

# LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI

38 A Hyde Vale, Greenwich,

London SE10 8QH



## POLICIES And PROCEDURES

The following Policies and Procedures are held at [Little Sponges](#) and are available to view at any time: -  
These policies are reviewed annually or when necessary.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
PARENTS (PARENTS AS PARTNERS)

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(Designated Person: Nicole Bacon/Deputy – Simone Ellis)

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(Designated Person : Nicole Bacon)

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# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

## PARENTS AS PARTNERS

It is very important for your child that we work in partnership. This will give your child continuity of care and he or she will not become confused with different standards of behaviour and boundaries.

As parents, you are the central adults in your child's life and the ones making decisions on their behalf. We will endeavour to work closely with you in order to carry out your wishes for your child whenever we can. LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI values the importance of communication with parents. We will provide you with a Parent Feedback Form which you can use to note any information that would be useful to us in the care and teaching of your child. Each child is allocated a Key Person who, together with any of the staff, will be available for you to speak to on a daily basis to exchange information and discuss any concerns.

It is vitally important that we are able to contact you at any time so please inform us immediately if there are any changes to your contact numbers, including work and mobile numbers and those of your emergency contacts.

Please feel free to discuss any issues that arise as your child grows and develops in order that we can work together and your wishes can be incorporated into our care routine for your child. For example, if you wish us to incorporate a special activity into our routine – perhaps a festival or religious holiday that you celebrate – please let us know.

If we have any concerns about your child's behaviour, development, eating habits etc. we will share them with you and if necessary work with you to seek support from outside agencies.

If your child is already involved with other support agencies, e.g. portage, please let us know. With your permission we may be able to work directly with these organisations to provide a more comprehensive care for your child.

We welcome input into our nursery from parents. Please discuss with the Head of Little Sponges if you would like to help within the setting e.g. coming along on outings etc.

## TRANSITION

As an Ofsted-registered nursery working in the Early Years Foundation Stage, we are very aware of the need to support both children and their families during the transition to another setting. This could be a child leaving the nursery to attend another setting, moving areas or starting school.

We will discuss any transitions with parents in advance and plan how we can support their child to make the change. This may involve reading books about starting school, for example. We can link activities to the transition and offer emotional support when needed. We can also help them to develop personal care skills so that they can be independent in the new settings e.g. putting on their own clothes/shoes, going to the toilet unaided as these activities are part of the Montessori curriculum.

We are happy to work with other settings, with your permission, to help smooth the transition for your child.

## WORKING WITH OTHER SETTINGS

As an Ofsted-registered nursery working in the Early Years Foundation Stage, we will work with other settings that your child attends, e.g. pre-school, childminders, etc., to ensure that your child benefits from the care that is given. Working/liasing with other settings that your child may attend enables the partnership to provide real continuity for your child's development.

# ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

For information on Little Sponges, please visit our website ([www.littlespongesmontessori.co.uk](http://www.littlespongesmontessori.co.uk)) which contains detailed and comprehensive information on the setting, photographs and contact details.

We actively encourage parents to visit the setting while sessions are in progress so that they can see how we operate and the interaction between the staff and the children. We request that parents make an appointment for these visits so that they do not have an impact on the running of the setting.

We request that parents complete a Registration form following the visit and send with a non-refundable registration fee of £35.00 to Little Sponges Montessori, 38a Hyde Vale, Greenwich, London SE10 8QH. Once registered, the child will be placed on our waiting list or offered a place if one is available at the time of registering. Before admission, we will require parents/carers to complete a comprehensive pack of documentation, namely the Application Form / Contract that can be downloaded from the website. This provides the setting with permission for events such as outings and the taking of photographs and detailed information on their child, enabling us to provide continuity of care where possible, as well as meeting the child's individual needs. Two copies of the Application Form/ Contract should be downloaded and completed. One copy should be signed by the parents or legal guardian of the child and sent to Little Sponges Montessori, 38a Hyde Vale, Greenwich, London SE10 8QH. The parent/legal guardian should retain the second copy. A deposit of £200.00 should accompany this Application Form/Contract and will be refunded when the child leaves Little Sponges, once all fees have been paid and four weeks' written notice, in term-time, is given. The deposit will be non-refundable if the place offered is not taken up.

