

Parent Code of Conduct

Findon Village Preschool (FVPS)

Revised April 2023

Yvonne Wilson (Chair of Trustees)



Introduction

Our parents recognise that providing early years education for children is a process that involves partnership between parents, preschool staff and the wider preschool community. As a partnership, our parents/carers will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for embarking on their primary school education. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our preschool.

Purpose and scope

At Findon Village Woodland Preschool, we believe it's important to:

- Work in partnership with parents to support their child's learning
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for children, staff and parents
- Model appropriate behaviour for our children at all times

To help us do this, we set clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community.

This code of conduct aims to help the preschool to work together with parents by setting guidelines on appropriate behaviour.

We use the term 'parents' to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a child
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders)
- Anyone representing the parent of a child.

Our expectations of parents and carers

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our preschool
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our children
- Maintain reasonable expectations for staff response to general communications (five working days)
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour
- Seek a peaceful and reasonable solution to all issues
- Where appropriate seek to clarify a child's version of events with the preschool's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any issue
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct
- Approach the right member of preschool staff to help resolve any issues of concern, following up if an appropriate response has not been received.

What constitutes aggressive or abusive behaviour ?

- a) We understand that people can become angry when they feel that matters about which they feel strongly are not being dealt with as they wish. If that anger escalates into aggression towards our staff, we consider that unacceptable.
- b) Any aggression or abuse directed towards our staff, other parents or children will not be tolerated.
- c) Aggressive or abusive behaviour includes language (whether verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused and may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness. The use of swear words in written or verbal communication will not be tolerated and these communications will not be responded to. Swearing at members of staff will not be tolerated.
- d) We also consider inflammatory statements, remarks of a racial or discriminatory nature and unsubstantiated allegations, to be abusive behaviour.

The following behaviours will not be tolerated

- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, preschool operations (including events on the preschool grounds)
- Swearing, or using offensive language
- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of preschool staff, Governor, visitor, fellow parent or child, regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence
- Displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, children or other parents
- Damaging or destroying preschool property
- Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication
- Unreasonable demands upon preschool staff to respond to a parental query, or expectations for staff or Governors to communicate outside of normal working hours
- The school does not permit electronic recordings of meetings or telephone calls by parents or staff without the explicit prior permission of all involved, and in agreement with preschool management
- Making serial and unreasonable complaints
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the preschool, its staff or any member of its community, on social media platforms (Please see Appendix A)
- Use of physical punishment against your child while on school premises
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards another child or adult
- Disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention
- Smoking or drinking alcohol on the school premises (unless alcohol has been allowed at a specific event)
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)

What constitutes unreasonable demands?

A demand becomes unacceptable when it starts to, or when complying with the demand would, impact excessively on the work of our staff or Governors, or when dealing with the matter takes up an excessive amount of staff time and in so doing, disadvantages other members of the preschool community.

For example:

- a) Repeatedly demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale
- b) Demanding responses from several members of staff on the same subject;

- c) Insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff when that is not possible;
- d) Repeatedly changing the substance of an enquiry or complaint or raising unrelated concerns;
- e) Repeatedly posing a question time and again, when a response has already been given, because the individual may not like the answer they have received.

What constitutes unreasonable levels of contact ?

Sometimes the volume and duration of contact made to our staff by an individual causes problems.

This can occur over a short period, for example, when a large number of calls or emails are received from the same person in one day.

- a) When we are dealing with a complaint or enquiry, this may occur when a person repeatedly makes long telephone calls to us or;
- b) Inundates us with emails or;
- c) Copies of information that have been already sent or that are irrelevant to the substance of the complaint or enquiry.

We consider that the level of contact has become unacceptable when the amount of time spent talking to an individual on the telephone, or responding to, reviewing and filing emails or written correspondence, impacts on our ability to deal with the matter, or on our responsibility for carrying out tasks relating to other members of the preschool community.

Breaching the code of conduct

Any member of staff who directly experiences aggressive or abusive behaviour from a parent, carer or other member of the public, has the authority to deal immediately with that behaviour in a manner they consider appropriate to the situation and which is in line with this policy.

If the preschool suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the code of conduct, the preschool will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident. depending on the nature of the incident, the preschool may consider :

Sending a warning letter to the parent

Inviting the parent into preschool to meet with a senior member of staff or the Governors

Contacting the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)

Staff will end telephone calls if they consider the caller aggressive, abusive or offensive. Our staff have the right to make this decision, to tell the caller that their behaviour is unacceptable and to end the call if the behaviour then persists.

If behaviour persists in future correspondence, we will tell the person in writing that we will not permit any further contact from them.

Where a parent or carer repeatedly phones, visits our preschool site, raises the same issue repeatedly, or sends us large numbers of documents about which the relevance is not clear, we may decide to:

- a) Limit contact to telephone calls from the person at set times on set days;
- b) Restrict contact to a nominated member of staff who will deal with future calls or correspondence;
- c) See the person by appointment only;
- d) Only allow their child to be brought to the preschool site by a responsible adult other than the one deemed to be acting in an abusive manner towards our staff;
- e) Restrict contact to written correspondence only;
- f) Refuse to deal with further correspondence and return any documents or, in extreme cases;
- g) Advise the person that further irrelevant documentation will be destroyed;

h) Take any other action that we consider appropriate to the circumstances.

Where someone repeatedly demands a response on an issue on which they have already been given a clear answer, we may refuse to respond to further enquiries from the person.

The preschool manager will seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)

The preschool manager may ban the parent from the school site (The preschool manager will consult the Chair of Governors before banning a parent from the preschool site).

We will always tell the person in writing the action we are taking and the reasons why.

The preschool will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the Chair of Governors.

We trust that parents will assist our preschool with the implementation of this policy, and we thank you for your continuing support of the preschool.

Appendix A

Inappropriate use of Social Media

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against settings or to share inappropriate information, e.g. naming children involved in incidences, sharing confidential information regarding an aspect of preschool life, making allegations or accusations or sharing false news. Findon Village Village Preschool considers the use of social media websites or Apps in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole preschool community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the preschool manager, or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren attending Findon Village Woodland Preschool is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites or apps, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The preschool will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases the preschool will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare. We would expect that parents would make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.