ii. The member of staff will be given full opportunity to state her/his case.
- iii. After careful consideration by the disciplinary panel, and if the warning is considered to be appropriate, the member of staff needs to be told:

- The nature of her/his failings;
- What action should be taken to correct the conduct or performance;
- That s/he will be given reasonable time to rectify matters;
- What training needs and/or support have been identified, with timescales for implementation;
- What mitigating circumstances have been taken into account in reaching the decision;
- That if s/he fails to improve, then further action will be taken;
- That a record of the warning will be kept; and
- That s/he has a right to appeal against the decision.

2. Formal written warning

If the member of staff fails to correct her/his conduct and further action is necessary, or if the original offence is considered too serious to warrant an initial oral warning:

- i. The member of staff will be interviewed by the disciplinary panel who will explain the complaint and give the member of staff an opportunity to state her/his case. (Reasonable time must be allowed for the member of staff to prepare her/his case).
- ii. If a further formal warning is considered to be appropriate, this will be explained to the member of staff and a letter confirming this decision will be sent to the member of staff.
- iii. The letter will:
 - Contain a clear reprimand and the reasons for it;
 - Explain what corrective action is required and what reasonable time is given for improvement;
 - State what training needs and/or support have been identified, with timescales for implementation;
 - Make clear what mitigating circumstances have been taken into account in reaching the decision;
 - Warn that failure to improve will result in further disciplinary action which could result in a final written warning and, if unheeded, ultimately to dismissal with appropriate notice; and
 - Explain that s/he has a right to appeal against the decision.

3. Final written warning

If the member of staff fails to correct her/his conduct and further action is necessary, or if the original offence is considered too serious to warrant any initial warnings:

- i. The member of staff will be interviewed and given the opportunity to state her/his case. (Reasonable time must be allowed for the member of staff to prepare her/his case).
- ii. If a final warning is considered to be appropriate, this will be explained to the member of staff and a letter confirming this decision will be sent to the member of staff. The letter will:
 - Contain a clear reprimand and the reasons for it;
 - Explain what corrective action is required and what reasonable time is given for improvement;
 - State what training needs and or support have been identified, with timescales for implementation;
 - Make clear what mitigating circumstances have been taken into account in reaching the decision;
 - Warn that failure to improve will result in further disciplinary action which could result in dismissal; and

- Explain that s/he has a right to appeal against the decision.

If the progress is satisfactory within the time given to rectify matters, the record of warnings will be removed from the member of staff's personal file.

4. Dismissal

If the member of staff still fails to correct her/his conduct, then:

- i. the member of staff will be interviewed as before; and
- ii. if the decision is to dismiss, the member of staff will be given notice of dismissal, stating the reasons for dismissal and giving details of the right to appeal.

Suspension

If the circumstances appear to potentially warrant dismissal or the circumstances of the case are considered to constitute gross misconduct, a member of staff may be suspended with pay while investigations are being made. These should consist of obtaining written statements from all witnesses to the disciplinary incident, and from the member of staff who is being disciplined. Obviously these investigations should be carried out within as short a time as possible.

Hearing appeals

The appeal hearing should be heard, if possible within 10 days of receipt of the Appeal with two or three Committee members present – not, if possible, those involved in the initial disciplinary procedures – will serve as an Appeals Panel. If this is not possible, the Appeals Panel may consist of the same people as the original panel, and they must make every effort to hear the appeal as impartially as possible. The member of staff may take a work colleague or trade union official to speak for her/him.

- I. The member of staff will explain why s/he is dissatisfied and may be asked questions.
- II. The Chair will be asked to put forward her/his point of view and may be asked questions.
- III. Witnesses may be heard and may be questioned by the Appeals Panel and by the member of staff and the Chair.
- IV. The Panel will consider the matter and make known its decision.

A written record of the meeting will be kept.

Time scales

Each step and action under the disciplinary procedure must be taken without unreasonable delay. Consideration should be given to timings and locations of meetings to ensure that the member of staff and her/his representative are able to attend. For cases that result in dismissal, two reasonable attempts by the Pre-School to arrange a meeting will normally be sufficient if they prove abortive because of the member of staff's non-attendance. If a member of staff is not able to attend the first disciplinary meeting arranged then s/he will be required to provide an alternative date to take place within 5 days of the original date given by the Pre-School.

Staff to Children Ratios

Churchill Pre-School is conscious of the importance of maintaining adequate staff to child ratios, ensuring that children are cared for safely and given adequate attention and support. In all

cases the minimum staffing ratio for children aged 3-5 will be 1:8. For children aged 2 Churchill preschool will maintain a ratio of staff to children of 1:4.

The Management Committee will ensure that there are always at least two members of staff on duty on the premises at any given time.

The Management Committee will further ensure that suitable and sufficient contingency plans are in place to cover emergencies, unexpected staff absences, holidays and sickness.

Confidentiality

Staff have a right to privacy, as do children and their parents/carers. Personal details should not be discussed except in exceptional circumstances. Staff will not talk about individual incidents or the behaviour of children in front of parents/carers and other children.

Under no circumstances should staff provide any information about children to any branch of the media. All media enquiries should be passed in the first instance to the Management Committee. Please refer to Churchill Pre-School's confidentiality policy for further details.

Absences

- Staff should take statutory annual leave during Pre-School holidays (i.e outside of term time). Any other absence must be agreed with the Management Committee in all cases giving as much notice as possible.
- If staff are unable to attend work due to illness or other medical condition, they must contact the Playleader/s in the first instance **prior** to the start of the working day.
- Staff should indicate why they are unable to attend work and when they expect to return.
- On returning to work, staff should complete a self-certification form for any sickness absence.
- A return to work interview will take place by the Playleader/s in relation to absences over 3 days.
- For absences of longer than 7 days, a doctor's certificate must be submitted.
- The Playleader/s/manager/s will keep records of all sick-leave, other absences and lateness

Policy date: 6th April 2016

Review date: 1st April 2017