A list of Policies and Procedures is kept at Little Sponges Montessori, 38a Hyde Vale, Greenwich, London SE10 8QH and can be viewed at any time. However, as part of the Contract and Admissions process, parents must read and understand the Policies and Procedures which can be viewed or downloaded from the website ([www.littlespongesmontessori.co.uk](http://www.littlespongesmontessori.co.uk)) before their child starts.

On admission, it is our policy to offer the child a settling-in period as the child has to become familiar with the new environment so that he/she feels safe and secure. The child will be allocated a key person to ensure they are available to provide the additional support the child may require although all staff will be involved in the child's care and education.

All children are welcomed to attend the sessions at Little Sponges Montessori and we make no discrimination. Children and families are all valued, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sex, and social and economic background. We demonstrate a commitment to working with parents to provide an environment that is suitable for their child's individual needs; this includes supporting children in developing independent toileting, and we will not exclude children using nappies.

Due to the high staff/child ratios and small, homely environment at Little Sponges, children tend to settle in more easily as they feel secure in a place that mirrors a homely atmosphere.

## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We, at Little Sponges Montessori, are strongly committed to supporting every child's learning and development in the Montessori method of education, together with the areas of Learning and Development as identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage, namely:

**PRIME AREAS** (*Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; Physical Development*) and **SPECIFIC AREAS** (*Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design*).

## TWO-YEAR PROGRESS CHECK:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires that parents and carers must be supplied with a short, written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS: *Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, and Communication and Language*, when the child is aged between 24-36 months.

The Progress Check enables earlier identification of development needs so that additional support can be put into place. Information will be provided to parents in the Prime areas of the learning and development of the EYFS. In preparing the report, we will refer to the *Early Years Outcomes (September 2013)* which sets out children's developmental progression across the Prime and Specific areas of learning from birth to five years. It offers helpful material for staff to inform and support our assessment judgements of a child's development in the Prime areas as well as identify if there are any areas in which a child may be developing at a faster or slower pace than the expected level of progress for their age.

We will also 'listen to the voice of the child'. Children have a right to be listened to and valued at Little Sponges and can become very able at thinking about and assessing their own learning and development if this is recognised and supported well. Children are encouraged to identify what they have enjoyed or found difficult. Very young children, and those with speech or other developmental delay or disability may not say anything or very little verbally, but they will communicate a great deal in other ways such as through gesture, action, and body language. We will inform and support our discussion with parents and other professionals where relevant.

## **OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING**

We continually observe the children in the nursery and assess and plan a holistic curriculum using the specialist Montessori materials and link it to the EYFS areas of learning and development. The staff constantly responds to the child's investigations wherever and whenever they occur. We need to examine not only what the child learns but also how, in order to appreciate the complexities of learning in the early years. The activities in the Montessori classroom have clearly defined aims and so contribute to the child's development as well as the content of the child's learning, they represent the curriculum. This curriculum is led by the needs of the child

Staff will note a child's achievements and actions they may make whilst playing or interacting with them. These observations are recorded in the My Montessori Child's web-based reporting system and shared with the family through the Parent Site of My Montessori Child. 'My Montessori Child' also reflects the links between the Montessori Curriculum and the Early Learning Goals. Other resources to record a child's progress include photographs, artwork, mark making and tape recordings of their conversations or music making.

This information is then assessed and evaluated by the staff to ensure that the child is progressing in all areas of the curriculum. The assessment is then used to plan further activities for the child. The aim of Observation, Assessment and Planning is to support the child's individual development and learning across the Montessori schemas of work, as well as the areas of learning and development in the EYFS.

### **Play**

We provide opportunities for children to play indoors and outdoors. The Montessori prepared environments (indoors and outdoors) allow children to engage in play spontaneously and in child-initiated activities. Challenging environments are provided for the children to help develop them intellectually, creatively, physically, socially, emotionally, reflectively and above all, safely and happily.

We believe that children's play is closely linked to each of the five outcomes for children: **EVERY CHILD MATTERS \_ Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Well-being.**

We have adopted some of the principles of Play: England's Charter for Children's Play:

*Children have the right to play; Every child should have time and space to play; Children need adults to let them play; Children value and benefit from supervised play provision; Skilled adults enrich children's play; Children in difficult situations need special attention to their right to play.*

## **PLANNING FOR THE EARLY YEARS**

LITTLE SPONGES brings the Montessori approach to the Early Years Foundation Stage and this guides our practice. We plan topics half-termly, which cover the Montessori principles. However, the main planning is centred around each individual child to enable staff to support a child on a one-to-one basis. Personalised learning is the key to helping the child reach his/her full potential.

