



Policies and Procedures

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Aims and Objectives

Our vision at Bright Sparks is to provide an environment where children are happy, stimulated and kept safe and healthy. We aim to ensure your child has plenty of opportunities to grow and develop to allow them to reach their full potential.

We achieve our goals through valuing each and every person involved in a child's development; children, parents and staff. Every individual will make a positive contribution and, working together with you as a parent, we will help your child achieve more.

Bright Sparks provides a strong curriculum in a safe, stimulating environment to create meaningful experiences for your child every day. Your child's day is designed to develop important foundational skills like language and literacy, mathematical thinking and problem—solving while stimulating your child's creativity.

We define a quality service as one that understands the individual requirements of the children in our care, as well as their parents/ carers, and provides the necessary staff, equipment and resources to meet and exceed those needs and will be working on building a good partnership with the parents, sharing information between home and setting.

Admissions policy

Bright Sparks aims to ensure that our setting is genuinely accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We ensure that all sections of our community have access to the setting through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

- We ensure that the existence of our setting is widely advertised in places accessible to all sections of the community.
- We ensure that information about our setting is accessible, in written and spoken form and, where appropriate, in more than one language.
- All applications are considered following the policies and guide lines of Bright Sparks Childcare and Nursery and when appropriate BELB admissions criteria.

Arrivals and departures of children

It is the policy of the nursery to give a warm welcome to each child on their arrival and ensure that they depart safely at the end of the day. A Risk assessment is in place for arrivals and departures and reviewed monthly. Details are updated and parents given written confirmation of any changes/updates through monthly newsletter.

Arrivals

Familiar staff will greet children and parents. As the children arrive, the parents are responsible for signing the child in on the daily register and adding the time they arrived, once signed into Bright Sparks on the register the children are officially bright Spark's responsibility.

Any specific information provided by the parents should be recorded.

A register will be kept and times of arrival and departure of children to the premises will be recorded and supplemented by regular head counts throughout the day. The register will be kept on the premises at all times other than trips or outings.

Departures

Parents may collect children at any time during the session.

Children will only be released to their parent/carer or the person on the permission form unless the setting has been informed of changes beforehand and a password given.

Bright Sparks Childcare and Nursery reserves the right to refuse for a child to be released from our care if there is any doubt of the authenticity of the person calling.

As the children depart, the parents are responsible for signing the child out on the daily register and adding the time they depart.

On departure, the childcare register must be immediately marked to show that the child has left the premises.

Settling in:

We aim for children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in preschool and to feel secure and comfortable with all staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners.

We aim to support parents and other carers by giving consideration to the individual needs and circumstances of each child and their families. Staff will work in partnership with by:

- Providing parents with relevant information regarding the policies and procedures of the setting
- Encouraging the parents and children to visit the setting during the weeks before an admission is planned
- Planning staggered settling in sessions to ensure children feel confident and secure while in the setting.
- Reassuring parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into the setting
- Allocating a key person to each child and their family, before they start to attend.

Additional Needs

Our setting believes in the principles of Equal Opportunities and therefore welcomes children regardless of ability. All children are natural learners who gain knowledge by actively doing and communicating. But we also know that play and learning opportunities are not a one-size-fits-all experience.

Our awareness of this allows us to organise a varied curriculum, which will enable all the children in our care to reach their full potential. We recognise close liaison between setting and home is valued and viewed as an important step in meeting the needs of children with additional needs.

The policies, procedures and practices of Bright Sparks are consistent with current legislation and guidance. These include the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (NIO 2005 and the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006

Children with additional needs, like all other children, will be admitted into the group after consultation between parents/carer's and the childcare manager. If other childcare professionals are already involved with the family, any relevant information will be used, to ensure consistency of care. We are committed to the inclusion of children and parents within our setting and will seek resources and advice to make the relationships successful. We will therefore:

- Endeavour to obtain suitable equipment to enable those with disabilities to be correctly supported and enabling them to make full use of activities.
- Ensuring that all children have full access to the play opportunities offered within the setting.
- Select resources which portray positive images of people with disabilities.
- Welcome the opportunity to work and liaise with other professionals in order to meet children's specific needs.
- Monitor and record children's progress on an individual basis to ensure planning is appropriate to age and stage of development
- Ensure that all staff who work with children have appropriate skills and training.

Accidents-preventing, reporting, recording, and notification

We are committed to encouraging and promoting good health and to dealing efficiently and effectively with accidents, incidents, illnesses and emergencies that may arise while children are in our care. We assess and minimise the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

Prevention:

We understand the benefits of undertaking suitable and sufficient risk assessments of all activities that may pose a risk to all users. The Manager/Deputy Manager will have the responsibility for ensuring that there are suitable and sufficient risk assessments for the setting. All employees will comply with preventative measures identified by risk assessments.

- At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premises at all time when children are present. This also applies on outings.
- A fully equipped first Aid Box with appropriate content to meet the needs of the children will be on the premises and accompany any trips or outings.

Reporting and Recording Accidents:

All accidents involving children are recorded in the Accident Record Book on the same day as the event took place and must be signed and witness by staff and parents. A copy will be given to parents and a copy will remain in the Accident Record Book. Subsequent action should also be noted where necessary.

In the event that a member of staff, visitor or other user has an accident resulting in an injury, however minor, this must be reported to the person appointed to administer first aid, if you are able to do so and recorded in the Accident book held in the childcare office.

Notification: (RIDDOR)

We understand our legal duty to report certain accidents and incidents (including specific diseases) to the Enforcing Authorities. The measures will include:

- Identifying those accidents, diseases and incidents (near miss) that should be reported to the Enforcing Authority

- Ensuring that all relevant accidents/incidents are reported and investigated as required.

Bullying Policy

Children need their own time and space. It is not always appropriate to expect a child to share and it is important to acknowledge children's feelings and to help them understand how others might be feeling. Children who experience bullying, racism or other unacceptable behaviour will be given the confidence to speak out

Children must be encouraged to recognise that bullying, fighting, hurting and discriminatory comments are not acceptable behaviour. We want children to recognise that certain actions are right and that others are wrong.

Bullying takes many forms. It can be physical, verbal or emotional, but it is always a repeated behaviour that makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened.

Any form of bullying is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately. At our setting, staff follow the procedure below to enable them to deal with challenging behaviour:

- Staff are encouraged to ensure that all children feel safe, happy and secure
- Staff are encouraged to recognise that active physical aggression in the early years is part of the child's development and that it should be channelled in a positive way
- Children need to be helped to understand that using aggression to get things is inappropriate and they will be encouraged to resolve problems in other ways
- Our staff are encouraged to adopt a policy of intervention when they think a child is being bullied, however mild or harmless it may seem
- Staff are ready to initiate games and activities with children, when they feel play has become aggressive, both indoors or out
- Any instance of bullying will be discussed fully with the parents of all involved, to look for a consistent resolution to the behaviour

If any parent has a concern about their child, a member of staff will be available to discuss those concerns. It is only through co-operation that we

can ensure our children feel confident and secure in their environment, both at home and in the nursery

All concerns will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Dealing with Bullying Behaviour:

We will make every effort to create a tolerant and caring environment within the setting, where bullying behaviour is not acceptable. Where appropriate staff will discuss the issues surrounding bullying openly, including why bullying behaviour will not be tolerated and what the consequences of bullying behaviour will be.

- All incidents of bullying will be addressed thoroughly and sensitively.
- Children will be encouraged to immediately report any incident of bullying that they witness. They will be reassured that what they say will be taken seriously and handled carefully.
- Staff have a duty to inform the Manager if they witness an incident of bullying involving children or adults in the setting.
- If a child or a member of staff tells someone that they are being bullied, they will be given the time to explain what has happened and reassured that they were right to tell.
- The individual who has been the victim of bullying will be helped and supported by the staff team. They will be kept under close supervision and staff will check on their welfare regularly.
- In most cases, bullying behaviour can be addressed according to the strategies in the setting. The bully will be encouraged to discuss their behaviour where appropriate and think through the consequences of their actions.
- A member of staff will inform the parents/carers of all the children involved in a bullying incident at the earliest possible opportunity. At all times, staff will handle such incidents with care and sensitivity.
- All incidents of bullying will be reported to the Manager and will be recorded on an Incident form which is signed by staff and parents. In the light of reported incidents, the Manager and other relevant staff will review the procedures in respect of bullying.

Complaints/Comments Policy

We value the right of each staff member, volunteer or customer to make a complaint. A complaint is viewed as an opportunity to improve our level of service and assists accountability within that service. All complaints will be dealt with in confidence and in accordance with the complaints procedure. All through the following process a complainant can use the services of an outside agency such as BHSC Early Years team, the Labour Relations Agency, Equality Commission, or the Health & Safety Executive, especially in circumstances where there is a complaint about Health and Safety Matters. This list is not exhaustive.

