

The Ark Policies

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Attendance Policy

This policy states how the attendance of children at The Ark is monitored and managed and also sets out the expectations and procedures relating to attendance for parents / carers and staff working within the setting.

Policy

This Attendance Policy relates to the care, safety, education, health and well-being of all the children attending The Ark Nursery and also applies to parents /carers and staff within the setting.

Aims of the Attendance Policy

- To create a culture within the setting where good attendance is normal and valued.
- To prepare children from the earliest age for their time at school where attendance is statutory.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the setting.
- To ensure children have full access to all the learning opportunities available and to the early year's curriculum.

Expectations of Parents / Carers: At The Ark we believe good attendance is essential for children to be settled and take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities available to them. For young children, consistency and continuity are important factors for their well-being and progress. All parents / carers will be made aware of the importance of regular attendance prior to entry and of the importance of collecting children on time. We ask parents to be prompt in bringing their child to nursery at the beginning of the session and collecting them at the end of their session. All parents / carers will be encouraged to ensure their child achieves the maximum attendance possible.

Procedures Relating to Children's Attendance at the Setting

We understand that children suffer from childhood illnesses and in the instance that your child should be unable to attend our setting on their nominated day we would ask that you contact us to give an explanation by phone, email or on tapestry on that day and on subsequent days as early as possible. 01258 861007 or thearkchildokeford@hotmail.co.uk. The Manager / Deputy Managers will note the reason for absence and expected return date of the child. Messages of absence from parents' carers are passed to the key worker

When your child returns to the setting you will be asked to sign an absence form stating the reason for the absence.

Monitoring attendance at nursery will support the safeguarding of children. If we do not have an explanation of absence, we will endeavour to contact you or your emergency contacts that day. If we fail to make contact within 48 hours by phone, we will contact Children's Services and/or a police welfare check requested. (This is in accordance with the Children's Act 2004) and for families who are already involved with Social Care we may contact Children's Services within 24 hours.

If there is no contact after one week, a letter will be sent to the parents /carers. If necessary, an appointment will be made with the Nursery Manager to discuss the matter. If after one month there has been no contact, the child's name will be removed from the register and the place allocated to another child on the waiting list. The Local Authority will be informed that the child has left the nursery.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the setting and the parents. Children can sometimes be reluctant to attend a setting which is new to them and we understand this issue well. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is best not to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Cooperation between home and nursery is the best way to support children's well-being needs. Parents are expected to contact the nursery at an early stage and explain to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

Parents of children whose attendance is inconsistent and generally poor will be contacted by the Manager and their future attendance monitored. If there is cause for concern, the health visiting service and/or Multi-agency Team may be contacted in order to ascertain if family support may be needed. In more urgent cases, social care may be contacted.

Admissions Policy

The Ark will comply with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. We aim to make the facilities accessible to all families from the local community.

- We will welcome children, fathers and mothers, other relatives, other carers and people from ethnic, religious and social groups, regardless of sexual orientation, with or without disabilities.
- We place notices advertising the group where all sections of the community can see them.
- Demand for places is always high and therefore it may not be possible for us to fit your child into sessions that you require straight away. Within each of the categories of places, we operate an allocation policy in order of application. However, we will give preference to those who need full-time places, children currently attending and their siblings, and children of staff. We will not take bookings more than nine months in advance of commencement, unless there is no availability until later.
- In order to accommodate emergency admissions we will endeavour to keep a place vacant, if this is financially viable.
- A deposit of 50% of four weeks' fees is required on receipt of a firm booking. This will be returned when the child leaves The Ark. However, if commencement is postponed, a retainer of 50% of fees will be charged, and if commencement is postponed for more than four weeks the deposit will not be refunded. **The deposit is non-refundable if you do not take up the place you have booked.** Discretion may be used in regard to the retainer fee in exceptional cases.
- Bookings for children in the Baby Room are year round, but bookings for the Toddler and Pre-school Rooms may be term-time only.
- To aid the settling of all children we recommend that at least two days per week are booked to enable continuity of care.

Allergy Policy

The Ark recognises the need for effective procedures to be in place to manage allergens. We are aware children and staff who attend The Ark /Raft may suffer from food, bee/wasp sting, and animal or nut allergies.

We believe that all allergies should be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional and appropriate manner to reduce risk and maintain a safe environment for those who attend.

Procedures and responsibilities for Allergy Management

To obtain all known allergy information from families prior to admitting a child to The Ark or Raft and inform staff of any change in a child's medical condition as necessary. Ensure staff are aware and familiarise themselves with any child with an allergy – the allergen, the nature of the allergic reaction (from rash, breathing problems to anaphylactic shock) and any required treatment.

An 'Allergy Action plan' and photograph of the child, which includes the child's personal information, are clearly shown in the kitchen and the main rooms within the building. The 'Allergy Action Plan' details the signs of ANAPHYLAXIS.

A- Airway - Persistent cough, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing, swollen tongue.

B- Breathing – Difficult or noisy breathing, wheeze or persistent cough.

C- Consciousness – Persistent dizziness, pale or floppy, suddenly sleepy, collapse/unconscious

If one (or more) of these signs above are present the child should be laid flat with legs raised, administer Adrenaline auto injector without delay and dial 999 for ambulance and say 'ANAPHYLAXIS'.

Signs and symptoms of a mild/moderate reaction may include.

- Swollen lips, face or eyes
- Itchy/tingling mouth
- Hives or itchy skin rash
- Abdominal pain or vomiting
- Sudden change in behavior.

Mild/moderate reactions can be treated by administering antihistamine.

Our staff are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of a possible allergic reaction, know how to administer treatment and what to do in an emergency allergic reaction situation. Staff are Pediatric first aid trained which includes the use of Auto Adrenaline injectors.

If a child has a severe allergic reaction, a trained member of staff will administer the relevant specialist treatment, such as an EpiPen, and call for an ambulance immediately. While waiting for the ambulance, we will contact the parents and arrange to meet them at the hospital.

Parents provide any up to date medication/equipment which is stored safely and easily accessible to members of staff. In the case of life saving medication such as an EpiPen, the parents / carers are responsible for the provision and timely replacements of the EpiPens. Children will not be allowed to attend without two EpiPens being on site.

Ensure good communication with families affected by allergies and any relevant health professionals.

We do our utmost to ensure cross-contamination is avoided by maintaining good food hygiene standards at all times and ensure there is clear separation and labeling of ingredients.

Maintain strict food hygiene and cross-contamination standards throughout food handling area

Behaviour Management Policy

We will provide a stimulating environment in which children develop self-discipline and self-esteem. Training and support in behaviour management is compulsory for all staff. Very young children are egocentric which means that they put their own feelings before others, and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over-exuberance. We acknowledge that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported and that very young children do not intentionally wish to cause hurt. If hurtful comments are made, our strategies are:

- To recognise that very young children are not always able to support their own feelings and deliver them appropriately
- To support their biological and cognitive development

Research has acknowledged and highlighted the need to recognise rough and tumble play as distinct from inappropriate or aggressive behaviour. Television or films, which include superheroes, often influence young children and they will mimic this behaviour through their play. We will endorse the following strategies to support this kind of play:

- Recognise that this is pro-social play rather than aggressive
- Use planning opportunities to discuss the concept of 'good' and 'bad'
- Support the play to find alternatives to weapon play, exploring different scenarios
- Work towards managing behaviour rather than the discipline of a child
- Clear, consistent boundaries are set regarding behaviour, taking into account the age and stage of development of the child
- Children are made aware of the need for goals and boundaries and specific expectations for their behaviour in ways appropriate to their levels of understanding
- Positive methods of guidance are used. We reward good behaviour and encourage respect for others
- We encourage responsibility such as helping to tidy up
- Adults intervene and redirect, if necessary, to prevent disagreements developing that children cannot handle
- Physical punishments are never used, nor are practices which humiliate or frighten children
- Where restraint is unavoidable, the minimum amount is used consistent with maintaining the safety of the child and others
- Any incidents of unwanted behaviour are handled in a calm and controlled manner
- Persistent problems with unwanted behaviour are promptly and accurately recorded, then reported to parents/carers, colleagues or professionals, as appropriate, and advice sought from Dorset County Council's Senior Early Years Inclusion Consultant. In extreme cases, children may be excluded from The Ark
- It is always made clear that it is the behaviour, not the child, which is unwelcome

The nominated person responsible for behaviour management is Sarah McNab.

We believe in:

- Praising and rewarding positive behaviour and giving attention on a one-to-one basis
- Adults demonstrating a good role model prompting acceptable behaviour
- Discussing issues with all other children
- Giving children the language with which to express themselves
- Providing a stimulating and developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Providing equipment and materials through which children can play out their feelings

Bullying

The DfES published guidance for schools in July 2017 'Preventing and tackling bullying'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Our policy reflects this guidance. Bullying is defined as actions that are meant to be hurtful, and which happen on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (for example, being ignored or not spoken to). Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We will therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing an ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. We aim, as a childcare setting, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can play and learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

This policy is to produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We aim to make all those connected with the childcare setting aware of our opposition to bullying, and we will make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our setting.

All the staff take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place. Staff will keep a record of all incidents that happen in the setting. If staff witness an act of bullying, they will refer it to the Manager. Staff will do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied, then the Manager will inform the parents.

If parents think their child is being bullied, they are requested to inform the Manager, noting if possible who, what, where and when the bullying occurred. If bullying is taking place, responses will vary from short periods of exclusion from activities to a withdrawal of privileges for the perpetrator. Staff will endeavour to identify the reasons for the bullying and put necessary measures in place to support and guide the bully, thereby helping the bully to understand the impact of their actions and helping them make better choices in the future. If a child demonstrates bullying type behaviour, the Manager will inform the parents.

Care, Learning and Record Keeping Policy

We are committed to meeting the individual needs of all children. The welfare of the children is central to our provision of care, learning and play. All children are respected and valued and we provide experiences to support their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development in a warm, caring and secure environment. Through carefully planned activities, play opportunities and interactions, staff promote children's self-esteem and support them in developing skills, knowledge and understanding as they explore their world. Children are encouraged and supported in making choices and decisions as active learners. Their progress is monitored regularly in order to ensure that individual needs are identified and provided for.

Planning

Our planning and learning is informed by a thorough understanding of the needs, interests, experiences and diversity of all of our children.

- We will provide a wide range of experiences and activities in order that children can learn through first-hand experiences and play
- We have established systems for planning children's experiences which reflect their individual needs
- We will monitor the progress of individual children and record this regularly and share this information with parents and carers
- We will encourage children to build relationships and develop self-esteem
- We will respect and value all the children, whatever their background, and we encourage staff and children to treat each other with respect

We will encourage children in their activities and provide support and reassurance for new experiences. We will give appropriate praise to support their efforts and achievements.

We will allocate each child a key worker who monitors progress and ensures that the child's needs are met. This member of staff provides the link between The Ark and home. The key worker will also manage communication between The Ark and the parents or carers, particularly on routine matters, and the child's progress.

Learning and play

- We will offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum which follows the Early Years Foundation Stage
- We will offer a variety of activities, both planned and free choice, which provide opportunities to learn through play
- We will offer a mixture of small and large group times both indoors and outdoors
- We will offer a mixture of active and quiet times throughout the day, and the children will have opportunities to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities
- We will take every opportunity to further individual children's communication skills in speaking and listening
- We will encourage the children to look at books and seek opportunities to read stories to, and with, them
- We will develop early mathematical skills through everyday routines, as well as through planned experiences and games
- We will provide activities which engage the children in problem-solving and investigation
- We will stimulate the children's imaginative and creative development through a range of activities, including: role play; a variety of painting, modelling and drawing experiences, both planned and free-choice; singing and dancing to music, as well as listening to music and playing instruments
- We will encourage the children to make choices and decisions during free play. We will also expect them, supported by adults, to take appropriate responsibility for the care and maintenance of resources
- We will make resources accessible to the children, wherever possible, in order that they can choose their activities independently
- We will label all resources so that children can find and return resources and equipment safely and easily

- We will ensure the safe use and storage of resources by the children, but we also support their independence and problem-solving abilities

Children's records

Policy statement

We have record keeping system in place that meet legal requirements; the means we use to store and share that information takes place within the framework of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

This policy and procedure should be read alongside our Privacy Notice, Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and our Information Sharing Policy.

Procedures

If a child attends another setting, we establish a regular two-way flow of appropriate information with parents and other providers. Where appropriate, we will incorporate comments from other providers, as well as parents and/or carers into the child's records.

Key workers will make observations on children's interests, schemas, progress and achievements, recording these in the children's individual records. This information will be used to plan appropriate activities that will aid the children's development, and will be shared with other staff to ensure continuity of care and learning. All observations are available to view through children's individual Tapestry login, we encourage parents/carers to view regularly and comment, and to also add photos from home and comment on any experiences children have enjoyed whilst at home or on outings.

- Key workers will be responsible for making sure that these records are updated regularly, and that the information is shared with parents and carers on a regular basis
- We aim to keep parents and carers fully informed about the provision of care, learning and play for their children

We keep two kinds of records on children attending The Ark:

Developmental records

- These include observations of children in the setting, photographs and samples of their
- in each child's individual folder which is kept in a locked cabinet.

Personal records

These are kept in a folder in a locked cabinet. They may include the following:

- Personal details – including the child's registration form and any consent forms.
- Contractual matters – including a copy of the signed parent contract, the child's days and times of attendance, a record of the child's fees, any fee reminders or records of disputes about fees.
- Child's development, health and well-being – including a summary only of the child's EYFS profile report, a record of discussions about every day matters about the child's development health and well-being with the parent.
- Early Support – including any additional focussed intervention provided by The Ark (e.g. support for behaviour, language or development that needs an SEN action plan) and records of any meetings held.
- Welfare and child protection concerns – including records of all welfare and protection concerns, and our resulting action, meetings and telephone conversations about the child, an Education, Health and Care Plan and any information regarding a Looked After Child.

