

Parents, Carers and Visitors Behaviour: **Expectations and Procedures**

Little Trees Nursery actively encourages close links with parents/carers and the community. We know that children benefit when the relationship between home and nursery is a positive one and we welcome visitors to our nursery and encourage parents to communicate with us by phone or via email. If a parent or carer has concerns we will always listen to them and seek to address them as quickly and positively as possible.

At Little Trees Nurseries Ltd the wellbeing and safety of our staff is paramount. The morale of staff, and their enjoyment and commitment to good working practice, can have a huge impact on the atmosphere that exists in the setting and, consequently, how happy and settled children are during their time here. It is important they feel valued and respected. We endeavor to always create an emotionally positive environment for everyone.

We will always act to ensure the nursery remains a safe place for children, staff and all other members of our community and therefore abusive, threatening, aggressive or rude behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs we will follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Types of behaviour that are considered unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff, and other members of the community are (includes but is not limited to)

- shouting, either in person or over the telephone
- swearing, either in person or over the telephone
- Verbal communication which is sarcastic, combative or aggressive in tone and language
- emails which are sarcastic, combative or aggressive in tone and language
- constant emails and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the nursery's best efforts to address a situation
- inappropriate electronic activity including publishing abusive, derogatory or inappropriate content with regards to the nursery, staff, children, third parties on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter or in email communication
- any form of physical violence, such as pushing or hitting
- physically intimidation, e.g. standing unnecessarily close to her/him
- the use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- making unreasonable demands
- communication whether written or verbal that creates a hostile environment
- attempting to intimidate: specially to compel, coerce or deter as with threats

Please note all incidents of rudeness, remarks or comments are documented.

The police will be contacted if staff deem necessary.

2. Procedure to be followed when behaviour is inappropriate

a) Informal complaint

If a parent, carer or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the nursery community, the Manager and/or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. Such discussion will highlight how the behaviour of the parent/carer did not meet the nursery's expectations and a request will be made that future communications with the nursery are modified in the light of this. A letter/email will be sent to the parent/carer to confirm this request.

b) Formal complaint

Following any interaction with a parent/carer or visitor, a member of staff reserves the right to submit a formal complaint about the incident to a Director. Should such a formal complaint be made then the Director or designated member of the Leadership team will investigate the complaint, by speaking with the parent/carer and the member of staff. During the investigation, any contact with the nursery will be through a designated member of staff and by prior appointment only. The parent/carer will be informed of this by letter/email. The Director will determine any action to be taken in response to the findings of the investigation.

If, however a member of staff wishes to make a formal complaint Little Trees Nurseries Ltd will proceed to the formal stage immediately.

3. Actions which could follow such an investigation (Including but not limited to)

- A request to meet with the Directors to discuss events
- A letter clarifying to the parent/carer what is considered acceptable behaviour by the nursery
- The designation of one member of staff to act as the conduit for communication between the parent/carer and the nursery
- Withdrawing permission for the parent/carer to enter the nursery site and/or buildings without prior appointment
- Suspend or terminate a child's place without notice
- If possible another parent/carer of the child to communicate with the nursery in the future.

4. Acceptable communication by telephone

a) Dealing with abusive telephone calls

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening telephone calls. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse and this guidance has been produced to assist parents to understand conduct which the nursery expects parents to follow during phone calls.

Guidance for parents/carers

- When you call Little Trees Nursery you may speak initially to one of our Nursery Nurses. They will do their very best to connect you with the person you wish to speak to, but given the vast majority of our staff will be busy, it is most likely that they will take a message or attempt to resolve your query.
- Please do not become frustrated with the Nursery staff if they cannot attain an answer to your concern or connect you to the person you wish to speak to straight away; this is not their fault and any frustrations vented at this time, will not serve to ensure your issue is dealt with any quicker.
- At any time when speaking to a member of staff at Little Trees Nursery, please do not raise your voice or use aggressive, argumentative or threatening language.
- Treat us with the same respect and courtesy that we show you. Therefore, if you would not accept a staff member speaking to you in the manner in which you are speaking to them. Your behaviour is unacceptable.

b) Acceptable communication by email

Sometimes staff may have to deal with challenging, abusive, aggressive or threatening emails. It is unacceptable for any member of staff to be subjected to such abuse and this guidance has been produced to assist parents to understand conduct which the nursery expects parents to follow when emailing the nursery.

Guidance for parents/carers

- Always address the member of staff formally (eg Dear Amanda...)
- Always end the email with the appropriate signature (eg Kind Regards, Michelle)
- Always use formal and courteous language in the message.
- Do not use bold text, capitalization, exclamation marks to emphasise concerns.
- Do not expect an instant response. The majority of staff will be busy for most of the day and do not always have the opportunity to check their emails.
- Treat us with the same respect and courtesy that we show you. Therefore, if you would not accept an email from us in the manner in which you have sent to us, your email is unacceptable.

5. Abuse/bullying using cyber technology

Staff may become targets of cyber abuse or bullying which can have a significant impact on health, well-being and self-confidence. Protecting staff from abuse is best done within a prevention framework, including whole nursery policies and appropriate practices. Cyber abuse/bullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation.

It may take the form of general insults, or prejudice based abuse, e.g. homophobic, sexist, racist, or other forms of discrimination. It may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat rooms, websites, social networking sites, mobile and fixed-point phones, digital cameras, games and virtual world sites.

Abuse using cyber technology can occur at any time and incidents can intrude into the victim's private life. The audience for such messages can be very large and can be reached rapidly. The content of electronically forwarded messages is hard to control and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for the victim to move on.

6. Termination

The nursery reserves the right to suspend or terminate a child's place without notice, in the event of unsuitable behavior from a parent, carer or visitors.

In the event a parent or carer threatens to remove the child from the setting permanently to compel or deter the nursery, the nursery will immediately ask the parent/carer to commence stage 2 of the official complaints procedure. If the parent/carer does not wish to raise their concerns/issue via this procedure but instead terminate their contract, notice of one month is required.