Types of Complaint –

Informal (1st Stage): Refers to verbal complaints which can be dealt with immediately. These complaints will be recorded in the Complaints Log. A co-operative approach should mean that most complaints can be dealt with in this way but complainants should be given the opportunity to make a formal complaint if they wish.

Formal (2nd Stage): Refers to a written complaint of a more serious nature, or one which needs to be investigated further. These complaints should be made by filling in a complaint form a line manager will complete this with the complainant and deal with the issue within 4 days. Few complaints should progress past this stage.

Formal (3rd Stage): If a complaint cannot be resolved by the line manager, it should be forwarded onto the HR manager by the line manager within 7 days of the complainant expressing dissatisfaction with stage 2 of the process. The HR manager will fully review the complaint with the complainant and line manager (where appropriate).

Formal (4th Stage): In extreme cases where no resolution has been possible the complaint will be given over to the Mission Director of East Belfast Mission, or a person appointed by the Mission Director. This will take place within 7 days of the complainant expressing dissatisfaction with Stage 3.

Most complaints should be resolved at this stage but if there is a failure to reach agreement and the parent/ carer feels the matter should be taken further they should contact the Belfast Health and Social care Trust responsible for the registration of the Bright Sparks as outlined on flow chart displayed in all rooms in the setting.

Confidentiality

Bright Sparks respects the right for all information, records and observations to be treated with respect and with due attention to confidentiality and privacy. However, the legal principle that 'the welfare of the child is paramount' (Children Order NI) means that confidentiality comes second to the right of the child to be protected from harm.

Management of Records:

- All registration forms and children's records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- Parents may have access to the records of their own child only.
- Information may be shared with Social Services. Parental consent will be obtained beforehand, if appropriate.
- All issues pertaining to the employment of staff will remain confidential to those persons who are directly involved with personnel decisions.
- Any breach of confidentiality by a member of staff, student or volunteer may lead to disciplinary action.
- Staff will not discuss individual children other than for purposes of planning and group management, with people other than the parents/carers of that child.
- Records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after the children have left the provision.
- Children's records are always available for parents and inspection by Social Services Early Years Team.

Consent:

Children's registration forms will ask for consent for the following:

- Medical Emergency
- Sun cream application
- Use of plasters
- All aspects of toileting and changing as required
- Observations
- Photographs
- Local outings

All confidential information given by parents/ carers will not be passed on without consent unless it is in the best interests of the child to do so.

Parents/carers will be able to share information and their views and concerns will be acknowledged and respected. Appropriate and prompt action will be taken on any concerns raised and a record of all complaints will be maintained.

All children's records will be available to the parents/carers of that child. Relevant staff will also have appropriate access. Any anxieties/evidence relating to a child's personal safety will be kept in a confidential file and will not be shared within the group except with the necessary staff.

Data Protection:

Bright Sparks will only hold and maintain records which are required by law and Registration requirements. We will operate within the Data Protection Act (1984)

Personal data will be:

- Obtained and processed fairly and lawfully
- Held only for the purposes described in the data users register entry
- Used only for those purposes, and disclosed only to those people, described in the register entry
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which they are held
- Accurate and where necessary, kept up to date
- Held no longer than is necessary for the register purpose
- Accessible to the individual concerned who, where appropriate, has the right to have the information about themselves corrected or erased.
- Surrounded by proper security

Equality

Bright Sparks is committed to equality of opportunity by providing activities, which are open to all children.

We aim to ensure that:

- We will treat all people equally with respect and dignity. We will operate with openness and acceptance in an inclusive manner challenging all forms of discrimination and accepting and celebrating difference.
- All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured.
- Any discrimination (language, behaviour or remarks) by children, parents/ carers or staff/ volunteers is unacceptable and will be challenged.
- We will develop partnerships, which will support the inclusion of all children regardless of disability, background or personal circumstances. We will consult with partners who have the expertise to support us.

First Aid

We recognise our duty of care and legal requirement for first aid provision in our facility and understand that we must ensure adequate arrangements are provided for dealing with emergency situations that require first aid.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that there is a fully trained First Aider available at all times.
- The first aid box is easily accessible to adults and is kept out of the reach of children.
- No un-prescribed medication is given to children, parents or staff.
- At the time of admission to the setting, parents' written permission for emergency medical advice or treatment is sought. Parents sign and date their written approval.
- Parents sign a consent form at registration allowing staff to take their child to the nearest Accident and Emergency unit to be examined,

treated or admitted as necessary on the understanding that parents have been informed and are on their way to the hospital.

- The First Aid box will be regularly checked to ensure its contents are up to date, in good condition and fulfil the criteria set out in the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.
- A First Aid box will be taken on all off site visits or outings.

Infection Prevention and Control

Bright Sparks believes that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. As such, it will sometimes be necessary to require a sick child to be collected early from a session or be kept at home while they get better to minimise the risk of infection spreading.

If any infectious or communicable disease is detected on the premises, the Manager will inform parents/carers personally in writing as soon as possible. The Early Years Link Social worker and Public Health Agency will also be informed if appropriate.

- If children appear unwell during the day – have a temperature, sickness, diarrhoea or pains, particularly in the head or stomach – parents will be contacted.
- If a child has a temperature, they are kept cool, by removing top clothing, sponging their heads with cool water, but kept away from draughts.
- Temperature is taken using a thermometer kept in the first aid cabinet.
- In extreme cases of emergency a member of staff will phone for an ambulance and the parent informed.
- After sickness or diarrhoea, parents are asked to keep children home for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or until a formed stool is passed.
- The setting has a list of excludable diseases and current exclusion times in accordance with the public health agency.
- Parents are asked to inform the setting if their child has any illness such as measles or chicken pox, as the other parents will need to be informed.
- Women who are pregnant are made aware of the following infections: chicken pox/shingles, rubella, slapped cheek syndrome and measles.

Exclusion of staff:

Staff with infections can place children and others at risk, therefore staff suffering from particular conditions must be excluded from their work in accordance with Health Protection Agency guidelines.

Any member of staff who handles food and becomes sick with diarrhoea, vomiting or infected skin problems such as wounds or boils must report this to the manager.

Those with diarrhoea or vomiting should be excluded from work until at least 48 hours after symptoms have stopped. They should seek medical advice.

Staff with infected wounds or skin infections on exposed parts of their bodies should be similarly excluded until the lesions are healed or they have been advised that it is safe to return to work by the GP.

Staff with other conditions which could spread infections, such as the common cold, should take sensible precautions and inform the manager.

Reporting of 'notifiable diseases'

If a child or adult is diagnosed suffering from a notifiable disease under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988, the GP will report this to the Public Health Agency, Health Protection Service.

When the setting becomes aware, or is formally informed of the notifiable disease, the pre-school manager will inform The Early Years Team and ensure that the setting acts on any advice given by the Health Protection Agency.

Management of Emergencies

We are committed to dealing efficiently and effectively any emergencies that may arise while children are in our care. Parents/carers are required to complete and sign the consent form as part of your child's registration. This enables the Manager or any member of staff so empowered, to give permission for emergency medical treatment for their child in the event of an emergency at the setting the following procedure will apply:

- In the first instance, the First Aider will be notified and take responsibility for deciding upon the appropriate action.
- The First Aider will assess the situation and decide whether the child needs to go straight to hospital or whether they can safely wait for their parent/carer to arrive.
- If the child needs to go straight to hospital, an ambulance will be called. The parent/carer will also be contacted. A member of staff will accompany the child to the hospital if appropriate.
- If the child does not need to go straight to hospital but their condition means they should go home, the parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to collect their child. In the meantime, the child will be made as comfortable as possible and be kept under close supervision until parent/guardian arrives.
- The Manager and other relevant members of staff should consider whether the accident or incident highlights any actual or potential weaknesses in the settings policies or procedures, and act accordingly, making suitable adjustments where necessary. The manager should notify the Insurance Company and Registering body of the incident.

Fire Safety

We recognise due to the inherent dangers involved and our legal duty that there is a requirement to ensure the necessary fire precautions and emergency arrangements are put into place (e.g. evacuation, fire fighting equipment and major spillages). Bright Sparks ensures our premises present no risk of fire by ensuring the highest possible standard of fire precautions.

To achieve this we ensure:

- All staff have received training in fire safety sufficient to be competent to carry out risk assessment.