- Correspondence and Reports – including a copy of the child's 2 Year Old Progress Check (as applicable), all letters and emails to and from other agencies and any confidential reports from other agencies.
- These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet, which is always locked when not in use and which the manager keeps secure in the office or other suitably safe place.
- We read any correspondence in relation to a child, note any actions and file it immediately
- We ensure that access to children's files is restricted to those authorised to see them and make entries in them, this being the manager, deputy or designated person for child protection, the child's key person, or other staff as authorised by the manager.
- We may be required to hand children's personal files to Ofsted as part of an inspection or investigation process; or to local authority staff conducting a S11 audit, as long as authorisation is seen. We ensure that children's personal files are not handed over to anyone else to look at.
- Parents have access, in accordance with our Privacy Notice, Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy, to the files and records of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Our staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Our staff induction programme includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
- We retain children's records for three years after they have left the setting; except records that relate to an accident or child protection matter, which are kept until a child reaches the age of 21 years or 24 years respectively. These are kept in a secure place.

Archiving children's files

- When a child leaves The Ark, we remove all paper documents from the child's personal file and place them in a robust envelope, with the child's name and date of birth on the front and the date they left. We seal this and place it in an archive box, stored in The Ark's loft for three years. After three years it is destroyed.
- If data is kept electronically it is encrypted and stored as above. Deactivated on tapestry
- Where there were s.47 child protection investigations, we mark the envelope with a star and archive it for 25 years.
- We store financial information according to our finance procedures.

Other records

- We keep a daily record of the names of the children we are caring for, their hours of attendance and the names of their key person.
- When students need to make observations in The Ark, they are advised of our Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and are required to respect it.

Legal framework

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

Transfer of records to school

Policy statement

We recognise that children sometimes move to another early years setting before they go on to school, although many will leave The Ark to enter a nursery or reception class.

We prepare children for these transitions and involve parents and the receiving setting or school in this process. We prepare records about a child's development and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage in The Ark; in order to enable smooth transitions, we share appropriate information with the receiving setting or school at transfer.

Confidential records are shared where there have been child protection concerns according to the process required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The procedure guides this process and determines what information we can and cannot share with a receiving school or setting. Prior to transferring information, we will establish the lawful basis for doing so (see our Privacy Notice).

Procedures

Transfer of development records for a child moving to another early years setting or school

Using the Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework

- (DfE 2021) guidance and our assessment of children's development and learning, your child's key person will prepare a summary of achievements in the seven areas of learning and development.
- The record refers to:
 - any additional language spoken by the child and his or her progress in both languages;
 - any additional needs that have been identified or addressed by The Ark;
 - Any special needs or disability, whether a CAF was raised in respect of special needs or disability, whether there is an Education, Health and Care Plan, and the name of the lead professional.
- The record contains a summary by the key person and a summary of the parent's view of the child.
- The document may be accompanied by other evidence, such as photos or drawings that the child has made.
- When a child transfers to a school, most local authorities provide an assessment summary format or a transition record, which we will follow as applicable.
- If there have been any welfare or protection concerns, we place a star on the front of the assessment record.

Transfer of confidential information

- The receiving school or setting will need to have a record of any safeguarding or child protection concerns that were raised in The Ark and what was done about them.
- We will make a summary of the concerns to send to the receiving setting or school, along with the date of the last professional meeting or case conference. The Local Safeguarding Children Board will stipulate the forms to be used and provide these for us to use.
- Where a CAF has been raised in respect of any welfare concerns, we will pass the name and contact details of the lead professional on to the receiving setting or school.
- Where there has been a s47 investigation regarding a child protection concern, we will pass the name and contact details of the child's social worker on to the receiving setting or school – regardless of the outcome of the investigation.
- We post or take the information to the school or setting, ensuring it is addressed to the setting or school's designated person for child protection and marked as 'confidential'.
- We do not pass any other documentation from the child's personal file to the receiving setting or school.

Legal framework

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Children Act (1989)

Further guidance

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners (HM Government 2015)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government 2018)

Complaints Policy

If a parent/carer has an issue either involving their individual child or The Ark as a whole, they should in the first instance raise the issue with the Manager. If the parent/carer feels unable or unwilling to raise the matter in this way, they can approach either:

- the Parent Representative on the Management Committee,
- the chairperson or other members of the Management Committee

In circumstances where the parent/carer feels it is not appropriate to approach either of the above, they should contact via enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or telephone Ofsted on 0300 123 4666

In the first instance every effort will be made to resolve any matters within The Ark.

If a formal complaint is received in writing then the issues raised will be dealt with within the following appropriate framework and a record of the complaint and outcome will be kept. The Ark will endeavour to resolve formal complaints within 28 days.

- A matter relating to an individual child should be discussed between the parent/carer and the Manager
- Should the matter not be resolved, the issue will be brought to the attention of the Management Committee. A member of the Committee will meet with all parties involved
If the matter raised concerns a general or policy issue, it should first be raised with the Manager, who will report it to the Management Committee for consideration
- Should an approach on general or policy matters be made via the Parent Representative or members it will be reported to the Management Committee for consideration
- Should the matter remain unresolved following the above procedures it should be referred to a specially convened panel consisting of a member of the Management Committee, the Manager, and an independent expert (e.g. a representative of the Dorset Early Years Team if appropriate). The complaint should be submitted in writing to the panel and the person who has complained should be given the opportunity to address the panel with any additional information. The panel may also require others to submit written information for consideration

During this process all parties involved will be kept informed of progress and the group will inform Ofsted of the outcome if they have been involved. A record of all complaints received is available on request for parents/carers.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted if you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we handle your data, please refer to the Privacy Notice given to you when you registered your child at The Ark. The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or ico.org.uk

Confidentiality and client access to records

Policy statement

'Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.'

Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HMG 2018)

In The Ark, staff and managers can be said to have a 'confidential relationship' with families. It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education in our setting. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. We have record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; the means that we use to store and share that information takes place within the framework of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

Confidentiality procedures

- Most things that happen between the family, the child and the staff are confidential to The Ark. In exceptional circumstances information is shared, for example with other professionals or possibly social care or the police.
- Information shared with other agencies is done in line with our Information Sharing Policy.
- We always check whether parents regard the information they share with us to be confidential or not.
- Some parents may share information about themselves with other parents as well as with our staff; we cannot be held responsible if information is shared by those parents whom the person has 'confided' in.
- Information shared between parents in a discussion or training group is usually bound by a shared agreement that the information is confidential to the group and not discussed outside of it. We are not responsible should that confidentiality be breached by participants.
- We inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep (see our Children's Records Policy and Privacy Notice) - for example with regard to any injuries, concerns or changes in relation to the child or the family, any discussions with parents on sensitive matters, any records we are obliged to keep regarding action taken in respect of child protection and any contact and correspondence with external agencies in relation to their child.
- We keep all records securely (see our Children's Records Policy and Privacy Notice).
- Information is kept in a manual file, and electronically. Our staff may also use a computer to type reports, or letters. Where this is the case, the typed document is kept on a password protected computer.
- Our staff discuss children's general progress and wellbeing together in meetings, but more sensitive information is restricted to our manager and the child's key person, and is shared with other staff on a need to know basis.
- We do not discuss children with staff who are not involved in the child's care, nor with other parents or anyone else outside of the setting.
- Our discussions with other professionals take place within a professional framework and not on an informal or ad-hoc basis.
- Where third parties share information about an individual with us our staff and managers check if it is confidential, both in terms of the party sharing the information and of the person whom the information concerns.

Client access to records procedures

Parents may request access to any confidential records we hold on their child and family following the procedure below:

- The parent is the 'subject' of the file in the case where a child is too young to give 'informed consent' and has a right to see information that The Ark has compiled on them.
- Any request to see the child's personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the manager.
- We will acknowledge the request in writing, informing the parent that an arrangement will be made for him/her to see the file contents, subject to third party consent.
- Our written acknowledgement will allow one calendar month for the file to be made ready.
- A fee may be charged for repeated requests, or where a request requires excessive administration to fulfil.
- The manager informs her line manager and legal advice may be sought before sharing a file.
- The manager goes through the file with their line manager and ensures that all documents have been filed correctly, that entries are in date order and that there are no missing pages. They note any information, entry or correspondence or other document which mentions a third party.
- We write to each of those individuals explaining that the subject has requested sight of the file, which contains a reference to them, stating what this is.
- They are asked to reply in writing to the manager giving or refusing consent for disclosure of that material.
- We keep copies of these letters and their replies on the child's file.
- 'Third parties' include each family member noted on the file; so where there are separate entries pertaining to each parent, step parent, grandparent etc. We will write to each of them to request third party consent.
- Third parties also include workers from any other agency, including children's social care and the health authority for example. Agencies will normally refuse consent to share information, preferring instead for the parent to be redirected to those agencies for a request to see their file held by that agency.
- Members of our staff should also be written to, but we reserve the right under the legislation to override a refusal for consent or to just delete the name of the staff member and not the information. We may grant refusal if the member of staff has provided information that could be considered 'sensitive' and the staff member may be in danger if that information is disclosed; or if that information is the basis of a police investigation. However, if the information is not sensitive, then it is not in our interest to withhold that information from a parent. In each case this should be discussed with members of staff and decisions recorded.
- When we have received all the consents/refusals the manager will take a photocopy of the complete file. On the copy of the file, the manager will remove any information that a third party has refused consent for us to disclose and blank out any references to the third party, and any information they have added to the file, using a thick marker pen.
- The copy file is then checked by the line manager and legal advisors to verify that the file has been prepared appropriately.
- What remains is the information recorded by the setting, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
- We will photocopy the 'clean copy' again and collate it for the parent to see.
- The manager will inform the parent that the file is now ready and will invite him/ her to make an appointment to view it.
- The manager will meet with the parent to go through the file, explaining the process as well as what the content of the file records about the child and the work that has been done. Only the person(s) with parental responsibility can attend that meeting, or the parent's legal representative or interpreter.
- The parent may take a copy of the prepared file away; but, to ensure it is properly explained to and understood by the parent, we never hand it over without discussion.
- It is an offence to remove material that is controversial or to rewrite records to make them more acceptable. Our recording procedures and guidelines ensure that the material reflects an accurate and non-judgemental account of the work we have done with the family.

- If a parent feels aggrieved about any entry in the file, or the resulting outcome, then we refer the parent to our complaints procedure.
- The law requires that the information we hold must be held for a legitimate reason and must be accurate (see our Privacy Notice). If a parent says that the information we hold is inaccurate, then the parent has a right to request for it to be changed. However, this only pertains to factual inaccuracies. Where the disputed entry is a matter of opinion, professional judgement, or represents a different view of the matter than that held by the parent, we retain the right not to change that entry, but we can record the parent's view of the matter. In most cases, we would have given a parent the opportunity at the time to state their side of the matter, and it would have been recorded there and then.
- If there are any controversial aspects of the content of a child's file, we must seek legal advice. This might be where there is a court case between parents, where social care or the police may be considering legal action, or where a case has already completed and an appeal process is underway.
- We never 'under-record' for fear of the parent seeing, nor do we make 'personal notes' elsewhere.
- Telephone advice regarding general queries may be made to The Information Commissioner's Office Helpline 0303 123 1113.
- All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of The Ark, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on Safeguarding Children and Child Protection.

Legal framework

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

Contingency Policy/Procedure

Evacuation:

In the event of fire, flood or any other emergency requiring evacuation, all children will be escorted to the Community Centre, which is located on the recreation field adjacent to The Ark.

The Manager or, in her absence, the Deputy Manager or a senior member of staff, will take with them the register, parent/guardian contact list and The Ark mobile phone. On arrival at the Community Centre all children will be checked off against the register, and parents/carers contacted by telephone to arrange for them to collect their children as soon as possible. If the premises continue to be unusable, The Ark will endeavour to provide childcare in temporary premises for working parents.

Major Staff Absences:

In the event of major staff absences, e.g. due to a sickness epidemic, the Manager, or, in her absence, the deputy Manager, will call on other members of staff not normally working at that particular time, to stand in. If this does not produce enough staff to operate normally, children will be turned away on arrival, unless sufficient parents/carers volunteer to stay and help. If several staff fall sick, or are otherwise forced to leave during the course of a day, parents/carers will be contacted by telephone to arrange to collect their children as soon as possible. Priority will be given to those children of working parents, vulnerable children and children with siblings at St Nicholas School.

Extreme Weather/Loss of Utilities/Fire/Flood:

The Ark will close in line with St. Nicholas School. If The Ark is unable to open due to extreme weather or any other reasons, an announcement regarding closure will be made on local radio stations Heart FM and Wessex FM and the Dorset Council website

[Closed Schools in Dorset - Dorset Council](https://mapping.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/closedservices/Service/schools)

<https://mapping.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/closedservices/Service/schools>

At least one member of staff will endeavour to remain on the premises until all parents of children due to attend that day have been contacted or met in order to advise them not to attend. Parents will not be charged if The Ark closes. If staff cannot get to work on time, or at all, or choose to leave early, due to adverse weather conditions then: Staff must take the time as unpaid leave, or, if preferred, as annual leave. If the closure is due to loss of utilities, fire or flood, then The Ark's insurance policy will cover any loss of income. Therefore staff will be paid as normal and would be expected to stay away from the premises.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy and Procedure

The Ark's main priority at this current time is to ensure the health and safety of all children, their families, carers, staff and volunteers who attend The Ark. This policy will encourage and promote a healthy hygienic environment to minimise the spread of infection for all the children in our care

The Ark staff will:

Advise children, staff and other adults do not come into The Ark if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have tested positive. And anyone developing those symptoms during the day will be advised to go home

- ensure that all adults and children clean their hands on arrival at The Ark, and wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry them thoroughly before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
- encourage children to learn and practise these habits through games, songs and repetition
- help children who have trouble cleaning their hands independently
- encourage children not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose
- where possible, ventilate all spaces well, using natural ventilation, opening windows and propping doors open, and where safe to do so, limit use of door handles
- use outside space for outdoor education, when possible, as this can limit transmission and more easily allow for distance between children and staff
- clean and disinfect shared materials and surfaces frequently
- clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- ensure that bins for tissues are emptied throughout the day
- introduce enhanced cleaning, including regularly cleaning frequently touched surfaces using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- where necessary, ensure staff wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Procedure to follow in response to any infection

If anyone in The Ark becomes unwell with a new, persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia) they will be advised to go home.

