



34. Parents as Partners Policy

**** When we refer to parents, we mean both mothers and fathers; which can be birth parents, step-parents or parents who do not live with their children but who still play a role in their child's life through regular contact. Reference to parents also includes carers, adoptive parents, foster parents and same sex parents. ****

Policy Statement:

At St Vincent's Nursery we believe that in order for children to receive quality care and early learning that suits their individual needs, parents and staff need to work together in a close partnership. The two-way sharing of information is key to this.

The nursery team welcomes parents as partners and support a two-way sharing of information that helps establish trust and understanding. We are committed to supporting parents in an open and sensitive manner and include them as an integral part of the care and early learning team within the nursery. Working together ensures we can meet the individual needs of the family and child and provide the highest quality of care and education.

Aims of this Policy:

Parents are a child's first and most enduring educators. Supporting parents' engagement in their children's learning is an effective way to make a difference to children's lives and outcomes. The aims of this policy are to support and enhance the development of the child and to respect, understand and value the contributions of the parent to the child's learning. It is important to remember that parents know the child best and to respect the parent's wishes even though they might differ from that of the practitioner. Practitioners listen to the parent and show confidence in them to promote their parental skills.

Our policy is to:

- Recognise and support parents as their child's first and most important educators and to welcome them into the life of the nursery
- Generate confidence and encourage parents to trust their own instincts and judgement regarding their own child
- Welcome all parents into the nursery at any time and provide an area where parents can speak confidentially with us as required
- Welcome nursing mothers. The nursery will make available a private area whenever needed to offer space and privacy to nursing mothers
- Ensure nursery documentation and communications are provided in different and accessible formats to suit each parent's needs, e.g. Braille, multi-lingual, electronic communications
- Ensure that all parents are aware of the nursery's policies and procedures. A detailed parent prospectus will be provided and our full policy documents will be available to parents upon request
- Maintain regular contact with parents to help us to build a secure and beneficial working relationship for their children



- Support parents in their own continuing education and personal development including helping them to develop their parenting skills and inform them of relevant conferences, workshops and training, where required
- Create opportunities for parents to talk to other adults in a secure and supportive environment through such activities as open days, parents' evenings and parent workshops
- Inform parents about the range and type of activities and experiences provided for children, the daily routines of the setting, the types of food and drinks provided for children and events through day-to-day communications, weekly updates, Manager's Newsletters and the nursery website
- Operate a key person system to enable parents to establish a close working relationship with a named practitioner and to support two-way information sharing about each child's individual needs both in nursery and at home. Parents are given the name of the key person of their child and their role when the child starts
- Inform parents on a regular basis about their child's progress and involve them in shared record keeping. Parents' evenings will be held twice a year. The nursery will consult with parents about the times of meetings to avoid excluding anyone
- Actively encourage parents to contribute to children's learning through sharing observations, interests and experiences from home. This may be verbally, sharing photographs or in written form
- Agree the best communication method with parents e.g. email, face-to-face, telephone and share information about the child's day, e.g. food eaten, activities, sleep times etc.
- Create opportunities for parents to talk to other adults in a secure and supportive environment through such activities as open days, parents' activity days, workshops, parent evenings etc.
- Consider and discuss all suggestions from parents concerning the care and early learning of their child and nursery operation
- Provide opportunities and support for all parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the nursery including signposting to relevant services, agencies and training opportunities
- Inform all parents of the systems for registering queries, compliments, complaints or suggestions, and to check that these systems are understood by parents
- Make sure all parents have access to our written Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Share information about the Early Years Foundation Stage, young children's learning in the nursery, how parents can further support learning at home and where they can access further information
- Provide a written contract between the parents and the nursery regarding conditions of acceptance and arrangements for payment
- Respect the family's religious and cultural backgrounds and beliefs and accommodate any special requirements wherever possible and practical to do so
- Inform parents how the nursery supports children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Find out the needs and expectations of parents. We will do this through regular feedback via questionnaires, suggestion system and encouraging parents to review working practices. We will evaluate any responses and publish these for parents with an action plan to inform future, policy and staff development.

Introduction to Nursery and Settling-in Process

The Key Person System



Prior to starting at the nursery, each child is allocated a key person. The allocation of key person is a very thorough process and takes into consideration the days that the child does so that they can link in with the days that the key person works, whether they are term time or all year round, the home language they speak and whether there is a staff member who speaks the same language, any additional needs they may have etc. The key person works on developing a strong bond with the key child and is a first point of contact for the parents to talk to about their child's learning and development, and any concerns they may have. The key person system also ensures a consistency in care, although we appreciate that once a child starts at the nursery, they may naturally develop a strong bond with another member of the team. If this is the case, we will endeavour to change the key person if we feel that this would be beneficial for the child and their settling in stage.

Each key person works in partnership with a buddy, which is another practitioner in the room. The buddy will take over from the key person whenever they are absent.

For more details about the key person system, please refer to the Key Person Policy.

New Parents' Evening

Before the child starts at the nursery the parents are invited to attend a New Parents' Evening; this usually takes place at the end of June and consists of a presentation and a nursery visit. During the presentation the parents find out more information about the nursery and the curriculum we follow, what we have been working on and plans for the future. They then have the opportunity to visit the nursery and their child's room, meet their child's key person and explore set up activities. Parents are given packs which contain information about their child's key person, date and time for a settling in session and an All About Me form for them to complete on their child.