- Fire doors are clearly marked, never obstructed and easily opened from the inside.
- Smoke detectors/alarms and fire fighting appliances conform to BSEN standards, are fitted in appropriate high risk areas of the building and are checked as specified by the manufacturer.
- Our evacuation procedures are clearly displayed in all rooms:
- Form part of induction process for all new members of staff, volunteers and students:
- Evacuation procedures are practised regularly to ensure all staff, children, students and volunteers are familiar with the procedure.
- Records are kept of fire drills and the servicing of fire safety equipment. These records are then used to evaluate if any changes need to be made to our evacuation policy

Closing the setting in an emergency:

In very exceptional circumstances, Bright Sparks may need to be closed at very short notice due to an unexpected emergency. Such incidents could include:

- Serious weather conditions (combined with heating system failure).
- Burst water pipes.
- Discovery of dangerous structural damage.
- Fire or bomb scare/explosion.
- Serious accident or illness.

In such circumstances, all staff and children will assemble at the pre-arranged venue, where a register will be taken. Steps will then be taken to inform parents/carers and to take the necessary actions in relation to the cause of the closure. All children will be supervised until they are safely collected.

Management of Medicines

Bright Sparks aims to promote the good health of the children in our care, taking necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and appropriate action when children are ill. While it is not our policy to care for sick children, who should be at home until they are well enough to return to the setting, we will agree to administer medication as part of maintaining their health and well-being or when they are recovering from an illness.

In many cases, it is possible for children's GP's to prescribe medicine that can be taken at home in the morning and evening. As far as possible, administering medicines will only be done where it would be detrimental to the child's health if not given in the setting. If a child has not had a medication before, especially a baby/child under two, it is advised that the parent keeps the child at home for the first 48 hours to ensure no adverse effect as well as to give time for the medication to take effect.

The administration is recorded accurately each time it is given and is signed by staff and a witness. Parents sign the medication form to acknowledge the administration of a medicine.

- Children taking prescribed medication must be well enough to attend the setting.
- Only prescribed medication is administered. It must be in-date, state the required dose and prescribed for the current condition.
- Children's prescribed medicines are stored in the medicine cabinet or refrigerated if appropriate in their original containers and are clearly labelled.
- Parents give prior written permission for the administration of medication.
- Non-prescription medication such as pain and fever relief will only be administered with parents' previous written consent and only when there is a health reason to do so.
- Medicines containing aspirin will not be administered to a child under the age of 16 unless they have been prescribed by a doctor.
- Items of medication in unlabelled containers will not be accepted
- The child's key worker is responsible for ensuring medicine is handed back at the end of the day to the parent.

- For some conditions, medication may be kept in the setting. Key workers check that any medication held to administer on an as and when required or on a regular basis, is in date and returns any out-of-date medication back to the parent.
- If the administration of prescribed medication requires medical knowledge, individual training is provided for the relevant member of staff by a health professional.
- No child may self-administer. Where children are capable of understanding when they need medication, for example with asthma, they should be encouraged to tell their key worker what they need. However, this does not replace staff vigilance in knowing and responding when a child requires medication.
- Medicines no longer required will be handed back to the parent and the medical form signed with date of return. If parents do not collect medicines after a reasonable period of time they will be given to a pharmacist for disposal.

Long term medical conditions:

A risk assessment is carried out for each child with long term medical conditions that require on-going medication. This is the responsibility of the manager alongside the key worker. Other medical or social care personnel may need to be involved in the risk assessment. Parents will also contribute to a risk assessment. They should be shown around the setting, understand the routines and activities and point out anything which they think may be a risk factor for their child.

For some medical conditions key staff will need to have training in a basic understanding of the condition as well as how the medication is to be administered correctly. The training needs of staff will be part of the risk assessment.

A health care plan for the child is drawn up with the parent by the GP/medical practice; outlining the key worker's role and what information must be shared with other staff who care for the child. The health care plan should include the measures to be taken in an emergency and reviewed every six months or earlier if there has been a change in condition or medication.

Managing medicines on trips and outings:

When children go on outings, staff accompanying the children must a member of staff who is fully informed about the child's needs and/or medication.

Medication for a child is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name, name of the medication, Inside the box is a copy of the consent form and a card to record when it has been given, with the details as given above.

If a child on medication has to be taken to hospital, the child's medication is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name, name of the medication. Inside the box is a copy of the consent form signed by the parent.

Procedure for dealing with known or suspected allergic reactions:

If a child has an allergy, a risk assessment form is completed to detail the following: and reviewed regularly

- The allergen (i.e. the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, cats etc).
- The nature of the allergic reactions e.g. anaphylactic shock reaction, including rash, reddening of skin, swelling, breathing problems etc.
- What to do in case of allergic reactions, any medication used and how it is to be used (e.g. Epipen).
- Control measures – such as how the child can be prevented from contact with the allergen.
- This form is kept in the child's personal file and a copy is displayed where staff can see it.
- If necessary the manager will seek further medical training from the Local Health and Social Care Trust or parents.
- Parents are made aware that no nut or nut products are used
- Named first aiders are trained to recognise allergic reaction symptoms.
- Medication required for treatment of an allergic reaction is to be stored in a first aid cabinet and clearly labelled.
- If relevant a Medic Alert and GB number will be kept in the first aid cabinet in an envelope with person's name on front, for information for operator in event of emergency.

- In the event of a suspected allergic reaction an ambulance must be called at all times. The telephone operator must be informed of the possibility of anaphylactic shock.

Parents access to records

Bright Sparks recognises that parents/carers are the first educators of their children and our aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers in providing an environment that supports that and promotes the best interests of children in our care.

We will involve parents/carers in the shared development record keeping about their child, either formally or informally and ensure they are aware they can have access to their child's written developmental records and ensuring they can discuss their child's progress at any time.

Participation with parents/carers:

All parents/carers will be informed about the setting, how it operates, opening times and policies and procedures through written information, newsletters, notice boards and informal communication and that parents are aware that they are welcome to contribute in any way they feel able.

- We will provide information on our fee structure and Payment Policy and listen to parent's feedback and act on this when appropriate.
- All parents/carers will have access to our complaints procedure and we will ensure that any complaints are dealt with effectively in accordance with the complaints procedure.
- We will keep parents/carers informed of activities by displaying the planning and themes using the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Listen to all suggestions and acknowledge that all children, parents and staff have the right to be consulted and be heard.
- We will ensure that all aspects of the child's achievements, experiences and friendships are shared and discussed with the parents. We welcome parents at any time to discuss their child's development and will hold parent evenings twice a year.

Play Policy

Play does not have a specified goal or outcome; it is children's way of making sense of the world around them. Play provides opportunities for children and young people to assess and manage risk for themselves.

Play is a child's right as dictated in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (Article 31).

At Bright Sparks we aim to provide play opportunities to all children irrespective of their culture, ability and background.

Through play we aim to empower children with choice, and opportunities through play:

Solitary; Competitive; Physical; Emotional; Quiet; Messy; Structured and creative; Spontaneous and Adventurous

Through these choices we believe children can be nurtured and helped along the path to adulthood and problem solving. Play opportunities are any activity that enables children to develop through play.

Outdoor play:

- Outdoor play will be part of the daily schedule unless the weather is unsuitable to allow the children the opportunity to run and shout in the fresh air.
- Unsuitable weather is heavy rain, snow, severe cold or heat.
- If the children's comfort can be upheld by them wearing a coat (cold weather) or a hat and their own sunscreen (hot weather) then the weather will not be considered too hot or too cold.
- Children must therefore bring the appropriate clothing and protection to the childcare setting.
- Should the child have difficulty applying sunscreen the staff will assist them.

Involving and Consulting Children:

We believe that actively promoting the participation of children in decision-making processes is beneficial to children, staff and the setting as a whole. The staff will consult with children at an age appropriate level on a daily basis about:

- What activities they have enjoyed and why?
- What activities they would like to do in the future?
- We will ensure children have an opportunity to express their views, experiences and ideas daily through circle time.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

We believe that children flourish best when they know how they are expected to behave. Children gain respect through interaction with caring adults who show them respect and value their individual personalities. Positive, caring and polite behaviour will be encouraged and praised at all times in an environment where children learn to respect themselves, other people and their surroundings.

Children need to have set boundaries of behaviour for their own safety and the safety of their peers. Within the setting we aim to set these boundaries in a way which helps the child to develop a sense of the significance of their own behaviour, both on their own environment and those around them. Restrictions on the child's natural desire to explore and develop their own ideas and concepts are kept to a minimum.

We recognise that children may experience difficulty maintaining their self-control and may need the time and space to manage their emotions and calm down. We will ensure

- Children have an identified space where they can go to 'reflect on their actions.'
- This is not a punishment but a tool to allow the child to regulate their own self control
- Children can choose to use the area on their own where they can be quiet, rest, or think.