In an emergency situation staff should call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk - anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any children who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate. However, they are advised to stay at home and arrange for a test if: they develop symptoms themselves; the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive.

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell - the area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with normal household disinfectant after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people; see the guidance on [cleaning of non-healthcare settings outside the home](#)

Delivery & Collection of Children and Lost Children

All parents must complete an admission form before their child starts at The Ark giving two/three emergency contact telephone numbers and the names of people allowed to collect their child/ren, which must be kept up to date. Parents/carers must sign the register on delivery and collection every time and must notify the staff if someone different is to collect. Staff will ask all unknown people to verify their identity before allowing children to leave with them. Children will not be allowed to leave the premises with anyone who is unauthorised. The parent will be contacted by telephone if any unauthorised person attempts to collect a child and if any aggression is displayed on refusal by The Ark staff to release a child, the police will be called.

If it is deemed unsafe for a child (ren) to be taken away from The Ark (e.g. parent/carer under the influence of alcohol, unstable state of mind), then contact will, in the first instance, be made with the next person on the contact list. If this is unsuccessful, contact will be made with the police and social services. (See also Parental Agreement re Late Collection fees)

Relationship breakdown of parents / guardians

The Ark has a clearly defined procedure, which is followed in the event of the relationship between a child's parents or guardians breaking down.

- Unless there is a court order, of which The Ark must have a copy, preventing one parent's contact to the child we are unable to legally deny access.
- Should a parent of concern ask to access their child, we will contact the first parent to come to The Ark as soon as possible, explaining this procedure and asking the second parent to wait.
- If there is concern about violent or aggressive behaviour from either parent we will seek advice from the police and follow their recommendations.

It is essential that children be collected promptly after each session. In the unlikely event that a parent is more than a quarter of an hour late, all contact telephone numbers will be tried. In the case of no response the Manager may contact Social Services' Out of Hours Service (01202 228866).

Updating information on the registration form: it is essential this important information is kept up to date, (as stated in the Parental Agreement).

Therefore Parents must inform The Ark in writing immediately of any important changes to:-

- domestic arrangements which could affect collection of the child e.g. a court order in respect of the residence of the child or who the child is able to have contact with.

- parental responsibility agreement
- home/ work addresses and telephone numbers

Lost Children Policy

Lost Children Procedure

Children's safety is The Ark's highest priority, both on and off the premises. The security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, The Ark's missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures:

Child going missing from the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the manager will be informed.
- The register will be checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- Doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, the manager will call the police immediately and report the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parent(s) are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing will be given to the police.
- The manager will talk to staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and will record this.
- The manager will contact the chairperson to report the incident. The chairperson will carry out an investigation as soon as possible.

Child going missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member will search the immediate vicinity, but will not search beyond that.
- The senior staff member on the outing will contact the police to report that child as missing.
- The manager will be contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident will be recorded.
- The manager will contact the parent(s).
- The Ark's staff will take the remaining children back to the mini bus or setting as soon as possible.
- Depending on the advice of the police, the senior member of staff, or the manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The manager will contact the chairperson to report the incident. The chairperson will carry out an investigation as soon as possible.
- Staff will keep calm and will not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted will be informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The chairperson will carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff and volunteers who were present.
- The manager, together with a representative of our committee will speak with the parent(s) and will explain the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with The Ark and/or Ofsted.

Each member of staff present will write an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the incident.
- Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.

- Which staff/children were in The Ark, or on the outing, and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
- When the child was last seen in The Ark, or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- What has taken place in The Ark or on the outing since the child went missing.
- The report will be counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted will be advised.
- The insurance provider will be informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- Staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The manager will ensure that any staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the manager and the other should be the chairperson or another representative of the management committee. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff will not be tolerated, and the police will be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly, but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- The Ark's staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press and The Ark's confidentiality policy must be adhered to at all times.

Employment, Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy

Good practice and equality of opportunity are integral to the Ark's employment, recruitment and selection policy. This policy will at all times be applied in accordance with the Ark's Equal Opportunities Policy on page 18.

Employment and Training

The Ark is committed to equality of opportunity in its recruitment and employment practices and aims to ensure that employment and progression within its organisation are determined solely by application of objective criteria and personal merit. No job applicant, trainee applicant, employee, or trainee will be treated less favourably than another. Recruitment, selection, employment procedures and practice will be kept under review to ensure that individuals are recruited, selected, trained and promoted on the basis of their ability, merits and the requirements of the job. The Equal Opportunity Monitoring Forms received from each job applicant will be reviewed annually with this policy to help ensure compliance.

The Ark's aim is to create a workplace in which individual differences and contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.

We aim to provide a working environment free from harassment and bullying (please see our separate Bullying and Harassment policy).

All employees will be given guidance on the Bullying and Harassment policy during their induction, and any breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

For more detailed guidance on the above you can contact ACAS on 0845 7474747 or visit www.acas.org.uk.

Recruitment and Selection

Merit, competence and potential will be the basis for all employment decisions. From this, it follows that the key principles of equity, fair treatment, consistency, transparency, legality and effective planning must underpin all recruitment and selection.

We welcome applications from a wide range of candidates based on their skills, qualifications and experience. No job applicant, trainee applicant, employee or trainee will be treated less favourably than another. All applicant information will be retained for 6 months stored in a locked filing cabinet in line with GDPR.

If appropriate checks reveal that a person has a previous conviction, The Ark will comply with the DBS Code of Practice. We will consider all of the circumstances before making a recruitment decision including our duties under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and the Rehabilitation of offenders Act 1974, and the Equality Act 2010.

Advertising

The Ark will ensure that job vacancies are advertised in a wide variety of places within the local community and press to attract applicants from all of the community. Wording of the advertisement will communicate clearly the specific requirements and will not use discriminatory language, unnecessary jargon or superfluous details.

Interviewing

The Ark will shortlist candidates against the essential criteria on the job specification. Those that match the criteria will be invited to attend an interview. Reasonable adjustments will be provided either before and/or at interview for candidates that request this. The Ark will avoid making biased judgements and select the best candidate for the job, based on the recommendations from the interview panel.

Employing Staff

The Ark will instigate checks and references, notifying Ofsted about staff appointments and prepare an induction package. All staff are Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked and then registered to the update facility.

Reviewing the policy

Recruitment, selection, employment procedures and practice will be kept under review annually to ensure that individuals are recruited, selected, trained and promoted on the basis of their abilities, merits and the requirements of the job.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

We will:

- Assess the vacancy and compile the job description and person specification for the position
- Advertise and shortlist applicants against the person specification
- Interview for the vacancy in line with the organisations recruitment and selection policy.
- Ensure the applicant has the relevant training, qualifications and experience.
- Apply for references, personal references and health reports. These may be verified over the phone.
- References obtained must contain factual information on the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- Notify Ofsted and undertake DBS checks.
- Check applicants' identity with appropriate documents, e.g., Birth Certificate, Passport, recent (last 3 months) utility bill to confirm address.
- Establish applicant's identity, if the name has changed e.g., Marriage Certificate, divorce details, deed poll documentation
- Obtain information regarding any social work involvement with applicants, by following Dorset Council's standard procedure

We will confirm that the person is eligible to work in the UK by checking one of the following:-

- National Insurance Number or NI card (not a temporary card)
- P45, P46, P60
- Work permit
- Evidence, such as a letter from the Home Office, confirming someone's right to live in the UK and take employment
- A full British passport or another passport with a stamp confirming the holders right of abode in the UK
- A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen
- A birth certificate issued in UK or Republic of Ireland
- A passport or identity card confirming someone is a citizen of the European Economic Area

The Ark will:

- Where practical, await clearance from the registering authority and have copies of the relevant references, before setting the start date.
- Ensure the new employee is aware of the 13 week probationary period and manner of review during this time.

Prepare an induction programme for the new staff member.

Equal Opportunities Policy

The Ark will comply with the Equality Act 2010.

This policy sets out The Ark's approach to equality and diversity. The Ark is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises the value that different backgrounds and experience can bring. We aim to do this in the way that we recruit, support and manage our staff, in the way that we deliver our service and as role models for the children attending The Ark.

The Ark is committed to equality of opportunity and recognises that people are subject to discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, caring responsibilities, social and economic deprivation, political beliefs, employment status, union membership, No job applicant, employee, trainee, volunteer, member or service user receives less favourable treatment on any of these issues set out above. It is The Ark's intention to take positive action to ensure that its Equal Opportunities Policy is implemented. The manager is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy. The Ark Trustees and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

We aim to provide a secure and accessible environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued. We aim to include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity. We aim to provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people.

We will:

- Acknowledge and value equally each child's individual stage, culture, religion, language, racial background, and family group
- Actively seek to combat sexism and promote equal opportunities for girls and boys, men and women
- Value the diversity of family lifestyles
- Encourage equality of opportunity for children with special needs and their families
- Achieve and maintain, within the framework of the law, a workforce which represents the community.

To achieve the above we will:

- Plan our programme to extend the children's experience and knowledge of other cultures, language, celebrations and festivals
- Ensure that the activities reflect the diversity of our society, not just The Ark
- Encourage children to explore in a positive way the differences and diversity of people ensuring that representatives of people are accurate and realistic
- Positively challenge stereotypes and assumptions – racist, sexist or concerning disabilities
- Enable adults with disabilities to take part in The Ark's activities where it is safe and reasonable to so do
- Encourage staff to report any incident of inappropriate discriminatory practice to the Manager who will speak to the person(s) involved and record/monitor and then take appropriate action.

E-Safety Policy

This E-Safety Policy operates under the umbrella of the Safeguarding Policy in relation to electronic communication of all types. We will follow advice from the Dorset Safeguarding Board.

The internet is now regarded as an essential resource to support learning, and computer skills are vital to accessing life-long learning and employment. It is becoming as commonplace as the telephone or television, but unmediated access to the internet brings with it the possibility of placing children in embarrassing, inappropriate or even dangerous situations. It is important for children to learn to be 'e-safe' from an early age and The Ark aims to play its part in this process. Children are encouraged to draw to an adult's attention anything on the internet which concerns them.

In line with other safeguarding policies, The Ark will provide children with as safe an internet environment as possible and teach them to be aware of and respond responsibly to possible risks.

Use of the internet

Staff will guide children in online activities in order to enhance children's learning experiences, for example, by looking at websites related to topics they have been discussing. The internet enables access to a vast array of libraries, databases and other resources, and therefore The Ark believes that the benefits of children using the internet outweigh any disadvantages.

The Ark website

Photographs will only be displayed on our website if parental permission has been obtained. Children's names will not be used on the website particularly in association with photographs. The point of contact on the website is The Ark's address, email and telephone number.

Mobile Phones/Electronic gadgets

The taking of photographs on mobile phones/electronic devices with imaging & sharing capabilities is strictly prohibited anywhere at The Ark, except upon The Ark's own Ipad's for children's developmental records. Staff must leave their mobile phones in the office or lockers in the staff room.

Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

Health and Safety Policy

The Trustees of The Ark acknowledge their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have produced the following Health and Safety statement:

The Trustees will ensure as far as practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all staff, students and volunteers and all persons within the premises for which the Trustees are responsible.

Safety Procedure

The nominated Health and Safety officer is Sarah McNab and the nominated Health and Safety Trustee is Florence Horsey.

The nominated Health and Safety officer will:

- Carry out a Risk Assessment annually, but action points will be reviewed termly to ensure target dates have been achieved, and a written record of any action required will be made.
- Be responsible for reporting to North Dorset District Council under the duties imposed by The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) contact phone number 0845 3009923
-

Security procedure

The building can only be accessed by entering a code in the external keypad adjacent to the main entrance, or by release of the lock from inside. The Ark staff will let parents and visitors into the building, and parents are requested not to let others in, even if those others are known to them. (See Parental Agreement.) Other adults authorised by parents to collect children should be recorded in the children's Admission Forms, and staff should be informed whenever anybody other than the regular person(s) are to collect a child. Visitors must sign in on arrival and out on departure. ID will be checked by staff.

Fire Policy

We aim to ensure the safety of staff and children against the risk of fire and will do all in our power to prevent such an occurrence.

Fire Procedure

The nominated Fire Officer is Sarah McNab.

The nominated Fire Officer will ensure:

- Fire drills are carried out every 6 weeks (1/2 termly)
- The nominated Fire Officer from County Hall regularly checks smoke detectors and fire control equipment and record this in a logbook
- Weekly tests on alarms are carried out by St Nicholas School Fire Warden
- The procedure to be followed in the event of a fire is displayed where staff, parents and children can read it

No Smoking Procedure

Smoking is prohibited on the premises, including all outside areas.

Health Policy

The Ark provides a healthy and safe environment for the children and for the staff to work in. The Ark will do all in its power to prevent the spread of infection and to promote good health.

Health Procedure

Infection can spread rapidly, not only amongst children, but also staff. Parents are required to keep their children at home if they have any infection and to inform the Manager as to the nature of the infection to enable other parents to be alerted. Any child who is obviously unwell on arrival will not be accepted. If a child becomes unwell during the course of the day the parent/carer will be contacted and, if necessary, asked to collect. If The Ark is unable to contact the parent/carer personally, the other numbers that have been given as alternatives will be telephoned and the child will be made as comfortable as possible until somebody is able to collect them. **It is therefore essential that our emergency contact numbers are kept up to date by parents/carers.**

The following procedures and exclusion periods, where specified, which follow Department of Health guidance, must be adhered to:

- **Gastric Upsets – Excluded until 48 hours after the last attack of diarrhoea or sickness**
- **High Temperature/Throat Infections – Excluded until 24 Hours after the temperature has returned to normal without medication.**
- **Head Lice – All parents are requested to check their child's head weekly and to treat accordingly**
- **Impetigo – Excluded until all lesions crusted or healed**
- **Chicken Pox – Minimum period of exclusion is 5 days after the onset of the rash**
- **Verruca – Children do not need to be excluded, but the verruca must be covered with a rubber sock, waterproof plaster or clear nail varnish when the foot is going to become wet or damp**
- **Measles – Minimum period of exclusion is 5 days from the onset of rash**
- **Meningitis – Children can return to the nursery as soon as they feel well enough**
- **Mumps - Minimum period of exclusion is 5 days following onset of swelling to glands**
- **Whooping Cough - Children can return to the nursery 5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days from onset of illness if there is no antibiotic treatment required**
- **German Measles – Minimum period of exclusion is 5 days from the onset of rash. It is essential to report German Measles as this can be extremely harmful to expectant mothers**

All infectious illnesses must be reported to the Manager who will advise on the exclusion period necessary, and inform other parents. (This also applies to all staff) If you would like more information on symptoms and incubation periods of any infectious illness please speak to staff. In case of an emergency The Ark reserves the right to remove a child to hospital. Please refer to the Parental Agreement.

