



## Code of Conduct Policy for Parents, Carers and Visitors

At St. Mary's Playgroup, we believe staff, parents, carers, and children are entitled to a safe and protective environment in which to learn and work. The education of our children is a partnership between staff, committee members, parents and carers and we recognise the importance of good working relationships. We welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our setting however, behaviour that causes harassment, alarm or distress will not be tolerated.

This policy aims to ensure that parents, carers, and visitors understand the expectations around the conduct of all parents and visitors connected to our setting.

### Aims:

- That all members of the Playgroup community treat each other with respect
- That adults always set a good example for our children, demonstrating how to get along with all members of the Playgroup and the wider community
- That no members of staff, parents or children are the victims of abusive behaviour or open to threats from other adults on the Playgroup premises
- That physical attacks and/or threatening behaviour, abusive or insulting language (both verbal or in writing), to staff, parents, carers, children, committee members or others on Playgroup premises will not be tolerated and will result in withdrawal of permission to be on Playgroup premises.
- To clarify the actions the Playgroup can take should this code be ignored

Everyday frustrations can cause misunderstandings and have a negative impact on relationships. However, we are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner through positive open discussion.

Behaviour that will not be tolerated:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the setting's normal operation or activities anywhere on the setting premises.
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the setting premises.
- Using loud or offensive language or displaying temper.
- Threatening in any way, a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent/carer or child
- Damaging or destroying setting property.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails/text/voicemail/Direct Messages or phone messages or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within the setting community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the setting or any of the children/parents/staff/committee at the setting on Facebook or other social media sites
- The use of physical, verbal, or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of your own child on setting premises.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences)
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on setting premises.
- Dogs being brought on to the setting premises. (other than guide dogs)

Should any of the above occur on setting premises (or in connection with setting) the setting may take action by contacting the appropriate authorities and/or banning the offending adult from entering the setting premises altogether.

**Parents/carers should make sure that all persons collecting their children are aware of this policy.**

### Procedure to address inappropriate behaviour by adults on the Playgroup premises:

At St. Mary's Playgroup, we operate a 'zero tolerance' of the use of inappropriate behaviour anywhere on the school site. *\*\*Inappropriate behaviour means disrespectful conduct towards people or property within the Playgroup premises.* All staff and committee members agree that any adult found to be using inappropriate behaviour towards other adults or children should be dealt with using the following steps:

- In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is a serious and potentially a criminal matter the concerns will in the first instance be referred to Thames Valley Police. This includes any or all cases of threats or violence and actual violence to any child or staff in the setting. This also includes anything that could be seen as a sign of harassment of any member of the setting community, such as any form of insulting social media post or any form of social media cyber bullying.
- In cases where evidence suggests that behaviour would be tantamount to libel or slander then the setting will seek further legal advice.
- In cases where the code of conduct has been broken but the breach was not libellous, slanderous or criminal matter, then the setting will send out a formal letter to the parent/carer with an invite to a meeting. If the parent/carer refuses to attend the meeting, then the setting will write to the parent/carer and ask them to stop the behaviour causing the concern and warn that if they do not they may be banned from the setting premises. If after this behaviour continues the parent/carer will again be written to and informed that a ban is now in place.

Please note, a ban from the setting can be introduced without having to go through all the steps offered above in more serious cases.

### **Complaints**

This code of conduct does not prevent parent/carers from raising a legitimate complaint in an appropriate fashion. In most cases we hope that all complaints and concerns can be resolved through open dialogue with members of staff as appropriate. Where you are not satisfied with responses received you should follow the complaints procedure as laid out in our setting complaints policy. This is available on the Playgroup's website and the Policies and Procedures folder.

### **Inappropriate use of Social Networking Sites (Social Media):**

Social media websites are being increasingly used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against schools, school staff, and in some cases other parents/children.

St. Mary's Playgroup considers the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable, and we take very seriously any inappropriate use of social media to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, child, member of staff or our setting.

Any concerns parents may have about the setting must be made through the appropriate channels as outlined above so that it can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

Social media should not be used to air any concerns or grievances.

Online activity which we consider inappropriate includes but is not limited to:

- Identifying or posting images/videos of children (without consent)
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, children or other parents
- Bringing the setting in disrepute
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff, parents or children
- Using social media to publicly challenge setting policies or discuss issues about individual children
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language
- Breaching setting security procedures

At our setting we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately in line with the actions outlined above.

Thank you for abiding by this policy in our setting. Together we create a positive and safe environment not only for the children but also all who work in and visit our setting.