We aim to:

- Recognise the individuality of all our children and that some behaviours are normal in young children e.g. biting
- Encourage self-discipline, consideration for each other, our surroundings and property
- Encourage children to participate in a wide range of group activities to enable them to develop their social skills
- Ensure that all staff act as positive role models for children
- Work in partnership with parents by communicating openly
- Praise children and acknowledge their positive actions and attitudes, therefore ensuring that children see that we value and respect them

- Encourage all staff working with children to accept their responsibility for implementing the goals in this policy and are consistent
- Promote non-violence and encourage children to deal with conflict peacefully
- Provide a key worker system enabling staff to build a strong and positive relationship with children and their families

We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and staff are required to be aware of this and respect those used by members of the settings.

We are concerned with safety and care and respect for each other. Children, who behave inappropriately by physically abusing another child or adult e.g. biting, or through verbal bullying, will be required to talk through these actions and apologise where appropriate. The child who has been upset will be comforted and the adult will confirm that the other child's behaviour is not acceptable. It is important to acknowledge when a child is feeling angry or upset and that it is the behaviour we are rejecting, not the child.

When children behave in unacceptable ways:

- Physical punishment such as smacking or shaking will be neither used nor threatened.
- Children will not be singled out or humiliated in any way.
- Staff within the setting will re-direct the children towards alternative activities.
- Discussions with children will take place respecting their level of understanding and maturity
- Staff will not raise their voices in a threatening way
- In any case of misbehaviour, it will always be made clear to the child or children in question, that it is the behaviour and not the child that is unwelcome

How a particular type of behaviour is handled will depend on the child's age, level of development and the circumstances surrounding the behaviour. It may involve the child being asked to 'take a break' and think about what he/she has done. It may also include the child apologising for their actions. Parents will be informed if their child is unkind to others or if their child has been upset. In all cases inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in the

setting at the time. Parents may be asked to meet with staff to discuss their child's behaviour, so that if there are any difficulties we can work together to ensure consistency between their home and the setting. In some cases we may request additional advice and support from other professionals, such as an early years advisor or educational psychologist.

Children need to develop non-aggressive strategies to manage their feelings. They need to be given opportunities to release their feelings more creatively. By positively promoting good behaviour, valuing co-operation and a caring attitude we hope to ensure that children will develop as responsible members of society.

Confidential records will be kept on any negative behaviour that has taken place. Parents will be informed and asked to read and sign any entries concerning their child.

If a child requires help to develop positive behaviour, every effort will be made to provide for their needs.

Through partnership with parents and formal observations, staff will make every effort to identify any behavioural concerns and the causes of that behaviour. From these observations and discussions an individual behaviour modification plan will be implemented.

In the event where a child's behaviour involves aggressive actions towards other children and staff, for example hitting, kicking etc. the manager should complete risk assessments identifying any potential triggers or warning signs ensuring other children and staff safety at all times. Children will be distracted from the negative situation and supported in a different activity or invited to 'take a break' if necessary for their own well-being and that of others in the group.

When dealing with negative behaviour, staff will always communicate in a clear, calm and positive manner at a level appropriate to age and stage of development.

Staff will encourage and facilitate mediation between children appropriate to their age and stage of development to try to resolve conflicts by discussion and negotiation.

Provision of Food and Drink

Bright Sparks have an important role to play in promoting healthy eating habits within the setting. We encourage parents to support our healthy eating policy by requesting that they do not send sweets, crisps or sugary drinks with their children.

Nutritional Policy:

The following guidelines as recommended by the Public Health Agency and guidance from Nutrition Matters for Early Years are adhered to in planning and preparation of children's meals and snacks.

A variety of foods are selected from each of the four food groups every day

- Bread, cereals, rice, pasta and potatoes
- Fruit and vegetables
- Milk and dairy food
- Meat, fish and alternations

At least one portion of bread, potato, rice, pasta is included in each meal
Whole milk and water is used routinely

At least 2 servings of fruit and vegetables are provided each day per child

Low fat spreads are not used

The minimum possible salt is used in cooking and no salt added at table
Fresh potatoes are served in preference to instant

Chips are served a maximum of once a week

Cultures and religious preferences are catered for where appropriate

Individual dietary requirements are catered for when appropriate

Policy on drinking water:

There is a water fountain available for all children to access drinking water throughout the day.

Children will be assisted in obtaining a drink of water should they need help.

Suitable bottles and cups are provided for children to drink water from.

Babies' bottle feeds:

Parents will provide empty bottles with secure fitting lids, clearly labeled with the child's name and their child's formula in the original container or an alternative suitable storage container. Childcare staff will make the bottles as required. Please ensure that your child's individual feeding routine is passed to their key worker or staff member on arrival. Staff will never leave your baby to feed unattended.

Before making your baby's feed we will:

- Sterilise your baby's feeding equipment if required.
- Clean and disinfect the work surface.
- Wash and dry hands.
- We do not use a microwave to heat babies formula;
- All bottles will be returned to parents at the end of the day.

Menu Planning:

Well-balanced meals and snacks are prepared to ensure children cared for are provided with the energy and nutrients they require. All menus are planned in advance with the catering manager and the childcare manager and reviewed every 3 months. The snacks are prepared in the settings kitchen by childcare staff while the hot lunch is prepared by the Re-Fresh Café situated in the same building.

Menus are displayed in advance for the parent's information. A list will be kept regarding children's food allergies and hypersensitivities. A member of staff trained in First Aid will always be available who is aware of dealing with anaphylactic shock.

Food Safety:

During the course of activities, children will be involved in preparing and eating a variety of foods. The manager is responsible for ensuring that children and staff involved in handling procedures are fully aware of this policy, and comply with regulations regarding food safety and hygiene.

- Staff and children must always wash and dry hands immediately before preparing food and after using the toilet.
- All staff involved in preparation of food has received Food Hygiene training. A record of this will be kept on file.
- Staff will always use clean equipment and wipe surfaces using an antiseptic spray before and after preparing food.
- Staff or children will not be involved in the preparation of food if they have an infectious illness or skin condition (see list of diseases and illnesses)
- Different chopping boards will be used for fruit, dairy and meat products.
- All snacks and most cooking activities will be nutritious and will respect dietary requirements.
- The inclusion of children in the preparation of food and food making activities will be an opportunity for staff to discuss nutrition and health and hygiene issues with the children.

Reporting Adverse and Untoward Incidents

We understand our legal duty to report certain accidents and incidents (including specific diseases) to the Enforcing Authorities. We realise we must identify reportable injuries, deaths and dangerous occurrences and report them in the appropriate manner. We have the facility to instigate control measures by:

- Identifying those accidents, diseases and incidents (near miss) that should be reported to the Enforcing Authority e.g. Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland or Local Authority (information can be found in the **guidance notes**).
 - Ensuring that all relevant incidents are reported and investigated.
- Responsibility for undertaking these measures has been delegated to the Manager/deputy manager.

Procedures:

Our risk assessments are carried out jointly by the manager and room leaders
The process covers adults and children and includes:

- checking for and noting hazards and risks indoors and outside, and in our premises and for activities;
- assessing the level of risk and who might be affected;
- deciding which areas need attention;
- developing an action plan that specifies the action required;
- the time-scales for action, the person responsible for the action and any funding required.

We maintain lists of health and safety issues, which are checked daily before the session begins. Risk assessments are reviewed annually or earlier if appropriate.

Safe Guarding and Child Protection

The Children Order NI 1995 provides a framework for the care and protection of children. It is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children. This policy and procedure is based on the 5 key principles of the legislation:

- The child/children's welfare is paramount and must over-ride all other considerations.
- Intervention should be child centred and should involve a measured approach minimizing the potential for abuse, trauma or disruption to the child/children and maximizing the child's involvement in the process
- Parents have the right to respect, consultation and involvement in matters which concern their family.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents
- Multi-disciplinary/multi-agency information sharing, collaboration and understanding are essential to the safeguarding of children and to the promotion of their well-being.
- While families have the right to confidentiality any information about child welfare issues should be shared on a need to know basis. Information shared for the health or protection of the child or protection of others is not a breach of confidentiality or professional ethics. Staff must be mindful of the criminal aspects of all cases under consideration.

Preventing abuse by means of good practice by:

1. Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers;
2. Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children/young people, parents, staff and volunteers
3. Working in partnership, sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children/young people appropriately;
4. Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;

5. Ensuring that all necessary vetting requirements are completed for all staff, students and volunteers with responsibility for children
6. Managing staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
7. Ensure details of Child protection officer are clearly displayed with flow chart to show procedure to be followed.