Medicines Procedure

We will administer medicine to control the effects of a non-serious illness or where a doctor has prescribed medication but only after receiving prior written instructions and consent from the parent. If your child has been prescribed an antibiotic they have **not** had before-he/she should not attend until 24 hours after the first dose was administered to ensure there is no allergic reaction. Each time medication is given to a child a written record will be kept of this together with a witness signature. Parents/carers will be asked to sign this record on collection of a child.

Emergency Medication

Upon admission Parents will be asked to provide a sachet of their preferred paracetamol suspension or ibuprofen, this will only be administered to your child by qualified Nursery Staff for a high temperature whilst waiting for your child to be collected. In the event of a medical emergency and with prior written consent the agreed medicine will be administered whilst your child is awaiting collection.

First Aid Policy

We aim to minimise any pain or discomfort suffered by a child or member of staff whilst in our care and will do all in our power to make them comfortable as quickly as possible.

First Aid Procedure

The appointed persons for First Aid are Sarah McNab and Natasha Pike.

First Aiders will attend an appropriate course every 3 years so as to ensure they remain up-to date on First Aid methods. There is at least one First Aider per room. An appointed person for First Aid will ensure a written note is made of any accidents in the accident book and that parents sign against this when collecting children to confirm they have been informed. Accident books are stored in the office. Parents will be requested to provide written details of any illnesses or conditions, which the children suffer on a permanent basis, together with appropriate medication and instructions on how to administer e.g. asthma inhalers. Parents will be requested to provide a list of any medications to which the child is allergic.

Hygiene Policy

We aim to provide a clean and hygienic environment for the children and staff, which minimises the spread of infection.

Hygiene/Nappy changing Procedure

- When changing babies'/children's nappies or soiled garments, staff will wear disposable aprons and gloves. Disposable paper roll will be used to cover the changing mat
- Soiled nappies, gloves etc will be placed directly into nappy sacks
- Each baby or child's own nappies, wipes and creams will be used
- After each use changing mats will be cleaned with antibacterial spray
- All nappy sacks will be placed in the nappy bin
- Indoor nappy bins will be emptied daily, into the outdoor clinical waste bins
- Children's nappy changes will be recorded either in their individual books, or on the Nappy Changing/Toileting Record Sheet
- Children who are potty training will be regularly toileted, and this will be recorded on the Nappy Changing/Toileting Record Sheet
- Potties will be cleaned after each use, washing in the sluice then spraying with antibacterial solution and wiping clean using disposable paper
- Toilets will be checked regularly and cleaned using disposable paper. Records of times will be recorded on the daily risk assessment sheets
- Staff and children will wash their hands after going to the toilet, and before handling food
- Staff will wash hands after wiping babies' or children's noses
- Regular checks will be carried out on any sandpits and the sand changed when appropriate
- A cleaning routine will be followed throughout the day to ensure the premises and equipment are kept hygienic.

Intimate Care Policy and Procedure

Intimate care involves areas of personal care, which most people normally do for themselves but some are unable to do because of developmental stage, impairment or disability. We provide intimate care to babies and children with a special need, which acknowledges the responsibilities and protects the rights of everyone involved. We believe that children have the right to be treated with sensitivity and respect, and in such a way that their experience of intimate care is a positive one. We acknowledge that it is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. We also believe that every child should be encouraged to have a positive image of their own body. We provide guidance to staff, in order to safeguard children and protect the rights and well-being of children.

Procedure

We will liaise closely with parents/carers of children with special needs to obtain as much information as possible in order to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible. We will endeavour to take all of their individual concerns into account. We are conscious that this is a sensitive issue and will ensure all of our staff are aware of our confidentiality policy. Parents have a responsibility to advise staff of the intimate care needs of their baby/child. We believe that information on intimate care should only be communicated by sealed letter, personal contact or telephone between parents/carers and the member of staff concerned.

- We will ensure that all staff are familiar with the normal precautions for avoiding infection and that they are aware of our hygiene policy and procedure
- We will encourage our staff to take part in any appropriate training, whether that is internal or external training, and we will provide supervision and induction of all staff
- We will normally ensure that intimate care of a child takes place within sight of another member of staff
- We will endeavour to ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation when carrying out intimate care.
- We will allow the child to care for themselves as far as they are able, and encourage our staff to promote appropriate use of toilets and independence
- We will encourage children to manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing and undressing and using the toilet independently
- We will be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions, and provide reassurance whenever this is required
- The above policy will be reviewed annually and the procedure monitored and evaluated

Lockdown Policy and Procedure

In the event of an incident, 'lockdown' of a building or buildings is an emergency procedure to secure and protect occupants near an immediate threat very quickly. Lockdown procedure restricts unauthorised access quickly, prevents staff and children from moving towards danger, and delays the identified risk from entering the building. Examples of incidents requiring lockdown are:

- An intruder on the school's site or nearby
- A local incident, such as a civil disturbance or risk of air pollution
- A fire adjacent to the school
- A dangerous dog or another animal which is nearby
- A firearms or weapons attack.

Procedure

In the event that The Ark needs to be locked down, the manager will walk through The Ark blowing a whistle in short, sharp blasts. When you hear this signal: bring children who are outside into The Ark's building quickly. Stay calm.

Follow the **CLOSE** procedure

Close all windows and doors

Lock up

Out of sight and minimise movement

Stay silent and avoid drawing any attention

Endure. Be aware that you may be in lockdown for some time.

- Keep children in their rooms
- Stay away from windows and doors.
- Stay below window level and keep calm
- Check/close/lock any external doors, windows in your room
- Close blinds
- Check your register and notify the manager immediately of any missing children, encourage children to remain calm
- Once in lockdown, stay in your rooms and await further instructions
- If the building needs to be evacuated the fire alarm will be sounded. Follow usual fire procedures and evacuate to the main school playground.
- Contact the emergency services on 999 if necessary
- Notify parents by email
- As soon as the emergency services arrive staff must comply with their instructions at all times.
- **Remain alert**
- Do NOT open the door once it has been secured until you are officially advised 'all clear' or are certain it is emergency services at the door.
- Do NOT call 999 again unless you have immediate concern for your safety, the safety of others, or feel you have critical information.

Following lockdown

- Co-operate with the emergency services to help in an orderly evacuation.
- Ensure you have the register and children's details with you.
- Any staff or children who have witnessed an attack or incident will need to tell the police what they saw.
- The police may require other individuals to remain available for questioning.

Managing parents

Parents will be informed that The Ark has a lockdown procedure. Parents will be given enough information to reassure them. Explain that The Ark understands their concerns for their children's welfare and is doing everything possible to ensure their children's safety. The Ark's lockdown procedure will be published and made available on our website. Parents should be requested not to contact The Ark. Contacting The Ark will block the telephone lines when they are needed to communicate with the outside world. Children will not be released to parents during a lockdown. Finally, parents should wait for The Ark to contact them when it is safe to collect their children and from where this will be; parents should also be made aware of what will happen if the lockdown continues beyond The Ark's normal hours.

Staff must rehearse 'lockdown procedures with children in an age appropriate way, as they would rehearse fire evacuation. Lockdown must be rehearsed and recorded termly.

Safer Eating and Nutrition Policy

We will promote healthy eating within The Ark through projects we do with the children, through communication with the children's parents/carers and the structure of the day. We are committed to equality of opportunity (please see our Equal Opportunities policy), and plan our programme to extend the children's experience and knowledge of other cultures, celebrations and festivals, to include the different foods eaten. We will try to make the children aware of the different food groups and the need for a balanced diet through play and discussion. Our admission form, which will be completed by parents in respect of every child, asks the parents to record if the child suffers from any allergies (including food intolerance) and whether the child has any special dietary/health requirements (e.g. vegetarian, religious, cultural, medical).

We will provide healthy snacks and milk for the children at snack time and water is available for whenever the children are thirsty (the children are made fully aware of this when they join us.) On special occasions such as birthdays, cake may be made available. All meals are home cooked using locally sourced fresh ingredients where possible. No artificial colours flavours or preservatives are used in foods. No salt is added during cooking. All meat is from J Mato & Son Ltd butchers shop in Blandford.

We request that parents support us in our healthy eating aims when providing packed lunches for their children in the following ways:

- Lunch boxes must be clean, plastic and clearly named, inside and out. They should contain a cool pack to keep food cool. The Ark does not have the refrigeration capacity for packed lunches
- Drinks should be packed in a non-breakable container with the child's name on it. Drinks bottles should only contain water and not juice and should be taken home daily to be cleaned.
- Foods such as crisps, chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks should be avoided, as should any other foods with high levels of additives/colourings as some children are highly sensitive to these ingredients which can severely affect their behaviour and/or make them sick.
- Cylindrical food such as grapes, blueberries or sausages should be cut in half lengthways.
- Foods with a **nut** and **Kiwi** content should be avoided as children with a severe allergy to nuts/Kiwi can suffer extreme reactions even via indirect contact
- Fruit or vegetable and dairy snacks are encouraged

We are, of course, conscious of parental choice and where possible will comply with parent's wishes regarding the above.

We will make snacks and meals sociable occasions with the children sitting down together in small groups. We will also ask our staff when eating with the children to adhere to this policy. We will endeavour to inform parents how well children having hot meals provided by The Ark have eaten.

Nutrition Procedure

- All staff will be required to complete a Foundation Food Hygiene course
- All staff on duty at mealtimes/snack times will hold a current Paediatric First Aid certificate including the use of Adrenaline Auto Injectors and will sit facing the children at the table.
- Staff and children will wash hands before touching food
- Children will not swap food with others in case of food allergies, intolerances or dietary restrictions
- Food brought in to share on special occasions such as birthdays must be shop bought in original packaging and not home-made.
- Water will be available for each individual child's needs
- Kitchens will be kept clean and tidy, and rubbish bins will be emptied regularly
- For those having packed lunch, any uneaten food will be left in the children's lunch boxes in order that parents can then see what the child has or has not eaten.
- Any incidents of choking that requires intervention will be recorded and parents made aware. These will be periodically reviewed and the appropriate action taken to address any identified concerns.

Outings and Events Policy and Procedure

The Ark will provide outings and events in a safe, well planned and organised manner, which provides opportunities for children to learn through play.

- The Ark will consult with children, parents/carers and staff before planning an event or outing
- The children's age, ability and stage of development will be considered when organising an event
- Health and Safety, including staff ratios, will be maintained during the event
- The Ark will carry out a risk assessment identifying potential hazards on the journey and at the location
- Detailed information about the event will be distributed to all parents/carers
- The organisation will ensure that all necessary consent forms and relevant documentation are completed and returned to The Ark
- If appropriate, the organisers may do a pre-visit to the location
- The Ark will ensure that all staff involved has the appropriate experience to organise an event.

Parent Partnership Policy

The Ark is committed to a genuine and meaningful partnership with the parents/carers of children in our care, and recognises that working in partnership with parents is of major importance in enabling The Ark to provide a caring and stable environment for the children. We aim to form a good relationship with parents so that information regarding their children (be it developmental, social or health related) can be exchanged easily and comfortably between The Ark staff and parents. Information about a child and his or her family is kept confidential within The Ark. We adhere to the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) when collecting and processing information about you and your child. We explain how your data is processed, collected, kept up-to-date in our Privacy Notice which is given to you at the point of registration. We provide you with a privacy notice that details how and why we process your personal information. We will never share your data with any organisation to use for their own purposes, unless you explicitly authorise us to do so.

The exception to this is where there is cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where there are concerns regarding child's development that need to be shared with another agency. Moreover, this partnership policy reflects the duty on The Ark and its staff to protect the rights and promote the interests of those who use The Ark. This is manifested in different ways:

The Management and Running of The Ark:

- The Ark is a charitable company limited by guarantee, managed by a voluntary Board of Directors/Trustees, and is run by staff with support from the Board of Directors/Trustees.
- Alongside the staff who play a vital role, the Board of Directors/Trustees has overall responsibility for everything The Ark does and is primarily drawn from parents/grandparents who are entitled and encouraged to put themselves forward for election to the Board of Directors/Trustees at the Annual General Meeting.
- Directors/Trustees are elected at this meeting (although vacancies may be filled throughout the year). Trustee meetings take place regularly throughout the year. The Ark circulates several newsletters each year to all parents/carers, with a minimum of one per term.

Understanding of, and Involvement in, Life at The Ark

To familiarise children with the setting before they start, we hold an induction/familiarisation visit for each child to meet staff and children.

Offering Places, Settling In and Welcoming Families

- A welcome pack is circulated to all parents/carers before their child starts. It includes a number of forms (including a Parental Agreement Form) and policies to enable families to become familiar with The Ark's practices and procedures
- Information provided by parents about their children will be kept confidential and treated on a strict need to know basis. Parents are requested to inform staff of any changes to personal circumstances which may have an effect upon a child, emotional or otherwise e.g. bereavement, separation or illness in the family, change of address
- Parents/carers are welcome to stay with their child for an hour to help them settle into The Ark.
- If there are any concerns about a child's well-being during the day every effort will be made to contact parents or their emergency contact

The Ark Activities, Parental Involvement and Your Child

- A member of staff is always available, either informally or by appointment, to discuss any concerns or queries you may have
- We hold a Parent Consultation each year at which you can discuss your child's progress with staff
- The plans for each of the nursery rooms are displayed on their respective doors

- The Ark issues regular newsletters (at least one a term) to keep you informed of curricular themes and activities in The Ark. Activity/topic plans will be on show in The Ark for parents to view/read. Information regarding children's activities throughout the day is always available to parents on a daily basis either verbally, in writing in the child's own book or through Tapestry, which is an online journal. Parents/carers will be given details of how to login to Tapestry using their unique password when their child starts attending The Ark. We also have our own website at www.thearkchildokeford.co.uk on which all our term dates and special events are displayed and from which you can download our prospectus and policies.
- Annual social events - the Christmas Nativity and fundraising events - are a further opportunity for home-nursery links to be forged.