In addition, special events and festivals such as Christmas, Chinese New Year and Diwali, to name a few, are planned and celebrated with the children. This helps to promote positive attitudes towards diversity and differences within all the children.

Planning is kept flexible in order to accommodate the changing needs and interests of the children. In a Montessori environment, the adults follow and guide the child and take advantage of spontaneous opportunities as and when they arise.

# EMPLOYMENT

## - SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

It is **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI'S** policy to recruit the most suitable person for each vacancy, regardless of sex, colour, race, nationality, national or ethnic origins, religion or beliefs, age or perceived age, sexual orientation or disability. Wherever possible, existing employees will be invited to apply for promotion opportunities when a suitable vacancy arises.

### Procedure

- *Staff concerned with recruitment must ensure that they comply fully with the organisation's equal opportunities policy at every stage of the recruitment process.*
- *Unless otherwise justified, a decision to shortlist, interview, employ or engage the services of any person will be taken without regard to the applicant's gender, marital status, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or disability.*
- *All job applications will be acknowledged within two weeks of receipt.*
- *Where appropriate, skills tests will form part of the interview*
- *When a suitable candidate has been identified, a job offer will be made subject to satisfactory references, proof of qualifications, sight of relevant documentation confirming the individual's right to work in the UK, provision of a DBS Disclosure (with a Barred List check) and a completed medical questionnaire that is acceptable to the employer.*
- *Each offer letter must be accompanied by a statement of the terms and conditions of employment relating to that position and a form for the applicant to sign denoting acceptance of the job on those conditions.*
- *In the case of internal promotions or transfers, the employee must be sent a letter confirming the variation to his or her terms and conditions eg salary. Details of the planned induction should also be sent with this letter, eg outlining any training and development.*
- *Appointments will not be confirmed, nor starting dates set, until satisfactory replies have been received from referees, proof of qualifications submitted by the employee, the required DBS Disclosures applied for, the medical questionnaire reviewed and documentation confirming the individual's right to work in the UK seen and copied.*
- *Once the starting date has been agreed, the successful will be informed in order that the induction programme can be arranged.*
- *All appointments will be made subject to a satisfactory probationary period. The Head will monitor new employees' progress closely during this period. Following this probation period, a recommendation will be made as to whether the employment should be confirmed, extended or terminated.*

## DISQUALIFICATION

Little Sponges Montessori follows its strict Safer Recruitment guidelines and will not employ anyone to work at the nursery, with children or staff, if they or others in their households are "disqualified".

The grounds for disqualification are not only that a person is barred from working with children (included on the children's barred list) but also if:--

- They have been cautioned for, convicted of or charged with certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults, at home or abroad;
- Other orders have been made against them relating to their care of children;
- They have had their registration cancelled in relation to childcare or children's homes or have been disqualified from private fostering;

Staff is required to sign a disclaimer, prior to appointment, to this effect.

## - STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS AND ROTAS

### Staff Deployment / Policy Statement

Here at **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI**, we use the Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare Requirements. However, we pride ourselves on high adult/child ratios at all times (four children to one adult). This enables us to provide a safer and richer learning environment for the children. It means we are better placed to support the individual needs of the children. Due to the nature of the specialist Montessori materials, the children are taught on a one-to-one basis and in small groups.

### Procedure

When we take the children on outings we always ensure that there is a higher level of staffing to support the children and their safety. Where volunteers are used to support outings we will take appropriate safeguarding procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children at all times.

## **- KEY PERSON SYSTEM AND SETTLING-IN PROCEDURE**

### **Role of the Key Person**

#### **Policy Statement**

Each child at LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI will be assigned a key person although all members of staff at Little Sponges Montessori will be involved in the care and education of the child and the Head will oversee the general working and development of the key person system. The key person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for and building relationships with their parents.