In order to achieve this we will:

- Making all new staff, students and volunteers aware of our child protection procedures and policies.
- Appointing designated officer's to enable any concerns to be reported in accordance with our procedures
- Information relating to named designated officers is clearly displayed in order that procedures can be followed.
- In house training will be delivered to ensure that all childcare workers are aware of the guidelines within Bright Sparks Childcare Nursery for reporting suspected abuse.

Reporting Procedures:

All staff are familiar with Bright Sparks reporting procedures and the need for clear, factual and accurate reporting, which distinguishes between fact, opinion and hearsay. This will be recorded on a **Cause for Concern Form** available in childcare office.

1. Staff/volunteer/trainees reports accurate factual information to designated officer using the appropriate paperwork
2. Designated Officer reports accurate factual information to the appropriate body:

In the case of a child/young person disclosing it is important to:

- Listen to the child/young person rather than directly question him or her. Offer reassurance without making promises
- Stay calm and reassuring
- Explain to the child/young person that if the complaint is of a serious nature that it may be necessary to inform others
- Listen to everything the child/young person has to say –never stop the child from recalling significant events; don't over react; explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Under no circumstances interrogate the child/young person
- Be clear in your mind what the child/young person has related to you

- Ask if he/she has told anyone else and if not, who would be a good person to contact
- Thank the child/young person for informing you and reassure him/her that they were right to do so

Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse:

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in your organisation has concerns, a record should be made on **Cause for Concern Form**.

Action:

- Record the discussions accurately and as soon as possible after the event. Remember to be factual and accurate and clearly distinguish between fact, opinion and hearsay.
- Contact the designated person immediately and seek guidance in relation to the complaint. The Designated Officer may contact the Social Services and if appropriate make a direct referral. It is important to keep a record of ALL actions taken i.e. letters and telephone calls.
- All complaints/allegations shall be dealt with in accordance with the organisations policy and procedures however the designated person may consider that complaints of a lesser nature i.e. bullying, cheating etc may be handled internally without outside involvement. It must be emphasised that each case will be thoroughly investigated and remedied to the satisfaction of the involved parties.
- We acknowledge that reporting abuse can be a distressing experience for staff and volunteers consequently support will be offered throughout the process.
- Everyone in the organisation will have in their possession a current copy of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Child Protection Procedures Flow Chart

On discovery or suspicion of child abuse or neglect



Inform your Named Person for Child Protection

Designated Officer **Una Gilmore**

Deputy Officers

Tanya Malone, Cher Allen and Carly Magowan on 02890 463480

Who should then take the following steps



Where it is clear that a Child Protection Referral is needed contact **THE BELFAST (HSC) GATEWAY TEAM** without delay

Tel No 02890507000

Out of hrs Emergency Duty Team

Tel No 02895049999



Where the Named Person is not sure whether it is a child protection issue, they may seek advice from **THE GATEWAY TEAM**



Phone the EARLY YEARS TEAM to inform them on 02895042811.

Remember always make and keep a written factual record of all events and action taken, date and sign each entry to this record. Keep records confidential and secure.

IF IN DOUBT ACT NOW !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Signs and symptoms of Abuse

1.0 Forms of abuse

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person's human and civil rights. The abuse can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.

Forms of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse** such as punching, pushing, pinching, slapping
- **Sexual abuse** such as rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person has not consented
- **Psychological or emotional abuse** such as threats of harm or abandonment
- **Financial or material abuse** such as theft, fraud or exploitation
- **Neglect** such as failing to provide for basic physical, emotional or social needs so that the persons health or well being is impaired
- **Discriminatory abuse** such as that based on race, age, disability, gender, colour, nationality, sexuality or religion

2.0 Alerting signs and symptoms

A person may become alerted to the possibility of abuse by:

- Allegations made by another person
- A person telling them or showing them that they have been mistreated
- An admission from someone who says they are harming another person
- Noticing signs and symptoms themselves

3.1 The physical signs of abuse may include

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds

3.2 Emotional indicators may include

- Otherwise, unexplained crying
- Withdrawal, feeling socially isolated
- Decreased self-esteem, sleep disturbances and depression

3.3 Financial indicators may include

- Inadequate money or material goods to meet own basic needs
- Not paying bills resulting in personal debts
- Lack of awareness of their own financial situation
- Not in possession of bank/post office account cards

3.4 Signs of neglect may include

- Underweight and always hungry
- Lethargy and lack of motivation
- The persons emotional and physical development may be affected by his/her need for love, care, food, security and stimulation

3.5 Behavioural indicators of abuse

- Uncharacteristic sexually explicit behaviour
- Open masturbation or aggressive sexual activity with peers
- Overly compliant or watchful attitude
- Acting out aggressive, destructive, irritable and /or generally hostile behaviour
- Depression or signs of withdrawal or regression
- An air of detachment – “ don’t care” attitude
- Mistrust of everyone
- Complaints of pain or discomfort with no medical explanation
- Eating problems
- Misuse of alcohol or illicit drugs
- Sleep disturbance
- Displays of unhappiness only in a particular environment
- Fear, anxiety or severe agitation displayed without identifiable cause
- Self- mutilation, particular but not exclusively in the genital area

Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse against a Staff Member:

- Allegations or concerns of bad practice relating to a staff member such as aggressive or threatening behaviour towards a child may be dealt with under disciplinary procedures.
- All complaints of child abuse against staff must be handled swiftly and sensitively according to ACPC procedures for investigating any concerns of abuse. The basic principles of child protection must apply and underpin the whole process.
- If at any point it appears that a serious physical assault or sexual abuse may have been committed, the person in charge who is present must inform the Gateway Team
- The member of staff will be informed that the Child Protection procedures are being invoked, which may involve Social Services and the Police. This must be done without questioning the member of staff about

the complaint and making it clear that they have the right to be accompanied by a representative or friend at all stages.

- The designated officer will discuss procedures with senior management and take appropriate action i.e. suspension or relocation.
- Parent(s) will be informed as will appropriate staff members and the Early Years nominated social worker that the organisation is dealing with the situation.
- EBM and Bright Sparks will conduct its own investigation in conjunction with the Gateway and Early Years Team in relation to practice issues. EBM's disciplinary procedures may be followed.
- Following an assessment of the evidence, the information may then be sent as a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) for consideration.
- Ensure that careful consideration is given to the kind of support that the member of staff concerned will require and his or her colleagues, both during any investigations and after it has reported any findings.

Intimate/Personal Care:

We aim to ensure that all children have their dignity preserved and receive a high level of privacy.

Information of a sensitive nature should only be shared with those who need to know, such as parents/carers and key workers.

Any intimate care, such as nappy changing and toilet training, will be carried out with respect and regard to the child's right to dignity and privacy.

Wherever possible, their key worker will carry out this care and ensure it is used as a time for positive shared interaction rather than just a hurried routine.

Procedure

Staff will have regard to strict hygiene procedures by wearing disposable gloves and aprons and appropriately cleaning equipment. Soiled nappies must be placed in a nappy sack before disposing of in the nappy bin. Children should not be allowed to take toys into the bathroom.

Older children will be encouraged to use self-help skills with regard to toileting but their key person should be aware of their abilities in this area and be available to offer help if necessary.

- Allow the child to care for themselves as far as possible
- Explain to the child that you need to get them washed/cleaned
- Ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation
- Staff and child's hand will be washed using anti-bacterial soap and changing mat/area also cleaned with anti-bacterial spray to avoid cross contamination
- Plastic gloves and aprons should be worn and soiled clothing will be wrapped securely and either disposed of or returned to parents

Staff should promote appropriate use of toilets and associated skills and work with parents to facilitate toilet training providing a consistent approach.

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation e.g. marks bruises soreness he/she will immediately report concerns to the designated officer. An incident report will be completed and where appropriate parents will be asked to give an explanation and to sign and date report. If required designated officer will inform social services and/or police if they believe the child is at risk from significant harm. Where appropriate parents will be kept informed at all times of this process.

Care in the sun:

Spending time outside is an essential part of a health promoting lifestyle. During the summer months when the sun is stronger, precautions must be taken in order to keep children safe whilst they are outdoors.

The following procedures are in place;

- Sunscreen is applied before children go outside the building.
- Children over the age of 3 years will be encouraged to apply sun cream themselves in order to encourage independence and self care, however adults will supervise to ensure that they have covered any skin not covered by clothing
- It is acceptable to apply sunscreen on the hands and face to protect exposed skin areas.
- Shaded areas outdoors will be used in the planning of outdoor activities.