Record Keeping and Assessment

- Every child is unique, has different interests and develops at different rates. Each child is assigned a key worker who regularly observes, makes notes, and takes photographs and occasionally videos. The observations are used to plan learning experiences to enable each child to develop their potential
- Records are kept of the children's development; each child has their own file, in which examples of their drawings, paintings and other achievements recorded by photographs are kept. The children are able to look at these whenever they like and parents are also welcome to look at any time. Records are stored securely on the online Tapestry website.
- If a child attends another setting or a child minder, we will arrange for his/her key worker to visit. This begins the process of information sharing about children's development

Policies and Procedures and Paperwork

- We have a number of policies to which we would especially like to draw to your attention: this Partnership with Parents Policy; the Behaviour Management Policy; the Safeguarding Children Policy; the Complaints Policy. These will be included in the Welcome Pack or circulated to parents whenever a policy changes.
- Parents/carers have the opportunity to complete formal Parental Questionnaires once per year. Questionnaire comments will be considered in forward-planning for The Ark. However, we welcome parent comment and suggestions all year round.

The Wider Community

- As a community nursery, we place great importance on a sense of community involvement. To this end, we organise local visits, build relationships with other local establishments (especially St. Nicholas CEVA Primary School) and through this, help the children to develop a sense of their place in a wider context.

Private Childcare Arrangements between Ark Staff and Parents

- The Ark is not responsible for any private arrangements or agreements that are made; such agreements are between the staff member and family. However, we do expect staff members to inform us if they are caring for or babysitting outside the setting, a child that attends the nursery.
- We have rigorous recruitment and suitability processes in place to ensure that we employ competent and professional members of staff and uphold our duty to safeguard children whilst on our premises and in the care of our staff. Whilst in our employment all staff are subject to ongoing supervision, observation and assessment to ensure that standards of work and behaviour are maintained in accordance with our policies. However, we have no such control over the conduct of staff outside their position of employment. Parents should make their own checks as to the suitability of a member of staff for babysitting.

- We will not take responsibility for any health and safety issues, conduct, grievances or any other claims arising out of the staff member's private arrangements outside nursery hours. The member of staff will not be covered by the nursery's insurance whilst babysitting as a private arrangement.
- Out-of-hours work arrangements must not interfere with the staff member's employment at the nursery.
- All staff are bound by contract of the Confidentiality Policy and Data Protection Act that they are unable to discuss any issues regarding the nursery, other staff members, parents or other children. If staff are found to have discussed confidential information outside of nursery this will result in disciplinary action
- The Ark has a duty of care to safeguard all children attending the setting. Consequently if a staff member has some concerns for a child following a private babysitting type arrangement they must pass these concerns on to the safeguarding lead within the setting.
- It will be the staff member's responsibility to ensure they have the appropriate insurance, MOT and child restraints or child safety seats if they are transporting children in a car.

Fee Charging Policy

This fees policy forms part of the contract with the parents/carers and The Ark.

The Ark operates a pre-school, nursery, afterschool, breakfast and holiday club for the parents and children in the local community. We aim to offer a high-quality, safe and stimulating environment that provides a service that is good value for money.

1. Opening Times

The Ark is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks per year. The Ark is closed for one week over Christmas and New Year, and for one week at the end of August.

2. Funding

From September 2024 eligible working parents of children aged 9 months to up to 3 years can access 15 hours childcare support.

Eligible working parents and carers of children aged 3-4 can get an additional 15 hours of childcare support, bringing the total hours they can get up to 30 hours per week. For those with a term time only booking, your hours can be used per week up to 38 weeks of the year. For those with a year-round booking, the hours can be spread over the year, using fewer hour per week over the year.

Please visit the Government Best Start in Life (formerly Childcare Choices website (see link below) to check your eligibility for funding and also to apply for funding.

[Homepage | Best Start in Life](#)

Parents of children accessing additional hours above the free entitlement will be charged at the normal rates as detailed below in fees. **Please note that free sessions missed owing to holiday or sickness cannot be carried forward.**

Parents and Carers will need to **complete a funding form each term**. These will be sent out by The Ark administrator before the start of each term and we ask that you complete and return these within the timescales laid out. Please speak to The Manager or Administrator if you have any questions at all about funding.

3. Funding from September 2025

Eligible working families of children from 9 months to school age will be entitled to 30 hours childcare a week. These hours can be used over 38 weeks of the year, or up to 50 weeks if you use fewer than your total hours per week. Please speak to The Manager

4. Booking, Deposit and Fees

Parents are advised to book the services they require in advance to avoid disappointment. If a place is needed at short notice, please contact The Ark as soon as possible.

A deposit of 50% of four weeks' fees is required to secure a place. This will be retained until your child leaves The Ark.

The deposit is non-refundable if you do not take up the place you have booked. If you postpone the start date after securing a place you will have to pay a retainer fee of 50% of fees, and if commencement is postponed for more than four weeks the deposit will not be refunded. Discretion may be used in regard to the retainer fee in exceptional cases.

THE ARK FEE STRUCTURE FROM 1st April 2026

CATEGORY	DETAIL	The Ark
Babies	All Day 8.00 – 6.00	£59.50
	Morning 8.00 – 12.30	£31.20
	Afternoon 1.30 – 6.00	£30.00
	Lunch Hour 12.30 – 1.30	£6.05

Toddlers	Breakfast 8.00 – 8.45	£5.00
	Morning 8.45 – 11.30	£17.60
	Lunch Hour 11.30 – 12.30	£6.05
	Afternoon 12.45 – 3.15	£16.30
	After School 3.15 – 4.15	£6.05
	After School 4.15 – 5.15	£6.05
	After School 5.15 – 6.00	£5.25
	Full After School 3.15 – 6.00	£14.00
	All Day 8.00 – 6.00	£59.50
	Hot Lunch	£3.35
	Tea	£1.20

Pre-School	Breakfast 8.00 – 8.45	£5.00
	Morning 8.45 – 11.30	£17.00
	Lunch Hour 11.30 – 12.30	£6.05
	Afternoon 12.45 – 3.15	£15.60
	After School 3.15 – 4.15	£6.05
	After School 4.15 – 5.15	£6.05
	After School 5.15 – 6.00	£5.25
	Full After School 3.15 – 6.00	£14.00
	All Day 8.00 – 6.00	£56.00
	Hot Lunch	£3.35
	Tea	£1.20

A light breakfast is included in the fee but, if taken, hot lunch £3.35 for toddlers and Preschool Children and tea £1.20 for toddlers and Preschool children are charged in addition to the above.

Children should be collected promptly at the end of a session during the nursery day, as late collections have an impact on staffing ratios set by OFSTED to which we are bound to adhere. If a child is persistently collected late from any session or sessions due to end before 6.00pm, a charge of £5.00 or that of the cost of the subsequent session, whichever is the smaller, will be made. If a child is collected after 6.00pm a discretionary late collection fee will be charged of up to £25 for first 15 minutes, or part thereof, after which a fee of £5 per 15 minutes, or part thereof. If a child is persistently collected late from any session or sessions due to end before 6.00pm, a charge of £5.00 or that of the cost of the subsequent session, whichever is the smaller, will be made. If a child is collected after 6.00pm a discretionary late collection fee will be charged of up to £25 for first 15 minutes, or part thereof, after which a fee of £5 per 15 minutes, or part thereof will be charged. Parent/carers will be told that any subsequent late collections will incur a charge.

All fees include resources and activities. Any planned trips are optional and advance notification will be provided. There will normally be additional charges to cover the cost of a trip.

5. Discounts

A 75% discount is applicable for up to two weeks holiday per calendar year, for those children who attend year round only. No set amount of notice is required however, and if that month's invoice has already been issued then the requisite amount of credit will be added to the following month's invoice.

6. Closures and Absences

The Ark is closed for all Bank Holidays, for a week in August (which usually includes the August bank holiday) and Christmas week.

Booked sessions must be paid for, even if your child does not attend e.g. owing to sickness. Alternative sessions cannot be booked as "swaps" for regular sessions in order to avoid additional fees.

7. Invoicing and Payment

- a. Fees for children who attend regularly will be invoiced at the beginning of the month, to be paid to The Ark by 15th of the month. Fee payment is expected in full. If payment is made by cash or cheque, it is your responsibility to obtain a receipt from The Ark as proof of payment.

If fees are unpaid by the end of the month, then a reminder will be issued with the following month's invoice, requesting payment of arrears within seven days. If this is not possible, parents are advised to discuss the situation in confidence with either the manager or administrator and a more flexible payment plan can be arranged. If fees remain unpaid for six weeks or more and contact has not been made within the seven day time frame, then the matter will be brought to the attention of the directors, who may decide that the child be excluded from The Ark, other than for funded sessions, until payment is received. The Ark reserves the right to recover any costs incurred in the recovery of late or unpaid fees. Such costs will include, but not be limited to, legal fees and court fees. The directors also reserve the right to charge a penalty if fees remain unpaid for more than three months.

Any cheques will not be considered as payment until cleared. Any sum tendered that is less than the sum due and owing may be accepted by The Ark as a payment on account only.

- b. One calendar months' notice is required if you wish to withdraw your child from the setting or reduce his/her sessions. If you wish to do this, please notify the manager or administrator as soon as possible.
- c. Where possible, we will be flexible to accommodate changing needs. Hence, if sessions need to be changed or extra sessions are required, please contact the setting as soon as possible to enable us to be as flexible as possible.
- d. Parents / legal guardians are required to correctly complete any voucher/payment scheme documentation they have signed up to via their employer or HMRC in respect of their child and to provide the appropriate authorisation to the relevant body which ensures regular payment.

8. Termination of the contract

The Ark reserves the right to terminate this contract immediately in the event of unsuitable behaviour of parents or non-payment of fees following the non-payment procedure. In any other circumstances, four weeks of notice will be given.

Parents/carers are expected to give a calendar month's notice. If notice is not received, a month's fees could be charged.

9. Universal Credit/Tax Free Childcare

If you receive Universal Tax Credit, you may be able to get help towards the cost of childcare. For further details contact the tax credits helpline on 0345 300 3900 or visit HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) website

www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits

Alternatively you may qualify for Tax Free Childcare **www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare**

10. Review

Fees will be reviewed yearly. Parents will be notified in writing of any fee changes at least six weeks prior to the change taking effect. The fee policy will be reviewed annually.

Fee Charging Policy for The Raft

This Fee Policy forms part of the contract with the parents/carer and The Raft.

The Raft operates an afterschool, breakfast and holiday club for the parents and children in the local community. We aim to offer a high-quality, safe and stimulating environment that provides a service that is good value for money.

1. Opening Times

The Raft is open from **8.00am to 5:45pm**, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks per year. The Raft is closed for one week over Christmas and New Year, and for one week in the Summer. Dates will be advised each year.

2. Booking, Deposit and Fees

For adhoc holiday club bookings, 25% of the fees must be paid at or immediately after such a booking and this is non-returnable unless one month's notice is given of cancellation. However, if a booking is cancelled with less than 7 days notice the full amount will be charged.

The Raft will take Ad hoc Bookings for holiday club, only once the previous holiday club has finished. (Eg for Easter holidays, we will take booking after February half term, For Summer holidays this will be after May half term)

3. Discounts

A 15% discount on afterschool and holiday club fees is offered to a second child and 10% to a third child providing both/all children are of school age. No further discounts are offered for the fourth and subsequent child.

If your child/children have a continuous year-round booking (i.e. this is a term time bc/asc booking and a holiday club booking) you are able to get a 75% discount for up to two weeks holiday per calendar year. (ie if your booking is for three days, you will get 6 days holiday entitlement)

After you have taken this entitlement, you will be charged for your space, even if your child does not attend. You cannot cancel sessions and expect to keep an ongoing year round place, even if you give a month's notice.

A month's notice is required if you wish to cancel your continuous year-round booking.

4. Closures & Absences

The Raft is closed for all Bank Holidays, for a week in August (which usually includes the August bank holiday) and Christmas week.

Booked sessions must be paid for, even if your child does not attend e.g. owing to sickness. Alternative sessions cannot be booked as "swaps" for regular sessions in order to avoid additional fees.

THE RAFT - FEE STRUCTURE FROM 1st January 2026

	session	cost
	Breakfast 8.00 -8.45	£6.05
	Full After School 3.15 -5.45	£14.00* (£11.90 – 2 nd) (£12.60 – 3 rd)
	All Day Holiday Club 8.00 – 5.45	£36.00* (£30.60 – 2 nd) (£32.40 – 3 rd)
	Half Day Holiday Club 8.00 – 12.30/1.30 – 5.45	£20.00* (£17.00 – 2 nd) (£18.00 – 3 rd)
	Holiday Club Lunch Hour 12.30 – 1.30	£6.05 * (£5.14 – 2 nd) (£5.45 – 3 rd)
	Hot Lunch	£3.60
	Tea	£2.05

Discounts	After School Club (School age only)	*15% for second sibling *10% for third sibling
	Holiday Club (School age only)	*15% for second sibling *10% for third sibling

A light breakfast is included in the fee but, if taken, hot lunch £3.60 and tea £2.05 are charged in addition to the above.

Children should be collected promptly at the end of a session as late collections have an impact on staffing ratios set by OFSTED to which we are bound to adhere. If a child is persistently collected late from any session or sessions due to end at 5:45pm, a charge of £5.00 could be incurred and you may not receive a handover for your child. If a child is collected after 6pm a discretionary late collection fee will be charged of up to £25 for first 15 minutes, or part thereof, after which a fee of £5 per 15 minutes, will be incurred. Parent/carers will be told that any subsequent late collections will incur a charge.

All fees include resources and activities. Any planned trips are optional and advance notification will be provided. There will normally be additional charges to cover the cost of a trip. If you book onto a trip and cancel within a week of it taking place, you will still be charged, unless we can fill the place.

