

35. Staff bringing their own children into preschool policy

Introduction 35.1

Walton under fives is committed to a supportive work environment for its staff members. In light of this, staff members are permitted to enrol or bring in their own children, or a close relative as a one off or to attend the nursery. However, this arrangement is subject to the following terms and conditions.

Staff are expected to maintain a high level of professionalism while working. This policy has been designed to allow staff members to be able to focus on the demands of their own role throughout their working day.

It is important that enrolling employee's children or close family members does not have a negative impact on the standards of work you provide and does not make other staff feel that staff children need special treatment or be fearful of caring for a child of one of their colleagues.

It is for this reason that before such an enrolment can take place staff must ensure they fully understand this policy and the role that they play as an employee and agree to the terms and conditions outlined below.

Procedures 35.2

Before agreeing to enrol a child or close family member of an employee, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the needs of the child, the wishes of the parent/employee and the expectations of the employer. If all parties are satisfied at this meeting that the terms and conditions can be met, then the child will be enrolled.

If at any point the management feel that the terms and conditions are being breached, then this agreement will be subject to change and review as appropriate.

The placement of the child at the nursery will remain at the discretion of the management.

At preschool we understand the potential stresses of staff returning to work after having a baby or working in the same environment as your child or a close relation. We wish to support all employees in this position and request the member of staff meet with the nursery manager, where appropriate, to discuss the needs of all parties.

We believe our staff should remain neutral and treat all children with the same regard.

This agreement is based on the following principles:

- Where staff work in the same room as their child or close relation, there is an agreed set of guidelines between the nursery and the member of staff setting out the expectations of working with their child/close relation. These include a clear statement that during their time at nursery the child is in the care of the nursery and it is the nursery that retains responsibility for the child and their care
- Where this agreement is not working or is impacting on the care of the child or other children in the room, the manager and member of staff will reassess the situation
- Staff caring for another staff member's child will treat them as they would any other parent/child.

- Where a staff member's child requires breastfeeding, the preschool will adapt the above guidelines to suit both the child's and mother's needs

The agreement will consist of the member of staff agreeing to the following conditions of enrolment of their own child or a close relative:

- Staff member's children or close relative should receive the same nursery experience as any of the other children attending the setting.
- Staff should give feedback to their child's key worker at the beginning of the day and no further discussion should take place until the staff member has finished work and is receiving an end of day handover (unless in the case of an emergency when you will be consulted in the same way that a parent of any other child would receive a telephone call).
- Key worker's will complete the same observations and assessments as they do with all other children and staff will be able to attend parents evening to discuss their child's development.

A staff parent or carer must agree that they will not use the Tapestry system to access their child's information and assessment data at any other time, as this is the role of the Key worker.

- If a staff member's child becomes unwell or injured at nursery and needs to go home, the staff member must be conscious of the staffing ratios and wait until appropriate cover can be found.
- Staff must still be flexible with their working shift as long as appropriate notice is given as per the standard contract of employment.
- Staff must at all times fulfil the needs of their own key group children and adhere to their job description. Unless it is an emergency, staff should have minimal contact with their own child or close relative during the working day (including designated break times).
- Staff should disclose any conflict of interest situations in the workplace that impacts on their professional conduct.
- All placements at the nursery are subject to the availability of space.

Ratios must always be considered when offering a place for a member of staff to use for their children or close relative. If no space is available at the time of employment or expression of interest, the parent/carer will be placed on the waiting list in the same manner as all other applications for children wishing to attend the nursery.

- Staff will not act as a key worker for their own children.
- Staff must not make comments about the quality of care their child is receiving in the room, if they have any concerns the appropriate policy should be followed by speaking to management first as is the case for all parents of children attending the nursery.
- Staff should endeavour to not disclose to other parents at the setting that their child attends as well. This may lead to other parents expecting you to engage in unprofessional conversations or providing information that is not suitable for parents to know.

In the event of a safeguarding concern about the child, the preschool policies will be followed as for any other child.

All contract terms, policies and permissions applicable for children at the nursery will be applied equally to the child or close relative of any staff member. These will be available for you in the same way as all parents and you are expected to read, understand and sign them in the same way

The terms and conditions for fees and payments will apply in the same manner to all other customers of the nursery.

Staff Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures In the event of challenges regarding staff being able to maintain high standards of professional conduct at the workplace the appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the employee handbook. Non-compliance to the policy could result in dismissal. If this were the case, the setting would continue to provide care for the child enrolled at the nursery even if the staff member has been dismissed. This is to ensure continuity of care for the child

Staff are free to change their provider of childcare at any time by giving a notice period of one month, as stated in the care contract. This will not have an impact on any employment contracts and is dealt with as a separate matter.

Staff bringing non-preschool enrolled children into preschool 35.3

There is an expectation that children who are not registered with Walton Under Fives will not attend preschool. Staff are expected to find alternative arrangements if their child's childcare or educational facility is unable to have them or to swap their day of work

If staff are unable to find an alternative then their children may be brought in if

- The Manager agrees to this in advance
- The child/ren must not be in their isolation period from their other setting due to sickness or illness
- The child/ren must not be left alone on the premises or with any preschool child
- The staff member must continue to work as their role and responsibility allows
- Other staff at the setting must treat the child/ren as any other child/ren
- The staff member's children will be included in their ratio. The manager will decide at the time how or if the staff members ratio will be reduced. This is dependant on the age and ability or the staff child/ren or any other children we have in on that day.
- If staff children are brought in during morning set up or at close down, then they cannot be in the main hall whilst staff are moving large or heavy equipment
- If staff child/ren need to be taken to their childcare or educational setting from the preschool, staff cannot leave the preschool out of ratio

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Walton Under Fives preschool held in November 2021

Signed (Manager) Date

Signed (Chair) Date