- Between 11am and 3pm, time spent outdoors, without shade, will be limited.
- Sunscreen will be reapplied often throughout the day.
- Children will be encouraged to sip water whilst outdoors to remain hydrated.

Parents will be responsible for the following procedures in order to work in partnership with Bright Sparks to keep children safe in the sun;

- Children should be supplied with a wide-brimmed hat that shades their face, neck and ears.
- Parents must apply sunscreen to their child in the morning, before arriving at nursery, even if it is not sunny or hot at that time in the morning.
- Parents must provide the nursery with sunscreen, at least factor 30 and formulated for children and babies skin.

Photography and Video:

We recognise the need to ensure the welfare and safety of children and young people and do not permit photographs, video or other images of children and young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children.

Staff will only use cameras that are designated for the sole use of practitioners and these will be stored securely. Personal photographic equipment will not be used and we will regularly review stored images and delete unwanted material from cameras and ensure a secure computer network. All photographs/videos remain the property of Bright Sparks.

The following are the guidelines all staff/volunteers in Bright Sparks should follow:

- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child/young person;
- Ensure parental consent to use an image of a child/young person

- Only images of children/young people in suitable dress should be taken to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- If anyone becomes aware of inappropriate images of children/young people being used this should be reported immediately to the designated officer.

External Photographers

Must be provided with a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour

Should be issued with identification which must be worn at all times

Children/young people and parents should be informed that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs

Do not allow unsupervised access to children/young people or one to one photo sessions

Children/young people and parents should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to the manager and/or designated person.

Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or leader and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern

External visits and outings

Children benefit from being taken out of the setting to go on visits or trips to local parks or other suitable venues for activities which enhance their learning experiences. Bright Sparks ensure that there are procedures to keep children safe on outings; all staff and volunteers are aware of and follow the procedures below:

- Parents sign a general consent on registration for their children to be taken out as a part of the daily activities of the setting.
- There is a risk assessment for each venue carried out, which is reviewed regularly
- Parents are always asked to sign specific consent forms before major outings with venue details, date and times, mode of transport and staff.
- Our adult to child ratio is maintained at the same level as in force in the setting. Additionally, where possible parents and or volunteers are encouraged to join in.

Staff will take a mobile phone on outings, and supplies of tissues, wipes, spare clothing etc as well as snacks and water. A first aider will be present with a suitably equip first aid box. A register including contact numbers of parents/carers as well as any medication and details of known allergies.

Staff will ensure the children's safety throughout the outing by undertaking regular head counts and providing a high child /adult ratio.

Records are kept of the vehicles used to transport children, with named drivers and appropriate insurance cover.

Children should be easily recognisable, e.g. high visibility vest, hats and a label with the mobile number and name of setting.

On arrival each group will be allocated a meeting point where children can make their way to should they become lost

At the conclusion of each outing the staff will complete a review

- Suitability of venue for age group of children
- Any particular problems with transport/venue
- Any particular problems with specific children (illness, distress, etc)
- Educational benefits of the visit
- Comments from parents
- Recommendation for future visits.

Missing Child:

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every staff member has responsibility to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

- Parents *must* ensure that staff have an up to date contact number in case of emergencies.
- Staff *must* keep the register up to date by signing children in and out of the setting.

Child going missing on the premises:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing staff will alert the manager or person in charge.
- The manager/designated person will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside area. CCTV footage should be immediately reviewed.
- Whilst carrying out the search staff must ensure that the adequate supervision of other children is maintained. Staff should remain calm and reassure the other children in the setting.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- If a complete search has been carried out and all adults on the premises have been consulted and the child has still not been located the Manager/designated person will inform the parents and contact the police and report the child missing.
- The incident will be recorded in incident book along with the outcome.
- Manager/Deputy will also inform the Director and the Early Years Team.

Child going missing on an outing:

Very occasionally a child may become separated from the group on an outing or become lost. To ensure the safety of children in our care we place a strong emphasis on prevention in order to minimise the risk of a child becoming lost. We do this by carrying out a risk assessment for offsite activities and preparing children accordingly.

If it is realised that a child is no longer with the group the following procedures should be followed:

- In the event of child/children being lost the action plan agreed with the host centre should be implemented. This will involve the host staff where appropriate and leader of Bright Sparks undertaking a joint search. Those staff not involved in the search will take responsibility for the remaining children and the leader's key children will be re-allocated.
- Information as to the last sighting of the child/children should form the starting point of the search. A description of the child and relevant information should be shared with the search party.
- Contact the line manager and brief of the situation.

The search must be time limited; if child/children is not found within 10 to 15 minutes of undertaking the search the appropriate services should be contacted.

The parents/carers must be informed and reassurance given. A contact number will be given to the parents/carer and an agreed time scale for regular updates set. A nominated person will ensure the consistency of contact throughout.

A written report should be completed on return.

Follow Up Review:

Once the incident has been resolved, the manager must review all relevant policies and procedures and implement any changes where necessary. This should also include a review of the security of the premises and effectiveness of risk assessments, to ensure that adequate measures are being taken to minimise risk and safeguard the children. Where changes are required these should be made as soon as possible.

Social network sites:

In the context of this policy “everyone” refers to members of staff, friends and anyone working in a voluntary capacity within Bright Sparks.

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace, Instagram or Twitter and posting material, images or comments on sites such as YouTube can have a negative effect on an organisation’s reputation or image. In addition, Bright Sparks has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

Key Principles

- Everyone at Bright Sparks has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of EBM and the setting, and to treat colleagues and members of the organisation with professionalism and respect.
- It is important to protect everyone at Bright Sparks from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.
- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone at Bright Sparks considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of work. Anyone working in Bright Sparks either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children and parents via social networking.

Aims

To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, friends and volunteers at Bright Sparks with respect to social networking. To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

Code of Conduct for Everyone Bright Sparks – Social Networking

The following are not considered acceptable at Bright Sparks:

- The use of the Bright Sparks name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of Bright Sparks. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of Bright Sparks.
- The posting of any images of employees, children or anyone directly connected with Bright Sparks whilst engaged in Bright Sparks activities.

In addition to the above everyone at Bright Sparks must ensure that they:

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the childcare facility, or anyone at or connected with the childcare facility.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation or the setting's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

- Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure..
- Bright Sparks will take appropriate action in order to protect their reputation and that of its staff, parents, volunteers, children and anyone else directly linked to the childcare setting.

Mobiles phones

To ensure the safety and welfare of children in our care we operate a personal mobile phone usage policy which stipulates that personal mobile phones cannot be used when in the presence of children on the premises or when on outings.

To ensure this we will ensure that:

- Mobile phones will not be permitted in the childcare rooms. Staff may avail of lockers in the staff room.
- Mobile phone calls may only be taken at staff breaks or in staff members' own time.
- If you have a personal emergency you are free to use the setting's phone or make a personal call from your mobile in the designated staff area of the setting.
- Staff must ensure that managers have up to date contact information and that staff make their families aware of emergency work telephone numbers. This is the responsibility of the individual staff member.
- During group outings nominated staff will have access to a mobile phone, which is to be used for emergency purposes only. The mobile phone is the property of EBM and for emergency calls only. There is no camera function on the phone.

Signature: **Name in Capitals:**

Role: **Date:**

Security of the setting

Our childcare nursery is purpose with a varied range of facilities and children have lots of space in which to play. We have a designated drop of area to enable you to drop your child off conveniently and safely. We take your child's security seriously at Bright Sparks and have a key fob system for all internal and external doors.

CCTV:

Safety and Security are of the utmost important to everyone at Bright Sparks. Our facilities and policies are designed with this in mind.

We have CCTV systems to monitor activity outside the nursery providing that extra level of security to give you peace of mind. Mobile telephones are banned from all rooms in the nursery. There is a keypad system for staff access and internal camera system to limit access to the setting. This ensures access is permitted only to known parents, children and visitors. All staff and visitors sign in and out of the building.

Equipment:

We are committed to providing children with access to a wide range of equipment that stimulates enjoyment, learning and development, both indoors and outdoors.

All furniture, toys and equipment are kept clean, well maintained and in good repair and in accordance with BS EN safety standards or the Toys (Safety) Regulations (1995) where applicable.

Equipment will be properly maintained and inspected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All electrical toys and equipment are subject to PAT (Portable Appliance Testing), and relevant staff are trained on the correct use of computers and other IT equipment.

All equipment and resources will be selected with care, and risk assessments carried out before new toys and equipment is purchased.

Through daily risk assessment checks all defective or broken equipment will be taken out of use and stored in a safe place before being disposed of.