5. Invoicing and Payment

- e. Fees for children who attend regularly will be invoiced at the beginning of the month, to be paid to The Raft by 15th of the month. Fee payment is expected in full. If payment is made by cash or cheque, it is your responsibility to obtain a receipt from The Raft as proof of payment.

If fees are unpaid by the end of the month, then a reminder will be issued with the following month's invoice, requesting payment of arrears within seven days. If this is not possible, parents are advised to discuss the situation in confidence with either the manager or administrator and a more flexible payment plan can be arranged. If fees remain unpaid for six weeks or more and contact has not been made within the seven day time frame, then the matter will be brought to the attention of the Trustees, who may decide that the child be excluded from The Raft, other than for funded sessions, until payment is received. The Raft reserves the right

to recover any costs incurred in the recovery of late or unpaid fees. Such costs will include, but not be limited to, legal fees and court fees. The Trustees also reserve the right to charge a penalty if fees remain unpaid for more than three months.

Any cheques will not be considered as payment until cleared. Any sum tendered that is less than the sum due and owing may be accepted by The Raft as a payment on account only.

- f. One calendar months' notice is required if you wish to cancel your child/children's continuous holiday club or Raft booking. If you wish to do this, please notify the manager or administrator as soon as possible.
- g. Where possible, we will be flexible to accommodate changing needs. Hence, if sessions need to be changed or extra sessions are required, please contact the setting as soon as possible to enable us to be as flexible as possible.
- h. Parents / legal guardians are required to correctly complete any voucher/payment scheme documentation they have signed up to via their employer or HMRC in respect of their child and to provide the appropriate authorisation to the relevant body which ensures regular payment.

6. Termination of the contract

The Raft reserves the right to terminate this contract immediately in the event of unsuitable behaviour of parents or non-payment of fees following the non-payment procedure. In any other circumstances, four weeks of notice will be given.

- a. Parents/carers are expected to give a calendar month's notice. If notice is not received, a month's fees could be charged.

7. Review

Fees will be reviewed yearly. Parents will be notified in writing of any fee changes at least six weeks prior to the change taking effect. The fee policy will be reviewed annually.

Parental Agreement

Agreement between the childcare provider and staff working with parents and carers to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. A copy of all policies are given to parents at their child's admission.

Bookings, Fees and Notice Periods

Fees for children who attend regularly will be invoiced at the beginning of the month, to be paid to The Ark by 15th of the month; if fees are unpaid by the end of the month then a reminder will be issued with the following month's invoice requesting payment of arrears within 7 days. If this is not possible parents are advised to discuss the situation in confidence with either the Manager or Administrator and a more flexible payment plan can be arranged. If fees remain unpaid for six weeks or more and contact has not been made within the 7 day time frame, then the matter will be brought to the attention of the directors/trustees, who may decide that the child be excluded from The Ark, other than for government funded sessions, until payment is received. The committee also reserves the right to charge a penalty if fees remain unpaid for more than three months.

We require one calendar month's notice to reduce sessions, and booked sessions must be paid for, even if your child does not attend e.g. due to sickness. Alternative sessions cannot be booked as "swaps" for regular sessions in order to avoid additional fees.

Any ad hoc bookings, in addition to regular sessions, will be charged on the next invoice, but if such a session is cancelled within 24 hours of the date of the session, the full charge will still be made.

Bookings for children in the Baby Room are year round, but bookings for the Toddler and Pre-school Rooms may be term-time only.

For those children who attend year round only, a reduction of 75% to the fees is applicable for up to two weeks holiday per year. No set amount of notice is required, however if that month's invoice has already been issued then the requisite amount of credit will be added to the following month's invoice.

Ad hoc bookings for Breakfast, After-school or Holiday Clubs for children that do not regularly attend The Ark may be made as long a time in advance as desired. 25% of the fees must be paid at, or immediately after, such a booking and this is non-returnable unless one month's notice is given of cancellation. However, if a booking is cancelled with less than 7 days notice the full amount will be charged.

Illness Guidelines

Please do not bring your child if he/she is unwell and/or has had a temperature above normal within the last 24 hours.

Sickness or diarrhoea – no attendance until 48 hours has passed since the last attack.

High temperature – no attendance until a normal temperature **without medication** for 24 hours

If your child has been prescribed an antibiotic they have **not** had before – he/she should not attend until 24 hours after the first dose was administered to ensure there is no allergic reaction.

We will administer medicine where a doctor has prescribed medication but only after receiving prior written instructions and consent from the parent. Each time medication is given to a child a written record will be kept of this together with a witness signature. Parents/carers will be asked to sign this record on collection of a child.

If in doubt either seek medical advice, ask one of the staff, keep your child at home or refer to our Health Policy and Procedure for more details.

Safety of Children

Parents/carers are requested not to open The Ark's doors to other parents/carers. Instead they should alert a staff member who will give access to that person.

Children must be signed in and out each day by their parent/carer. Children are not allowed to leave The Ark, unless accompanied by their parents/guardian or nominated other adult.

If a parent/carer is unable to collect their child/children, they must inform the Manager of the nominated other responsible adult to collect. No child will be allowed to leave the premises with person or persons unknown.

Parents are requested to behave in a polite and appropriate manner when dropping off their children. Failure to do so could lead to their children being excluded from The Ark.

Parents are required not to upload photographs and videos showing children other than their own, to websites that are not password protected or to any social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube etc.

Keeping and Updating of Records

Records will be kept containing details about the child, including relevant health, religion and diet information, parents and emergency contact details, child protection records if applicable and any appropriate signed consent forms. It is the parents' responsibility to update the relevant information as and when necessary i.e. contact details and medication needs. Parents must inform the setting if the child has been given new medication at any point before coming into the setting. Parents have access to all written records about their child/children.

We will pass any records drawn up by us in respect of a child to any Pre-school / school that a child moves on to, providing that the child's parents have given their prior consent to the records being passed on.

All staff are aware of the need to maintain confidentiality about matters concerning families and children.

We will provide you with a privacy notice that details how and why we process your personal information.

Other Information

Parents are invited to participate on the Board of Directors/Trustees

Any problems which cannot be satisfactorily resolved between parents and staff may be referred to the Board of Directors/Trustees, in line with The Ark's complaints procedure.

Personal, Social & Emotional Policy

The Development Matters Framework states that "Children's Personal Social and Emotional development is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development"

We will give guidance and model positive and age appropriate ways to help children develop as follows:

Ages 0-4

- Provide each child with a key worker before they settle to support strong and warm relationships with familiar adults.
- Identify and name emotions and feelings, and explain that all feelings are acceptable but some behaviours are not.
- Emphasise the importance of hygiene routines e.g. hand washing/oral health and encourage independence when appropriate
- Make children aware that everyone is unique and has similarities and differences.
- Explain the consequences of children's words and actions on others and recognising that bullying is wrong
- Promote social skills such as sharing, taking turns, playing, helping others, resolving conflict, as well as recognising and resisting bullying

Ages 5 – 7 years

- Enable children to see themselves as a valuable individual, respecting others and their community.
- Promote the basic rules and skills for keeping healthy and safe e.g. road safety and stranger danger when on outings.
- Recognise their own feelings, views, needs and rights and learn to recognise those of others
- Help children take responsibility for themselves and their environments

Ages 7 – 11 years

- Enable children to see themselves as growing and changing individuals with their own experiences and ideas, and as members of communities
- Promote Staying healthy and safe, managing risk
- Enable children to appreciate the wider world and the interdependence of communities within it
- Develop children's understanding of social justice and moral responsibility
- Enable children to understand how their own choices and behaviour can affect local, national or global issues and political and social institutions
- Encourage children to make more confident and informed choices about their health, behaviour and environment
- Encourage children to take more responsibility, individually and as a group, for their own learning
- Enable children to define and resist bullying

Sex and Relationships

We aim to answer children's questions as honestly as possible according to their ages, emotional development and level of understanding with regard to:

- The physical development of their bodies as they grow into adults
- Respect for their own bodies and how they wish to identify as an individual.
- The importance of family life and building relationships with others, involving trust and respect
- The importance of self-control and moral questions

Respect for the views of other people and within this context will challenge inappropriate language and behaviour

Mobile Phone, Electronical Devices, Photograph and Filming Policy and Procedure

To protect and promote the safety of the children in our care we ask that all parents and visitors not to use their mobile phones or any electronical devices with imaging and sharing capabilities i.e. smart watches or glasses that take photos on The Ark premises. There is clear signage on the gate and main door to show this.

Any parent/visitors who arrive using their phone or electronical device will be asked to leave the premises.

Parents are encouraged to share relevant developmental photos and videos via Tapestry or email.

During events such as Nativity/Graduation the manager will inform parents as to whether or not photos or filming will be allowed. Parents will have the choice to withdraw their child if they wish.

At The Ark, staff members, students and children are encouraged to take photographs and record videos for a variety of purposes such as:

- To record events and activities
- To celebrate children's achievements
- To share activities/information with parents
- To record children's development and learning (observations)
- To use for training purposes
- To use for display purposes

In addition photographs and videos may from time to time also be used for:

- Promotional materials (prospectus)
- The Ark's website
- Newspaper and media articles
- Students' coursework
- With your permission your child's photographs will only be used for marketing while they are attending the Ark, unless you have given your permission.
- Images used by The Ark in the above will only be taken on devices owned by The Ark

We recognise that it is important to have clear policies and procedures in place in order to safeguard children, for confidentiality reasons and to ensure that photographs and videos are used only for the purposes intended and with the full and informed consent of parents.

The following policy and procedures will therefore be used for the taking, use and storage of photographs and videos of children:

Written parental consent will be obtained for the general purposes above. Parents will, of course, have the right to refuse permission for all or some of the purposes outlined above.

- Staff members, students and visitors are not permitted to take photographs or video children for their personal use.
- Staff members' and students' own mobile telephones, cameras and video cameras must be stored in the lockers provided and only used in staff areas and they must not be used to video or photograph children.
- All photographs and video recordings will be stored on password protected computers.

Staff who wears smart watches should ensure that they are on flight mode or Bluetooth is disabled to ensure that there is no internet connectivity to access notifications whilst working with the children.

The Prevent Duty and Radicalisation Policy

The NPSCC states that signs of radicalisation may be:

- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- Unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use

The Prevent Strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy called CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent Strategy is to reduce the threat to the United Kingdom from terrorism by preventing people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent strategy has three specific elements:

- Response to the ideological challenge of terrorism and threat we face from those who promote it.
- Prevention of people being drawn into terrorism and ensuring that they are given appropriate advice and support and
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

The Prevent Duty became law in 2015 it places a duty on registered early years providers to 'have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

The Ark is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability. The Ark will tackle any instances of discrimination and aims to be alert to potential risks from radicalisation and extremism.

All staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of **British values**, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These values are fundamental to helping all children become compassionate, considerate adults.

The Prevent Duty Procedure

- The Ark will promote and implement British Values throughout the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2017), and through policies and procedures relating to equality, behaviour, safeguarding, with which the Prevent Duty is consistent.
- The Ark will ensure that all staff, volunteers and where appropriate, parents understand and promote British values within the children's learning experiences.
- Staff will focus on children's personal, social and emotional development; ensuring children learn right from wrong, mix and share with other children, value other's views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and staff will challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.
- Staff will be alert to harmful behaviours by influential adults in the child's life. This may include discriminatory and/or extremist discussions between parents, family and/or staff members.
- Staff will regularly undertake training on safeguarding, British values and Prevent.
- Staff will record and report their concerns to The Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL) and Manager, when they observe behaviour of concern or identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. The DSLs are: - Sarah McNab and Natasha Pike and Emma Nichols.
- The Manager and Designated Safeguarding Leader will assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, and work in partnership with local partners such as the police, Prevent Co-coordinators,

Channel Police Staff and their Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), to take account of local risks and respond appropriately.

- The Manager or Designated Safeguarding Leader will report any concerns to the Childrens Advice and Duty service (ChAD) on 01305 228558, local police When there are immediate concerns or suspicions, DSLs will phone the Police.
- The Department for Education also has dedicated a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) to enable staff to raise concerns relating to extremism directly. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values which include democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty and mutual respect; and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Radicalisation is a process by which children come to support any form of extremism, including terrorism. It is part of practitioner's wider safeguarding responsibilities to prevent and intervene where appropriate. Vulnerable children can come from all backgrounds. The internet and social media have become a major factor in radicalisation and specific training is available to schools.

This policy links to: The Arks Child Protection Policy (DFE 2021)

Privacy Notice

Introduction

The Ark is committed to ensuring that any personal data we hold about you and your child is protected in accordance with data protection laws and is used in line with your expectations. This privacy notice explains what personal data we collect, why we collect it, how we use it and how we protect it.

What personal data do we collect?

We collect personal data about you and your child to provide care and learning that is tailored to meet your child's individual needs. We also collect information in order to verify your eligibility for free childcare as applicable.

Personal details that we collect about your child include:

- your child's name, date of birth, address, health and medical needs, development needs, and any special educational needs

Where applicable we will obtain child protection plans from Social Care and health care plans from health professionals.

We will also ask for information about who has parental responsibility for your child and any court orders pertaining to your child.

Personal details that we collect about you include:

- your name, home and work address, phone numbers, emergency contact details, and family details

This information will be collected from you directly in the registration form.

If you apply for up to 30 hours free childcare, We will also collect:

- your national insurance number or unique taxpayer reference (UTR), if you're self-employed. We may also collect information regarding benefits and family credits that you are in receipt of.

Why we collect this information and the legal basis for handling your data

We use personal data about you and your child in order to provide childcare services and fulfil the contractual arrangement you have entered into. This includes using your data to:

- contact you in case of an emergency
- to support your child's wellbeing and development
- to manage any special educational, health or medical needs of your child whilst at The Ark
- to carry out regular assessment of your child's progress and to identify any areas of concern
- to maintain contact with you about your child's progress and respond to any questions you may have
- to process your claim for up to 30 hours free childcare (only where applicable)
- to keep you updated with information about our service

With your consent, we will also record your child's activities for their individual learning record. This may include photographs and videos. You will have the opportunity to withdraw your consent at any time, for images taken by doing so in writing.