Home Visits

For all children new to the setting, the key person and a member of the leadership team will complete a home visit. This is to meet the child in their home environment where they are most comfortable, find out about their routines and any individual needs that they may have, and let them familiarise themselves with their new key person.

Settling in Session in Nursery

Parents are asked to bring their child in for a settling in session as per their allocated day and time. During this session the parents can ask questions of the staff team and stay as long as they need to in order to settle their child in. Once the child is settled, parents will be encouraged to leave to see how their child will settle with their key person. Parents must ensure that they bring in completed All About Me forms to the settling in session so that the key person can read through them and talk them through with the parents, and ascertain further information regarding any special needs, health or other issues relating to the child. Practitioners should work with the parents to build up a holistic picture of the child in the first few weeks of starting at the setting.

If a child is unsettled and requires more settling in sessions, the key person will work with the parents to arrange this based on availability in the room.

Drop Off and Collection of Children:

Practitioners will ensure that all parents and children are greeted with a welcoming, friendly smile upon their arrival at the nursery. The key person, or buddy, will exchange meaningful information that either the parent or the practitioner has about the child's day.

Information on the child's day will be recorded on a daily basis on Famly and available to access by parents through their Famly account; it will provide details on meal times, sleep times and nappy changes, as well as weekly updates and photo pages on activities. Practitioners will also ensure that they pass on any messages when the child is collected.

For detailed information please refer to our Arrivals and Departures Policy.

Links to Home:

To ensure an ongoing dialogue with the parents so that we may work together to support the children's well-being, learning and development, we have several strategies, initiatives and ways of information sharing in place:

- ***On Entry Assessments*** – upon joining the nursery, parents contribute to their child's starting point assessments so that their child's stages of development, interests and special skills are shared; parents also provide detailed information about their child in the All About Me booklet they fill in as part of the settling in process to ensure transition to our nursery is smooth by knowing as much about the child and their needs as possible
- ***Parent Information Boards*** – these are regularly updated and contain information such as menus, event posters, newsletters, monthly room information (i.e. baby sign of the month, colour / shape of the month etc.), team member of the month award, as well as any other relevant information.
- ***Achievement Boards*** – for parents to share with us their child's achievements at home so that these can be celebrated and incorporated in their child's planning
- ***Weekly Update*** and ***Manager's Newsletter*** – weekly communications with parents informing them on what individual rooms have been up to that week, sharing the dates of upcoming events and any other information that is passed on by the manager (i.e. changes in policies and procedures)
- ***Star of the Moment*** – celebrating children's achievements / good conduct at the nursery and sharing this with parents
- ***Family Events*** – inviting family members to the nursery to take part in events such as Mother's Day Tea Party, Father's Day Garden Party, Grandparents Day, Pre-school Graduation, Sports Day etc.
- ***'Share With Us' days*** – inviting parents / family members to the nursery to share with us their professions, skills, special interests, cultural / religious traditions and customs, home language and country of origin etc.
- ***Lending Library*** – parents are encouraged to borrow books from our library to take home and read with their children

- **Support Bags** – Support Bags provide additional support for parents in areas such as Toilet Training, New Baby, Bereavement etc.
- **Well-being Support Bags** – our Well-being Support Bags focus on issues surrounding emotional well-being and mental health, and provide additional support to our families with dealing with anxiety, OCD, dementia, bipolar disorder etc.
- **Parents' Evenings** – these are held twice a year, in January and July, and provide a great opportunity for parents to have uninterrupted time with their child's key person and discuss the child's stages of development in each area of the EYFS; parents are provided a written report on which they are able to comment and share their views
- **'You Said, We Did'** – parent surveys are sent out twice a year to gather feedback from parents on all aspects of the nursery life; we endeavour to act on any reasonable and practicable suggestions in a timely manner and any changes we have made from parent suggestions are communicated in a 'You Said, We Did' style
- **Facebook Page and Nursery Website** – regular updates posted on both our Facebook page and website, including events, Wow activities, newsletters etc.
- **Parent Workshops** – free workshops for parents on any identified area of need (i.e. Speech and Language, Toilet Training, Physical Activity etc.)
- **Family Challenges** – various activities / challenges that parents can do at home with their children linking in with what we have focused on in the nursery

Two year check:

When a child is aged between 24 and 36 months, practitioners must agree a date to conduct the two year check with parents to review progress in the prime areas of learning and development, and supply parents with a written summary of their child's development in prime areas of learning (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication & Language). The development and progress check at 24-36 months must identify any areas where the child's progress is less than expected, and should shape a targeted plan to support that child's future learning and development in the nursery. Parents are asked to take the report to their 2-year check appointment with the health visitor so that it can support the Healthy Child Programme undertaken by health visitors. If additional support is required in the area of special needs then the parent should be introduced to the SENCo for further information and guidance as laid out in the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy.

Statutory Framework Links:

In compliance with The EYFS Statutory Framework, the following documentation is in place and available for parents:

- The policies and procedures file containing policies such as Admissions Policy, Arrival and Departure Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy and Information Sharing Policy
- Complaints procedure



St Vincent's Nursery, Orchard Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 8EY

- Emergency procedures
- Details for contacting OFSTED
- Co-ordinator information – Safeguarding, SENCo, Health & Safety, Positive Behaviour, ENCo

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