Drop off and Pick up Area;

Bright Sparks Childcare and Nursery has a designated Drop off and Pick up area immediately outside the front door of the premises. This is clearly sign posted and should be kept clear at all times. The area has a one way traffic system in operation and all users are required to adhere to this to ensure the safety of all users.

Bright Sparks has a risk assessment in place for drop off and pickups and this is regularly reviewed to ensure the safety of all users in the facility.

Staffing

Behaviour and Conduct:

This Code of Conduct applies at all times when performing official duties including when we are representing Bright Sparks at, training events, conferences and attending work-related social events.

The primary aim of this is to promote good relationships, so that people can work together with the common purpose of helping everyone to learn, grow and develop. This policy supports the ethos of EBM in aiming to allow everyone to work together in an effective and considerate way.

Bright Sparks is committed to creating and maintaining an environment for children, parents, visitors and employees which is professional, child centred, safe and free of any form of unlawful or inappropriate behaviour.

All employees of EBM and Bright Sparks have an obligation to ensure their personal conduct and behaviour is at all times professional and lawful and does not reflect adversely on the reputation of EBM. All employees of Bright Sparks are required to perform their duties to a high standard and demonstrate impartiality and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities. Employees are to ensure there is no real or apparent conflict of interest between their private activities and their official duties.

Clothing and Uniform:

As you will come into contact with children, parents, other professionals, visitors and members of the public, it is important that you present a professional image with regard to appearance, standards of dress and personal presentation. Bright Sparks staff will be provided with 2 polo shirts and an outdoor fleece upon commencement of employment and every year thereafter. All staff will sign to say they have received the required uniform and will be required to return if employment ceases. Additional polo shirts and fleeces can be purchased by staff at cost price.

All staff will be required to wear the polo shirt and fleece with black trousers and black sensible footwear. These must have regard to health and safety considerations e.g. trousers that are of a length that they touch the ground when walking, rubber soles shoes. Stiletto heels and plastic flip-flops are not acceptable.

False nails, nail gel/polish and false eyelashes are not permitted. Nails should be sufficiently short to ensure safe contact and good hand hygiene.

The uniforms issued must not be altered or added to by the individual and laundered on a regular basis.

Signature: **Name in Capitals:**

Role: **Date:**

No Smoking:

This policy has been developed to protect the children, their parents/carers, employees and visitors to the nursery from exposure to second hand smoke and to assist compliance with the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. All our workplaces and vehicles are smoke-free, and all children and employees have the right to work and be cared for in a smoke free environment.

Smoking is prohibited in all areas of the workplace, including the grounds and immediate vicinity of the building.

Overall responsibility for policy implementation and review rests with the Manager. However, all staff are obliged to adhere to and support the implementation of the policy. Existing staff shall be informed of the policy and their role in the implementation and monitoring of it. New employees will be given a copy of the policy.

Appropriate 'No Smoking' signs will be displayed at the entrances to, and within the buildings.

EBM disciplinary procedures will be followed if a member of staff does not comply with this policy. Those who do not comply with the smoke free law may also be liable to a fixed penalty fine and possible criminal prosecution.

Discipline:

The purpose of this procedure is to encourage employees to conform to their contracts of employment and EBM rules and regulations in relation to attendance, time-keeping, attention to work, safety and conduct generally and to promote attitudes of self-discipline among employees. It also aims to ensure fairness and consistency of treatment in disciplinary cases while ensuring that the unreasonable conduct of an employee does not disrupt the work environment.

Disciplinary action includes those listed in the schedule below. It should be noted that these are not necessarily progressive. Disciplinary action will be appropriate to the breach of discipline.

Employees will be given reasons for the disciplinary action contemplated or being taken, e.g. allegations of misconduct/ unsatisfactory performance. They will receive this in writing prior to any disciplinary hearings or investigation interviews.

Formal disciplinary action will only take place after a hearing before a panel of at least two members. Each case will be judged on its own individual circumstances and merits and appropriate consideration will be given to any mitigating circumstances put forward and to previous record of service.

At each stage of this procedure an employee shall have the right to a fair disciplinary hearing with the opportunity to state their case. They will also have the right, where reasonably requested, to be accompanied at a disciplinary hearing or disciplinary appeal hearing by a work colleague from EBM or by a trade union official before any disciplinary action is taken. Disciplinary hearings are those which could result in the administration of a formal warning or some other disciplinary penalty including dismissal. Meetings held for the sole purpose of providing informal counselling, are not regarded as disciplinary hearings.

The disciplinary penalty will be confirmed in writing. This will specify the misconduct, the improvement expected, the duration of the penalty, the likely consequence of further misconduct and the right to appeal. Full details of Disciplinary Policy and Procedure can be found in the staff handbook.

Grievance:

This procedure will be used to deal with issues which are causing grievance to an individual employee. It covers all differences between EBM and an individual which affect conditions of service including issues of grading. The purpose of this procedure is to provide an open and fair way for employees to make known their complaints and to have issues considered and if possible resolved at the appropriate level of management.

There is an expectation that this procedure does not absolve employees from their responsibility to make every effort to resolve issues of grievance through their existing lines of staff/management communication. Only where informal efforts are unsuccessful should the Grievance Procedure be used.

Stage 1:

An employee wishing to raise an informal grievance should do so in the first instance with their Line Manager. If an employee is not satisfied then they can proceed to raise a formal grievance.

Stage 2:

An employee wishing to raise a formal grievance should put details of their grievance in writing to the Human Resources Manager.

The HR Manager will arrange to investigate the issue and arrange a grievance meeting at which the employee may put forward reasons in support of their grievance. The meeting will consist of a panel of two members. The employee may be personally represented at the hearing by a trade union representative or colleague. The meeting will normally be arranged within 14 days of receipt of the written grievance. The decision of the panel will be conveyed to the employee within 7 days of the hearing.

Appealing the Decision

If an employee wishes to appeal the decision, they must refer the matter, to the Director within 7 working days from the date of the Grievance Panel decision. The employee must forward a copy of the original written grievance with other supporting evidence relevant to their grievance.

The Director will arrange an appeal hearing involving the employee (and his/her representative where appropriate) and the Appeal Panel within 10 working days of receipt of the Appeal or where this is not possible within a reasonable time scale mutually agreed.

Induction:

Each new member of staff will complete a staff induction process. This will ensure that all employees receive a Statement of Main Terms and Conditions, job description, access to the Employee Handbook, additional policies, and Health + Safety training. Additionally, the process will improve their understanding of Bright Sparks and EBM and their role within it. Each member of staff will have a designated Line Manager.

Meetings:

Bright Sparks staff attend a number of meetings as detailed below. Full team meetings are held every 2 months, and will cover changes in P&P, registration requirements, information sessions and training information as well as news and events in the wider organisation. There will also be weekly staff meetings in each room for reflecting on practice, reviewing planned activities and observations. Staff meetings will be a forum for setting objectives for the room. Room Leaders will meet monthly with the manager to look at planning, rota's ratios and any issues that may arise.

Records:

EBM shall maintain a Personnel File and computer records for each employee in Bright Sparks. The employee shall have right of access to these records when requested through the Human Resources Department. EBM is required to keep records relating to its employees and aspects of their employment. EBM will only hold and maintain records which are required by law or to enable EBM to achieve its objectives. EBM will operate within the Data Protection Act (1984)

Recruitment:

EBM and Bright Sparks recognises that the vast majority of people who wish to work with children and young people are well motivated; our recruitment and selection procedures are in place to screen out those who are not suitable.

- We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.
- We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
- All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.
- All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.
- Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.
- Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
- We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.
- Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.
- Confirmation and commencement of employment will only begin after AccessNI, Social Services checks and references have been received.

We acknowledge that no matter how stringent recruitment and selection procedures may be, they are not 'fool proof', therefore good practice in management and supervision of staff after appointment is crucial.

Probationary Period:

Staff join us on an initial period of 6 months or as per letter of offer. During this period their work performance and general suitability will be assessed and, if it is satisfactory, employment will continue. However, if work performance is not up to the required standard, the individual is considered to be generally unsuitable, we may either take remedial action (which may include the extension of your probationary period) or terminate employment at any time. We reserve the right not to apply our full contractual capability and disciplinary procedures during your probationary period.

Rotas

Bright Sparks is conscious of the importance of maintaining adequate staff: child ratios required by regulations and ensuring that children are cared for safely and given adequate attention and support.

The following ratios are maintained at all times:

Child age under 2 years:	Ratios 1 staff: 3 children
Child age 2 years to 3 years:	Ratios 1 staff: 4 children
Child age 3 years to 8 years:	Ratios 1 staff: 8 children

In order to achieve this we:

Have a flexible shift pattern agreed with staff and ensure that the shifts overlap during peak/busy times of the day.