We have a legal obligation to process safeguarding related data about your child should we have concerns about their welfare. We also have a legal obligation to transfer records and certain information about your child to the school that your child will be attending (see *Transfer of Records* policy).

Who we share your data with

In order for The Ark to deliver childcare services we will also share your data as required with the following categories of recipients:

- Ofsted – during an inspection or following a complaint about our service
- banking services to process chip and pin and/or direct debit payments
- the Local Authority (where you claim up to 30 hours free childcare as applicable)
- the government's eligibility checker (as above)
- our insurance underwriter (if applicable)
- The Ark's software management provider, KINDERSOFT
- the school that your child will be attending

We will also share your data if:

- We are legally required to do so, for example, by law, by a court or the Charity Commission;
- to enforce or apply the terms and conditions of your contract with us;
- to protect your child and other children; for example by sharing information with Social Care or the police;
- it is necessary to protect our/or others rights, property or safety

We will never share your data with any other organisation to use for their own purposes

How do we protect your data?

We protect unauthorised access to your personal data and prevent it from being lost, accidentally destroyed, misused, or disclosed by storing it in locked cabinets and on password protected computers.

How long do we retain your data?

We retain your child's personal data for up to 3 years after your child no longer attends The Ark, or until our next Ofsted inspection after your child leaves The Ark. Medication records and accident records are kept for longer according to legal requirements. Your child's learning and development records are maintained by staff and handed to you when your child leaves.

In some instances (child protection, or other support service referrals) we are obliged to keep your data for longer if it is necessary to comply with legal requirements (see our Children's and Provider Records policies).

Your rights with respect to your data

You have the right to:

- request access, amend or correct your/your child's personal data
- request that we delete or stop processing your/your child's personal data, for example where the data is no longer necessary for the purposes of processing; and
- request that we transfer your, and your child's personal data to another person

If you wish to exercise any of these rights at any time or if you have any questions, comments or concerns about this privacy notice, or how we handle your data please contact the manager. If you continue to have concerns about the way your data is handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or ico.org.uk/

Changes to this notice

The Ark will keep this notice under regular review. You will be notified of any changes where appropriate.

Provider records

Policy statement

The Ark keep records and documentation for the purpose of maintaining our charity. These include:

- Records pertaining to our registration.
- Lease documents and other contractual documentation pertaining to amenities, services and goods.
- Financial records pertaining to income and expenditure.
- Risk assessments.
- Employment records of our staff including their name, home address and telephone number.
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of anyone else who is regularly in unsupervised contact with the children.

We consider our records as confidential based on the sensitivity of information, such as with employment records. These confidential records are maintained with regard to the framework of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018), further details are given in our Privacy Notice and the Human Rights Act (1998).

This policy and procedure should be read alongside our Privacy Notice, Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and Information Sharing Policy.

Procedures

- All records are the responsibility of our management team who ensure they are kept securely.
- All our records are kept in an orderly way in files and filing is kept up-to-date.
- Our financial records are kept up-to-date for audit purposes.
- We maintain health and safety records; these include risk assessments, details of checks or inspections and guidance etc.
- Our Ofsted registration certificate is displayed.
- Our Public Liability insurance certificate is displayed.
- All our employment and staff records are kept securely and confidentially.

We notify Ofsted of any:

- change in the address of our premises;
- change to our premises which may affect the space available to us or the quality of childcare we provide;
- change to the name and address of the person managing The Ark
- significant event which is likely to affect our suitability to look after children; or
- Other event as detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2017).

Legal framework

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Human Rights Act 1998

Safeguarding Children Policy

The Ark will comply with its obligations under The Children Act 1989, The Children Act 2004, the Human Rights Act 1998, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the UK Government in 1991) and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)

The Ark has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be taken if we have reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to either emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect. Our primary responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/main carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention.

The Ark has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse whether this stems from allegations against staff, volunteers, carers or the general public. The Ark will follow the procedures set out in the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership safeguarding standards policy and procedure document and will seek their advice on all steps taken subsequently.

This policy applies to all staff, including the board of Directors, paid staff, volunteers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of The Ark.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually

Safeguarding Procedure

It is the duty of any staff member to report any suspected abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Sarah McNab

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Natasha Pike

The E-Safety Champion Sarah McNab

The Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) are Martha Sharp and Martin Welden (01305 221122)

The Ark will notify Ofsted if Social Services are investigating a safeguarding children matter related to the group. Our local Social Services office is the North Dorset Local Office at Cedar House, 1 Cedar Office Park, Cobham Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 7SB tel. 01202 877445. We will notify Family Support and Advice Line services on 01305 228558.

When responding to signs of abuse staff should

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully to what is said

- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer Use Tell Explain Draw (TED)
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling them
- Tell the child what they will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure the record is signed and dated
- Contact the designated person – Sarah McNab or Natasha Pike.

REMEMBER:

It is important that everyone at The Ark is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

Sarah/Natasha will take the lead in dealing with any concerns raised initially, and will take advice from Social Services, or the police. If it is decided to discuss such issues with the parents/carers of the child Sarah/Natasha will facilitate the discussions (although no discussions will take place if it is believed this would place the child at risk of significant harm).

An allegation of child abuse or neglect could lead to a criminal investigation so staff will not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, for example, ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse.

Social Services takes the lead role in enquiring about safeguarding children issues related to the child whilst the employer retains the responsibility for disciplinary actions related to their staff member or volunteer.

Abuse of children can be physical, emotional, sexual or neglect. We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.

When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse this may be demonstrated through:

- significant changes in their behaviour
- deterioration in their well being
- their comments which may give cause for concern or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure)
- changes in appearance, behaviour or play
- unexplained bruising, marks signs of possible abuse or neglect

The Ark staff are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent's learning disability.

Children's vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when The Ark's staff know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we will inform our local authority children's social care team.

The Ark staff will take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person, Sarah McNab or Natasha Pike will take immediate action to contact the child's parent to seek an explanation for the child's absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child's parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCB procedures

are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

Other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse;

Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.

In relation to radicalisation and extremism, The Ark staff will follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.

The designated person completes online Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.

The Ark staff are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers, including early years practitioners, and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.

The Ark staff are aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.

Below are aspects of Safeguarding that can be found under other policy headings:

- **Unauthorised Collection of Children**
- Please see our Delivery and Collection of Children Policy on page 17
- **Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras in the Setting**
- Please see Photograph and Filming Policy and Procedure on page 40
- **Employment, Recruitment and Selection** Please see page 20
- **Training and Induction** Please see page 55
- **Supervision** Please see page 53

Safe working practice

The vast majority of adults who work with children provide a safe and supportive environment for children in their care. However, it is essential that all possible steps are taken to safeguard children and ensure that the adults working with them are safe to do so. Staff must follow the Safe Working Practice guide in the Staff Handbook.

- **E-safety Policy** PLEASE SEE PAGE 26
- **Intimate Care Policy** PLEASE SEE PAGE 30

Training

All staff must complete the Foundation in Safeguarding Children (Level 2) and update every 2 years.

The DSL and DDSL must complete the Multi-agency Working Together to Safeguard Children Update every 2 years. Staff training is provided by Dorset Nexus training provider www.nexus.co.uk. Staff also complete the Governmental Prevent and Female Genital Mutilation training every 2 years.

There are regular in-house refreshers and questionnaires to keep staff updated.

Allegations against member of staff or volunteer

Action will be taken under this heading if allegations of child abuse/neglect are made against a member of staff or a volunteer. Please also see Complaints/Policy on page 6 and Whistle blowing Policy on page 52. An allegation against a member of staff/volunteer may arise from a number of sources (e.g. a report from a child, a concern raised by another adult in the organisation, or a complaint by a parent).

The person to whom an allegation or concern is first reported should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.

S/he should not:

- Investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Promise confidentiality, but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

S/he should:

- Immediately report the matter to the designated safeguarding officer (Sarah McNab), or deputy (Natasha Pike in her absence, or where the designated safeguarding officer is the subject of the allegation, to the designated safeguarding director, Emma Nicholls.
- As soon as possible make a written record of the information (where possible in the child / adult's own words), including the time, date and place of incident(s), persons present and what was said.
- Sign and date the written record.

Initial action by the designated safeguarding officer

When informed of a concern or allegation, the designated safeguarding officer should not investigate the matter or interview the member of staff, the child concerned or any potential witnesses.

S/he should:

- Obtain written details of the concern / allegation, signed and dated by the person receiving (not from the child / adult making the allegation)
- Countersign and date the written details
- Record any information about times, dates and location of incident(s) and names of any potential witnesses
- Record discussions about the child and/or member of staff, any decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions

The designated safeguarding officer should report the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer Martha Sharp and Martin Welden (LADO) 01305 221122 promptly, at least within 1 working day. If there is any doubt regarding whether the allegation meets the criteria, advice should be sought from the LADO. Referral should not be delayed in order to gather information. Any failure to follow procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

If an allegation requires immediate attention, but is received outside normal office hours, the senior manager should consult the LA Children's Services emergency duty team (tel: 01202 45800) or local police and inform the LADO as soon as possible.

The allegation will also be reported to Ofsted.

Confidentiality

The aim of The Ark is to promote an environment of respect with reference to confidential information relating to the children, families or The Ark users and The Ark's business (please see our confidentiality policy).

All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the circumstances under which they may share information about you and your child with other agencies.

If it becomes necessary to disclose information concerning a child and/or member of staff (if the allegation is made against a staff member/volunteer) to an outside agency, the following procedure will be followed:

- The consent of the parent/carer of that child and/or the consent of the staff member to the disclosure will be sought first (unless it is believed that obtaining such consent would place the child at risk of significant harm).

PLEASE NOTE: THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE PROCEDURES. IF ANY CHILD IS THOUGHT TO BE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, THE ARK STAFF WILL CONTACT SOCIAL SERVICES AND/OR THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.

Operation Encompass Safeguarding Statement

The Ark is part of Operation Encompass. This is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children who experience Domestic Abuse. It is in place in every police force in the UK, the Isle of man, Jersey, Guernsey and Gibraltar.

Children were recognised as victims of abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with The Ark about all police attended Domestic Abuse incidents which involve any of our children PRIOR to the start of the next school day. The notification informs us about the context of the incident and includes the voice of the child.

Once DSL's have completed the National Online Operation Encompass key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation Encompass to all staff. Sarah McNab, Natasha Pike and Charlotte Morris have completed the training.

Operation Encompass information is on our website.

Settling-in Policy

A settling-in period is intended to bridge the gap between home and nursery for babies and children. It will help children become accustomed to the nursery setting and allow them time to form an attachment to their key person. Starting nursery can be enormously beneficial for babies, children and their families, yet it can be an anxious time too. If children are to play and learn successfully, they must feel secure and happy in the absence of their carers. They need to be confident in the knowledge that their carers will return at the end of the session.

In order to achieve these aims our policy is to:

- assign each baby/child a key person to help settle them into The Ark
- ask parents/carers to visit
- agree with parents/carers how we will introduce and settle a child into the group
- ensure that the individual needs of the child and family are met
- introduce children new to the group in small numbers over a period of time
- give each child adequate time and support needed to settle
- encourage parents to bring babies/children's comforters, for example, dummies, teddies, blankets
- encourage parents/carers where possible to separate from their children for brief periods at first then gradually build up to longer absences. Parents/carers will remain on site during settling sessions so that they are close and able to return quickly if their baby/child is distressed. We currently ask parents to wear a face covering whilst in The Ark building.
- reassure parents/carers who are anxious about their child by giving them information about their child's activities and welfare during the session
- recall a parent/carer if the child is distressed or unable to settle
- if necessary encourage term time only children to attend during the holidays for consistency

Sleep Policy

At The Ark we aim to ensure that all children have enough sleep to support their development and natural sleeping rhythms in a safe environment.

The safety of babies' sleeping is paramount. Our policy follows the advice provided by The Cot Death Society and Lullaby Trust to minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death. We make sure that:

- Babies are placed on their backs to sleep, if a baby has rolled onto their tummy, you should turn them onto their back again, however once a baby can roll from back to front and back again, on their own, they can be left to find their own position
- Babies/toddlers are never put down to sleep with a bottle to self-feed
- Babies/toddlers are monitored visually when sleeping. Checks are recorded every 10 minutes and babies are never left in a separate sleep room without staff supervision
- When monitoring, the staff member looks for the rise and fall of the chest and if the sleep position has changed
- **As good practice, we monitor babies less than six months every five minutes until we are familiar with their sleeping routines.**

We provide a safe sleeping environment by:

- Monitoring the room temperature
- Using clean, light bedding/blankets and ensuring babies are appropriately dressed for sleep to avoid overheating
- Only using safety-approved cots or other suitable sleeping equipment (i.e. mats) that are compliant with British Standard regulations
- Only letting babies sleep in prams if they lie flat and we have parents' permission
- Not using cot bumpers or cluttering cots with soft toys, although comforters will be given where required
- Keeping all spaces around cots and beds clear from hanging objects i.e. hanging cords, blind cords, drawstring bags
- Ensuring every baby/toddler is provided with clean bedding
- Transferring any baby who falls asleep while being nursed by a practitioner to a safe sleeping space to complete their rest
- Babies who arrive asleep in a car seat will be transferred to a safe sleeping space
- Having a no smoking policy.

We ask parents to complete sheets on their child's sleeping routine with the child's key person when the child starts at nursery and these are reviewed and updated at timely intervals. If a baby has an unusual sleeping routine or a position that we do not use in the nursery i.e. babies sleeping on their tummies, we will explain our policy to the parents and not usually

offer this unless the baby's doctor has advised the parent of a medical reason to do so in which case we would ask them to sign to say they have requested we adopt a different position or pattern on the sleeping babies form.

We recognise parents' knowledge of their child with regard to sleep routines and will, where possible, work together to ensure each child's individual sleep routines and well-being continues to be met. **However, staff will not force a child to sleep or keep them awake against his or her will. We will not usually wake children from their sleep unless requested to do so by parents.**

Staff will discuss any changes in sleep routines at the end of the day and share observations and information. Further information can be found at: www.lullabytrust.org.uk [The Lullaby Trust - Safer sleep for babies, Support for families](#)

Special Needs Policy

We have regard to:

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice January 2015

The Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3

Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage from 2014

UNCRC

And also the provisions of the Equality Act 2010

The Ark will offer a place for any child with special needs, provided we can offer a positive experience of learning through play. Our aim is for all children to be included in all activities wherever possible. We will modify the curriculum as necessary to take account of the child's needs and this will be decided on an individual basis in consultation with carers.

