Blanchelande College

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Nursery Family Partnership Policy

Policy Statement

At Nursery, we believe that children achieve the best outcomes when parents and practitioners work together in a positive, respectful and trusting partnership. Parents and carers are a child's first and most important educators, and we value the knowledge, experience and insights they bring.

We are committed to building strong relationships with families through open communication, mutual respect and collaboration. By working together, we can provide consistent care and learning experiences that support every child's wellbeing, development and individual needs.

We recognise that family circumstances vary and that children may experience significant life events during their early years. This policy outlines how the nursery works in partnership with families, including separated parents, supports children and families through loss and bereavement, and ensures the safe collection of children. In all circumstances, the child's welfare, wellbeing and best interests remain our priority.

Our Commitment

Nursery will:

- Treat all children and families with dignity, respect and confidentiality.
- Foster positive, honest and professional relationships with parents and carers.
- Promote equality, inclusion and respect for all families, recognising that every family is unique.
- Encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's learning and development.
- Share information openly and work together to support each child's wellbeing and progress.
- Support children and families through significant transitions, including starting nursery, family changes, life events and preparing for school.
- Work in partnership with families to ensure every child feels safe, valued and supported.

Communication with Parents

We believe effective communication is a shared responsibility. Parents are encouraged to keep the nursery informed of any changes that may affect their child, including:

- Home circumstances.
- Medical needs or dietary requirements.
- Emergency contact details.
- Collection arrangements.
- Significant events that may affect their child's emotional wellbeing.

The nursery will keep parents informed through:

- Daily verbal feedback.
- Class Dojo.
- Parent meetings.
- Informal and formal discussions with the child's Key Person, ALNCO or the Manager.
- School email or text.

Parents are encouraged to speak with staff at any time if they have questions, concerns or information they wish to share.

Induction and Starting Nursery

We aim to make every child's introduction to nursery as smooth and welcoming as possible.

Following registration, parents/carers will be invited to visit the nursery with their child to meet the Manager and nursery team. This provides an opportunity to become familiar with the environment, ask questions and share important information about their child's needs.

During the initial visit, parents will receive an All About Me pack, which should be completed and returned before the child's start date. This enables us to gain an understanding of each child's routines, interests, likes, dislikes, comforters, medical needs and individual care requirements.

Meet and Greet and Settling-in Sessions

Children due to start in September will be invited to attend a meet-and-greet session before their first day. Due to the high number of children joining the nursery during September, we are unable to offer settling-in sessions at this time of year.

Children under the age of two are unable to attend settling-in sessions due to the statutory staffing ratios required for this age group.

For children aged two years and over who begin at other times of the year, settling-in sessions may be offered on a case-by-case basis, considering the individual needs of the child and the availability of the setting. Where settling-in sessions are agreed, they will be arranged in consultation with parents before the child's start date where possible.

Parents are welcome to remain for short periods during settling-in sessions. We encourage a gradual separation to help children develop confidence and establish secure relationships with staff.

The number, length and timing of settling-in sessions will be determined according to the individual needs of the child whilst ensuring the safe and effective operation of the nursery.

The Key Person System

Every child is allocated a Key Person who takes primary responsibility for supporting their care, wellbeing and learning throughout their time at nursery.

The Key Person will:

- Develop a warm, trusting and respectful relationship with their key children.
- Provide a secure base from which children feel safe to explore and learn.
- Meet children's individual care needs, including feeding, toileting, nappy changing, comfort and emotional support.
- Observe, assess and monitor each child's development and wellbeing.
- Plan for each child's next steps in learning, taking account of their interests and individual needs.
- Act as the main point of contact for parents regarding their child's care, learning and development.
- Support children through transitions within the nursery and into school.

Secure Attachments

We recognise that secure attachments are fundamental to children's emotional wellbeing, confidence and ability to learn.

Although every child has a designated Key Person, we acknowledge that children may develop positive relationships with several members of staff. All practitioners work collaboratively to ensure children feel safe, valued and supported throughout the nursery day.

Staff work closely with parents to understand each child's routines, preferences, comfort strategies and attachment needs. If a Key Person is absent, another familiar member of staff will provide consistent care to maintain continuity.

Working Together to Support Learning

Parents play a vital role in their child's learning and development.

We encourage parents to:

- Share information about their child's interests, achievements and experiences at home.
- Contribute to their child's journey through conversations with their Key Person and Class Dojo.
- Attend parent meetings and nursery events where possible.
- Work with nursery staff to support agreed learning and developmental goals.

By sharing information between home and nursery, we can provide meaningful learning experiences that reflect each child's interests and individual stage of development.

Supporting Individual Needs

We recognise that every child develops at their own pace. Where a child requires additional support, we will work closely with parents and, where appropriate and with parental consent, other professionals and agencies to ensure the child's individual needs are understood and supported.

Working with Separated Parents

Parental Responsibility

- Under Guernsey law, mothers automatically have parental responsibility.
- Fathers also have parental responsibility if they are married to the mother at the time of the child's birth, or if they are named on the child's birth certificate.
- Parents who do not have parental responsibility will not normally be entitled to receive information or make decisions about the child.