Have a number of bank/flexible staff and volunteers.

Policies and procedures for managing and reporting absence from work.

Supervision and Appraisal:

Bright Sparks recognises the need for regular and effective supervision of its staff [paid or unpaid]. Supervision is a formalised, regular meeting provided by the designated line manager every 6 - 8 weeks. There will also be an annual appraisal to agree your main objectives for your role in the coming year in line with organisational objectives.

This is to ensure the following:

- That individuals feel well supported and motivated in their work
- That quality services are delivered to service users
- That the organisation can function effectively

Supervision is an opportunity to review staffs performance and to monitor their progress. Any gaps in skills and training needs can be identified in order to enhance professional development. The staff member’s achievements in their work are also identified and celebrated.

It is a place where a member of staff can be challenged supportively and constructively within mutually agreed and accepted boundaries. Issues relating to the workplace and to working practices can be identified and discussed and targets agreed upon.

This is also an opportunity to show that the member of staff is a valued member of the Bright Sparks team and it offers a chance to ensure that their emotional well-being is considered and that their personal development needs are being met. During the session, the member of staff will be able to ‘offload’ their concerns and these can be discussed in a supportive environment.

A supervision agreement is discussed and signed by the supervisor and supervisee which agrees the following:

- Frequency; Duration and setting
- Statement about interruptions
- Primary method of supervision
- Use of records (confidentiality)
- Expectations of Employee (accountability, self-evaluation)
- Expectations of Supervisor(preparation)
- Review

Both parties receive a copy of supervision and any agreed actions and targets. All records are stored in line with data protection policies.

All staff will have an annual performance development review with your manager to agree on the top 4-6 objectives for their role for the coming year in line with organisational objectives. This will reflect on the progress achieved and the training and development requirements to allow for personal development and meet the requirements of the job.

Training and Development:

EBM and Bright Sparks see its staff as its key resource, and give a high priority to staff development and training.

The individual training and development needs will be identified through supervision and appraisals with staff, and requests from employees. All internal training provided by the organisation will be of no cost to the employee. External courses and professional qualifications may be fully or partly funded by EBM or subsidiary companies, depending on the nature of the training.

As part of EBM's continuing commitment to training and development, employees are asked to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the training and development they undertake. This information will be used to assess and improve the training process. This policy respects equal opportunities and applies to all employees including part-time and temporary staff.

Transport for service users

It is our policy to take all reasonable steps to manage the health and safety of those staff that drive and are transported on Mission business. This is to comply with our legal duties as an employer and to demonstrate that we have taken all reasonable steps to introduce safe systems of work. It is for this reason that our policy not only sets out our procedures on work-related driving, but details what we expect from our employees; both in terms of complying with relevant legislation and our own standards. These cover a variety of areas including the documentation that we need to see from own-car drivers on Mission business, as well as basic guidelines on driver health. In order to comply with our legal duties, we have introduced a set of procedures. These are to be followed by staff at all times and are as follows:

- Where a Mission vehicle is provided, employees must always report any suspected mechanical defects to their line manager. In the event

that a defect is suspected, staff should never take a risk and attempt to drive a vehicle.

- If an employee uses their own vehicle for business use, they will be required to maintain it in a roadworthy condition.
- Before embarking on a long journey, employees should always carry out basic checks, e.g. check oil, water levels and tyre pressure.
- Staff should follow any advice given on route planning. They should also ensure that sufficient breaks are built-in to prevent fatigue and allow for any bad weather or traffic congestion, etc.
- Staff should also follow any instructions given relating to driving hours and in particular, any requirement to record time spent driving.
- Hand-held mobile phones should never be used whilst driving and calls should only be made or taken when it's safe to do so.
- Staff should always drive within speed limits and according to the prevailing weather conditions.
- Before driving, staff should familiarise themselves with the procedure to follow in the event of a breakdown.

Documentation:

In order for us to comply with our legal duties, we will require those using their own vehicles on Mission business to produce basic documentation. Where this is necessary the appropriate line manager will take responsibility for checking the following on an annual basis:

- The employee's driving licence
- If the car is more than three years old, the current MOT certificate
- Insurance documents indicating that the vehicle is insured for business use.

Employee Duties:

Where appropriate, employees are expected to follow the above procedures and to:

- Ensure that they have the correct class of insurance for the use of a private vehicle on Mission business.

- Keep their insurance up-to-date if using their own vehicle on Mission business.
- Make available copies of the above documents annually or when requested to do so.
- Inform their line manager of any changes in circumstances, e.g. penalty points, new insurance company or vehicle.
- Keep any private vehicle used on Mission business in a roadworthy condition.
- Have regular eye tests and ensure that any necessary glasses for driving are worn.
- Read any updates that we may periodically issue on road safety matters. These will include information on good practice as well as forthcoming legal changes which affect those who drive for work.
- Ensure that they keep up-to-date with changes to the Highway Code.

Ill-health and Driving:

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they are physically fit to drive. Drivers should also remember that some prescription drugs can cause drowsiness and affect the ability to drive safely. In the event that medication is necessary, employees should check with their GP or pharmacist before driving; even over short distances.

Vehicles are often used to transport children to and from nursery and on outings as well as transporting equipment. It is therefore essential that there are clear rules to ensure both a safe and quality service is required.

- Records must be kept about vehicles in which children are transported, including insurance details and a list of named drivers. Drivers using their own transport must have adequate insurance cover (copy to be kept on record). The EBM Mini Bus is fitted with First Aid Kit & Fire Extinguisher.
- If a child is registered disabled their parents will be asked for the use of their “blue” parking badge and clock, to allow suitable parking once at the outing destination.

- Count the children before they board the vehicle and when they are on the vehicle so as to make sure the correct amount of children are on board. Have a list of all the children who are present.
- Take care, before departing that all passengers have a correctly fitted seatbelt and that their chair is in the proper position. Children must be provided with booster seats if required.
- Advise the children to keep their arms and legs within their seating area for safety.
- The vehicle must come to a stop/park to allow children to disembark directly onto a path BEFORE children are allowed to undo their seatbelts; breach of this rule will not only will result in disciplinary action but could involve legal action being taken
- Drivers must always park so that passengers can alight on the pavement and not on the road
- All drivers should be able to help children/passengers into and out of the vehicle as necessary
- To treat children/passengers in a professional and courteous manner at all times
- To identify children's/customer needs and assist in providing solutions to those needs
- To ensure that Child safety seats or appropriate booster seats are correctly installed and all children wear suitable safety belts or harnesses.
- To ensure that the windows near the children are kept locked

Whistle Blowing

Whistle blowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation. Bright Sparks is committed to delivering a high quality childcare service, promoting accountability, maintaining public confidence and achieving the highest possible ethical standards in all its practices. This policy provides individuals in the workplace with protection from victimisation or punishment when they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the setting.

If you become aware of any criminal offence or other wrongdoing in the workplace, you should report it immediately. If the wrongdoing gives rise to a personal grievance, you may raise the matter under the EBM's formal grievance procedure. Alternatively, if you simply wish to disclose a wrongdoing without raising a personal grievance, you may use the following whistle blowing procedure.

This procedure is not legally binding and does not form part of your contract of employment.

Principles:

In accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, EBM has instituted a system for reporting information which in your reasonable belief points to a wrongdoing at work.

A wrongdoing is any of the following:

- a criminal offence has been or is likely to be committed
- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice has happened, is happening or is likely to happen
- the health and safety of an individual has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- damage to the environment has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- Information showing any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed.

EBM wishes to ensure that any such wrongdoings are reported and dealt with. If you become aware of a wrongdoing at work then please follow the procedure below immediately. If you believe that EBM's managers may be involved in the wrongdoing, then please approach the Director directly.

Procedure:

An employee or volunteer who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise such a concern should normally report the matter to:

- The childcare manager who will carry out a prompt and thorough investigation of the matter and report their findings to the HR Manager.
- The HR Manager will take any necessary action including, if appropriate, reporting the matter to the relevant external authority. Where, as a result of the disclosure, it is necessary to take disciplinary action against an employee, this will be done in accordance with the EBM's formal discipline procedure.
- Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible and the employee or volunteer will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of raising any genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice within the setting.
- Concerns should be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.
- If you are not satisfied that your disclosure has been dealt with properly or you believe that your line manager or any of the EBM's managers are involved in the wrongdoing, raise your concerns directly with the Director.
- The Director, or an authorised deputy, will arrange for an investigation or further investigation to be carried out and take any necessary action.
- Alternatively you can contact the Registered Body 'Early Years Services' on 02895042811 for advice on what steps to follow.