Access

We will:

- Make every reasonable attempt to provide access for children with special needs
- Assess each child's needs in terms of access and adapt our facilities as appropriate as far as possible
- We will discuss each case on an individual basis with parents and relevant professionals.
- Please see our Admissions Policy for further information

Assessment

We will:

- Observe all the children attending in order to identify any special educational needs that they may have, including those who are gifted
- We will ask for relevant detail on the admission form from the parents/carers about any special educational needs they have identified in their child on the registration form
- Talk to the parent/carer and child about what they want
- Ascertain the needs of the child, including medical requirements
- Discuss abilities
- Analyse our ability to offer positive care, both in the physical environment, as well as staff and their suitability

Support and expertise

We will:

- Contact the relevant professionals with the parent's permission, for advice and support.
- Ensure staff will work together with parents/carers as partners to give day to day care and education for the child and support the parents/carers
- Ensure that all children are treated individually and are encouraged to take part in every aspect of the settings activities
- Promote positive images of those with special needs
- Endeavour to appoint staff with experience and knowledge
- Investigate opportunities for training of staff and volunteers, and encourage the staff team to attend training where appropriate
- Provide support in following the stages through The Graduated Response:
 1. A differentiated curriculum
 2. Targeted support by ourselves
 3. Targeted support by ourselves and Specialist services
 4. An EHC Needs Assessment
 5. An EHC.

- We will pass any records drawn up by us in respect of a child to any new setting that a child moves on to, providing that the child's parents have given their consent.

Resources

We have the following resources to help provide for special educational needs:

The building is wheelchair accessible. Staff are trained in alternative communication methods such as 'Signalong'. Our tables are height adjustable to allow easy access to activities for all. We have an easy access toilet. Other specialist resources are available on loan from the Dorset Early Years and Childcare Services and other professional and charitable services.

Funding

Funding for children within the Graduated Response pyramid may be available from the Special Education team in Dorset Council's Education Department for up to 15 hours per week. This might be used to fund a member of staff to observe and support the child, for training, and as laid down in the SEN Code of Practice.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO) are Sarah McNab and Doreen Denham.

The key worker and Manager will liaise with the parents/carers of the child.

The role of the SENCO is to take responsibility for the day-to-day operation of The Ark's SEN policy and to co-ordinate provision for children with SEN, particularly through the Graduated Response

External Support

The Ark can access support from the following list of professionals although this list should not be seen as exhaustive:

Speech Therapist, Health Visitor, Portage, Educational Psychologist, DCC's Special Needs Adviser, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapy and support groups for particular cases.

Staff & Student & Apprentices Policy

It is the aim of the Ark to provide the highest standard of care and we therefore employ staff with a range of qualifications and experience, and from a range of backgrounds. The Ark is fortunate in having experienced and qualified staff, many of whom have been with us for several years. The staff are the most important resource of any nursery. They do a very demanding job and continually try to improve the standard of the service. In charge of every group is a Room Leader, all of whom are qualified to NVQ3 level. They are supported by other staff most of whom are trained to NVQ3, a minority to NVQ2.

Apprentices gain experience and learn through a variety of ways. Employing apprentices is a great way to support loyalty and retention of staff.

Apprentices will be expected to work across the Nursery to understand The Arks' ethos and get a good understanding of how children of all ages develop across the EYFS.

Employing apprentices is a way to find motivated members of staff, who work well as part of a team and meet the expectations and standards of The Ark.

Apprentices are used in ratios only when they are deemed competent and responsible and have completed Pediatric First Aid Training.

We believe that continuity of care is very important for children in day-care and will do everything we can to minimize changes for your child. We will always try to keep children with the same peer group, and as much as possible with the same staff. This gives the children a very stable and secure experience, and enables them to form strong relationships with peers and staff. All new staff will have checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service, and will be closely supervised for a period of time before they are allowed to work unsupervised. Following this period, the member of staff may work without close supervision. No staff will use or carry mobile phones while working in The Ark; however, The Ark's mobile phone will be taken on all outings for safety reasons. If staff need to make or receive telephone calls during working hours they will use the office telephone.

Students on Placement

We seek to support the education and training of people who are studying or may wish to study childcare and education. We therefore offer placements to students on various childcare and education courses.

Students also provide a valuable additional resource for The Ark. Because they are training, they will always work under the supervision of The Ark staff. Some students are on a degree or postgraduate course, and will have assignments to undertake at The Ark. For this, students must have permission from the Manager, who will ensure that there are no negative effects for the children, and ensure that students seek parental permission when appropriate.

Students will be supervised at all times and will not be left alone with children.

Students are not counted in staffing ratios

Supervision Policy & Guidance

This supervision policy requires staff to take time out regularly from the day-to-day demands of their jobs and reflect on their work. Staff supervision is intended to be supportive, constructive and challenging in order to increase the confidence and competence of staff and improve the quality of the services provided. Supervision is the formal mechanism by which those with leadership and management responsibilities meet staff members individually, develop positive working relationships and enable them to be more effective in their roles.

The Ark will offer other formal ways of supporting staff, such as staff induction, staff meetings, training and staff appraisals, as well as less formal ways in which staff members are supported in their work.

The purpose of staff supervision is to:

Establish and maintain a positive and co-operative working relationship between leaders and staff, built on trust, and respect

- To provide a reflective and safe space to address issues and dilemmas experienced by staff members in their work roles
- To ensure staff members are accountable for their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their skills and knowledge
- To promote critically reflective, competent and responsible practice
- To ensure staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and that their practice is consistent with The Ark's values, policies and procedures
- To ensure that tasks are carried out in an appropriate and efficient way
- To monitor progress in relation to appraisal objectives
- To enable staff to carry out their duties by providing support, information, feedback, guidance and instruction, as well as a model of working
- To identify and review personal development needs and activities for staff that relate to their roles and the needs of The Ark

Scope of the staff supervision policy

Staff supervision is the formal mechanism by which The Ark leads, manages and communicates with its staff members and takes place in regular one-to-one meetings between a leader and a staff member. Other means of assisting staff members in their roles, such as peer support, training or external consultation, do not constitute formal supervision so need to feed into a formal staff supervision session.

The staff supervision policy applies to **all** staff members. Supervisors need to make appropriate arrangements for temporary staff, students and volunteers.

Staff supervision provides a formal record of the work of a staff member, and supervision notes are the confidential property of The Ark and may, in exceptional circumstances such as complaints against The Ark, disciplinary procedures or child protection proceedings, be accessed by directors or The Chairperson or local authority officials.

Responsibilities of supervisors

Supervisors need to:

- Establish the importance of supervision with the staff member and how it will best be carried out in their working relationship. Include ways in which staff members have felt supported in the past and what they have found useful and not useful.
- Consult with each member of the team for which they are responsible to reach an agreement on the supervisory relationship. This needs to include the appropriate frequency of supervision sessions for each member of the team, taking into account the experience of the staff member and the nature of the work.

- Establish mechanisms to ensure that staff supervision agreements are adhered to. For example, regular checks on the logging of supervision and supervision records and adjustments to the workload for team leaders so they have time to supervise staff
- Avoid postponing supervision sessions. Where cancellation is unavoidable, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to arrange an alternative time as near as possible to the original time.
- Arrange a suitably private venue free from disturbances.
- Be prepared to challenge and to give and receive constructive feedback.

Responsibilities of supervisees

Supervisees need to:

- Value the importance of supervision and contribute to an effective process.
- Prepare for, attend and actively contribute to supervision meetings.
- Act on decisions made in supervision.
- Be open to challenge and to receive and give constructive feedback.

Staff Supervision Standards

Induction– Within the first two weeks in post, all aspects of supervision will be discussed, agreed and recorded with a new staff member, and this will be recorded in a Supervision Agreement

Frequency and duration - will vary depending on the role of the supervisee and hours of work. All fulltime staff working with children or families need to take part in at least 4 supervision sessions over any 12-month period.

Setting – The venue will be mutually agreed, private and free from disturbances.

Recording individual supervision sessions –

- The supervisor will record the session using the supervision record form
- Safeguarding decisions will be clearly stated and will be recorded in the safeguarding file.
- The supervision record will be completed and printed at end of supervision
- The supervisee will check the notes upon receipt and discuss any amendments to the supervisor immediately.
- Both parties will formally agree the notes of the meeting, and sign.
- During every supervision meeting, it is essential that both the supervisor and supervisee make a note of decisions made and actions required, and these actions are formally agreed at the end of the meeting.

Students – Students will be supervised by their college tutor and by their line manager

Volunteers – Volunteers need to take part in regular, formal supervision

Storage – electronic and hard copy – The Ark's Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Confidentiality Policy will be adhered to.

- The supervision records will be kept as a password-protected document in the Supervision folder on computer. Only Sarah McNab will know the password.
- When an employee leaves The Ark, all supervision records will be kept for one year.

Training – Supervision training is essential for all those undertaking supervision. This training will include general supervision skills and detailed information for using standards and documentation. It is desirable for supervisees to attend supervision training.

Training Policy

We will provide opportunities for training for all our staff and volunteers. The Ark will financially help and support all staff to access training whenever possible.

Induction training will be given to all new members of staff in order to help them understand how our provision operates and their specific role within it. Induction training is an in-depth one-to-one session with a member of the management team, who will give full details of all aspects of the nursery and the procedures and routines we follow in order to provide a safe and stimulating environment.

All staff members undertaking a supervisory role within the setting will hold a relevant level three childcare qualification or relevant higher qualification.

Training may be

- Accessed through www.nexus.co.uk
- in-house training, keeping current with information on a wide variety of issues
- informal workshops to update knowledge or skills
- working towards a recognised qualification e.g. National Vocational Qualification.

Appropriate training will be paid for by The Ark. Staff will be paid for the time spent attending any mandatory courses outside working hours, but not for voluntary courses. Travelling expenses will be paid at the maximum rate allowable under HMRC regulations without incurring a tax liability, and, where appropriate and subject to availability, any necessary childcare will be provided free of charge, providing space is available.

Training will be discussed during staff supervision meetings and a programme of continuing professional development will be planned in advance.

All staff are required to undertake training in:

- Paediatric First Aid
- Safeguarding
- Food Hygiene

These courses need to be updated every two/three years. Certificates of staff training will be kept in staff files along with a record of all training completed.

If a member of staff decides that they would like to undertake further education training, for example, an NVQ, Diploma or degree course and needs to access financial support from The Ark, then the Trustees request that the staff member applies in writing to the Trustees, via the manager, before such training commences, giving full details of the training and including all expected costs. The Trustees will then consider each application and make a decision as to how much The Ark is able to contribute towards the training costs. However, should an individual leave employment at The Ark, then repayment of any sums paid in excess of £100 towards training costs of any individual course may be required. This will take the form of a sliding scale as follows:

Leaving The Ark within:

- 1 year of training - reimburse all costs met by The Ark.
- 2 years of training - reimburse 50% of costs met by The Ark.
- Over 2 years of training - no reimbursement necessary.

Under Two's Policy and Procedures

Staff will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, in order that all babies' and children's learning needs are met. Daily activities will consist of a wide variety of sensory play, both indoors and out. These will be carefully planned and appropriate for the age and development of babies and children. When possible, and with parents' written consent, staff will take the babies/children for outings around the village and to the park.

All outdoor shoes will be removed before entry to the Baby Room.

Our staffing levels will ensure that babies and children will interact at regular intervals with a familiar adult throughout the day.

There is a separate base room for babies and children under two.

Nappies will be checked and changed regularly, using each baby's or child's own nappies, wipes and creams. Nappy changes will be recorded in babies' and children's individual books. Nappy changing facilities are provided which meet environmental health standards.

Cots, sleep mats and bedding are provided for babies and children to rest or sleep. Babies and children will not be prevented from sleeping and will be allowed to wake naturally. Each baby or child will have their own bedding, kept in a named cotton drawstring bag. Bedding will be washed weekly or when soiled. Cots will be cleaned after each use. Individual sleep patterns will be adhered to. Sleeping babies will be frequently checked, every ten minutes, and this will be recorded on the 'Sleep Record' chart.

Feeding will follow each baby's individual needs, in detailed consultation with parents when weaning babies. All babies' bottles will be clearly labelled and stored in the small fridge in the kitchen. All feeds will be prepared in the kitchen. Steam sterilisation will be used for babies' and children's feeding equipment and dummies.

When in low chairs babies will be secured in safety harnesses. The Ark will provide beakers, bowls, cutlery and bibs. Staff will ensure babies and children are well cared for, keeping faces and hands clean at all times.

Toys and equipment will be cleaned weekly or as necessary.

A daily system of exchange of information will take place both verbally, and in the form of individual books, between parents/carers and Ark staff.

Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedure

The Ark will meet the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. It is our aim to provide a safe environment for children in which staff, parents and volunteers feel able to report their concerns. We are committed to high standards of integrity and accountability and believe that inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.

Adults should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. If anyone has a concern either involving a child, staff member or The Ark as a whole, they should in the first instance raise the concern with the Manager or Deputy Manager. If they feel unable or unwilling to raise the matter in this way, they can approach either:

- The chair or other members of the Management Committee or
- Ofsted on 0300 1231231 or write to the following address - Early Years Ofsted, National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M12WD or
- The local Early Years Team
- LADO 01305 221122

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other channels are open to them:

- NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.
- Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a childcare provider: Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).
- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing> for employees: What is a whistleblower - GOV.UK

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act the whistle-blower's identity will not be revealed, nor will they be treated any less favourably as a result of whistle-blowing. If a formal concern is received in writing then the issues raised will be dealt with in an appropriate manner and a record of the concern and outcome will be kept. The Ark will endeavour to resolve formal concerns within 28 days.

During this process all parties involved will be kept informed of progress.

Annual Policy Review

The above policies have been subject to an annual review by the Board of Directors/Trustees and updated to meet current government recommendations.

Signed.....E Nicholls.....(Emma Nicholls) date9.9.25.....
Chairperson