Communication

- Wherever possible, we will communicate with all parents who have parental responsibility.
- School newsletters, notices and general information will be sent electronically or made available to both parents if contact details are provided.
- It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure that the nursery has up-to-date contact details.

Information Sharing

- Both parents with parental responsibility are entitled to information about their child's progress, development and wellbeing.
- We will provide copies of reports or updates on request, provided that doing so does not conflict with legal restrictions.
- We will not mediate or take sides in disputes. If parents cannot agree, we may ask that they resolve matters through mediation or legal channels before involving the nursery further.

Collection Arrangements

- We will release children only to those named on the child's registration form or authorised in the child's all about me document.
- Where there is disagreement between parents, we cannot restrict access to a parent with parental responsibility unless there is a court order or formal legal instruction in place.
- Copies of any court orders, injunctions or similar legal documents must be provided to the nursery to ensure we act in accordance with them.

Emergencies and Decision-Making

- In cases of emergency, we will attempt to contact the primary carer first, and then the other parent with parental responsibility or emergency contacts identified on the child's all about me document.
- Where immediate decisions are required, nursery staff will act in the child's best interests, in line with safeguarding procedures.

Collection of Children

The safety and wellbeing of all children at Nursery is our highest priority. Children will only be released into the care of a parent, legal guardian or authorised adult who has been named in advance on the child's all about me document. At the time of registration, parents/carers must provide details of at least two emergency contacts who may be contacted if required.

No child will be released to anyone under the age of 16.

Authorised Collectors

Parents/carers must complete and sign a collection record listing all authorised adults who are permitted to collect their child. This information is included within the child's All About Me document. Any changes to authorised collectors must be communicated to nursery staff in writing, either by email or via ClassDojo.

Staff will not release a child to an unknown or unauthorised person unless direct confirmation has been received from a parent or legal guardian.

Identity Verification

If a member of staff is unfamiliar with an authorised collector, parents/carers may be asked to provide a photograph of the individual before collection. Staff reserve the right to contact parents/carers to confirm collection arrangements before releasing a child. If staff are unable to verify the identity or authorisation of the person collecting, the child will remain in the care of the nursery until appropriate confirmation has been received.

Late Collection

Nursery sessions finish at 2:45pm. Children attending the after-school club must be collected by 3:50pm. Parents/carers are expected to collect their child on time. If a child is collected late on a regular basis, a charge of £5 for every 5 minutes late will be added to the parent/carer's account. If a parent/carer is delayed, they must inform the nursery as soon as possible. If no communication has been received, staff will attempt to contact the parent/carer and then the emergency contacts provided. Persistent late collection may result in further charges and may be formally addressed by the nursery.

Parental Responsibility and Court Orders

The nursery recognises the rights of all individuals with legal parental responsibility. The nursery will not prevent a parent with legal parental responsibility from collecting their child unless a relevant court order or legal restriction is in place. Parents/carers must provide the nursery with a copy of any court orders or legal documents that affect collection arrangements or parental access.

Supporting Families Through Loss and Bereavement

At Nursery we recognise that loss and bereavement are sensitive and significant life events which may affect children, families and staff. As a nursery for children aged 2 to 4, we are aware that children may not fully understand the permanence or impact of death, but they will experience and express grief in their own ways. Our aim is to provide a safe, supportive and compassionate environment in which children, families and staff feel listened to, respected and cared for during times of loss.

Supporting Children

- Staff will provide a nurturing environment where children feel secure to ask questions and express feelings through play, stories and conversation.
- Explanations will be age-appropriate and honest.
- Children will be encouraged to express their emotions, and their responses will be acknowledged without judgement.
- Resources such as books, stories and activities about loss and feelings may be used sensitively to support understanding.

Supporting Families

- The nursery will respond with empathy and sensitivity to any family experiencing bereavement.
- Parents will be consulted about how they wish their child to be supported in the nursery.
- The nursery will respect the family's cultural and religious beliefs and practices around death and mourning.
- Staff will remain mindful of anniversaries or reminders of loss which may affect children and families.

Supporting Staff

- Staff will be supported by the Nursery Manager and colleagues when experiencing bereavement themselves.
- Training and guidance will be made available to help staff respond appropriately to children's questions and needs.
- Staff wellbeing will be monitored, and additional support or counselling signposted if required.

Practical Arrangements

- If a member of the nursery community dies, the Nursery Manager will inform staff and families sensitively and appropriately.
- The nursery may send condolences, cards or flowers on behalf of the nursery community, as appropriate and in line with the family's wishes.
- Where appropriate, remembrance activities may be carried out, such as lighting a candle, creating a memory box or planting a tree.

Confidentiality

Information shared by parents will be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality and managed in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Concerns and Complaints

We operate an open-door policy and encourage parents to discuss any questions or concerns with the Manager as soon as possible. Should a concern remain unresolved, parents may follow the procedures outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.

Safeguarding

- If we have concerns that a child may be at risk due to parental conflict, we will follow our Safeguarding Policy and make a referral to the relevant authority if necessary.
- If staff have any concerns that releasing a child may place them at risk of harm, the child will not be released until the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has been consulted.
- The nursery will follow its safeguarding procedures and may contact relevant agencies, including Children's Services, where necessary.
- All decisions will be made with the child's safety and welfare as the primary consideration.