#### **The key person's role involves:**

- *supporting the settling-in procedure*
- *observing developmental progress and planning learning opportunities to meet individual needs*
- *keeping records on daily activities and routines, developmental progress, accidents, the administering of medicines, etc and sharing these with parents and other professionals as necessary*
- *communicating with parents on a daily basis in person and through diaries*
- *communicating with the Head, other members of staff and other professionals where appropriate*
- *organising a back-up key person who is known to the parent and child.*

#### **Settling-in Procedure**

When a child is admitted to LITTLE SPONGES, communication with parents and continuity of care are paramount. It is a key person's responsibility to support this and provide a vital link from home to setting. The key person will aid the "settling-in" process and consequent monitoring of play and learning experiences and support and promote the child's all-round development. The settling-in process helps to develop secure and trusting relationships and respond to a child's individual needs.

The process can take a minimum of two-weeks — this could be longer depending on how a child progresses. Children need time to bond with the key person and to become familiar with the nursery routines and the environment in order to feel happy and safe. Parents are welcome to stay for a short time with their child when first introduced to nursery life so that they can settle comfortably.

#### **Communication with Parents**

One of the underlying principles of the EYFS framework is the significance of positive relationships. Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents first, and later, a "key person" in their setting. It is therefore vital that parents and key persons communicate effectively and exchange information as necessary. Having a key-person system allows parents to build up a trusting relationship and to be fully aware of their child's progress. Parents and key persons can then work together to ensure that any information, which needs to be shared in the interests of the child, is shared with other staff in an appropriate and sensitive manner. The Head will be fully involved too in the overall communication process with parents and key persons.

#### **Training**

All staff will be trained appropriately on the key person role. Training will include: -

- *explanation of the key person role*
- *links with the EYFS*
- *recording information*
- *working and communicating with parents*
- *planning and assessment*
- *attachment theory*
- *reflection on practice.*

The Head of Little Sponges will provide regular support and supervision for key person and communicate regarding any concerns or issues arising.

#### **SETTLING-IN**

##### **Policy Statement**

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with all members of staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well being and their role as active partners with the setting.

##### **Aim**

We aim to make the setting a loving, warm and welcoming place where children feel secure, loved and settle easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

## SETTLING-IN Procedure

In order to help children settle comfortably in **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI**, we use the following procedure.

- *We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family when she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.*
- *By way of the Settling-In form, information on the child is gained and used to enable the child to settle in more easily and to ensure that all relevant information about the child is made known.*
- *Parents will be contacted immediately if the staff is unsuccessful in settling a child and other strategies will be tried.*
- *Children are encouraged to bring in a comfort object (clearly labelled with their name) if it will enable them to settle.*
- *Some children take longer to settle. This can be for a variety of reasons; maybe they have not been left before or have had an unhappy previous experience when parted from their main carers. The key person will work with the parents to try different settling techniques. These might include bringing in photographs of their family.*
- *When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.*
- *When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back to collect them.*

We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from setting.



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI** is committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. It encourages equal opportunities and operates an equal access policy.

All children, irrespective of their race, colour, family structure and social, cultural and religious backgrounds are welcomed. It welcomes all children with disabilities and special needs and encourages full integration within the daily life at LITTLE SPONGES.

It respects and celebrates cultural diversity and acknowledges its responsibility to promote positive images and role models to all the children in its care. Activity programmes will reflect the multicultural nature of our society in an environment where gender stereotyping is not an option.

Staff will be expected to create an atmosphere that allows children to feel valued and enable them to develop a high self-esteem. It is the responsibility of all members of staff at LITTLE SPONGES to ensure that the statements in this policy are complied with at all times.

Any signs of direct or indirect discrimination resulting in one person being treated less favourably than another will be challenged. LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI expects that unacceptable conduct of an anti-discriminatory nature, from staff or any adult, who has been observed by another member of staff, would be reported.

The activities and play materials in the setting help the children to broaden their knowledge and understanding of people and cultures in our society and the world at large. For example, as well as celebrating Christian festivals, LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI bases activities on religious and cultural celebrations from across the globe, and the children play with dolls and other toys which reflect race, culture, or physical ability which is different from their own. All children in this setting are given the opportunity to play with all the toys (subject to health and safety with children under three years of age). No toys are just for girls or just for boys.

All children in this setting are provided with the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## STAFF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI'S Staff Equal Opportunity policy is that in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, development and promotion of staff, the only consideration must be that the individual meets, or is likely to meet the requirements of the post. Providing the requirements are being met, employees will not be discriminated against on the basis of their sex, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, marital status, caring or parental responsibilities, age, or beliefs on matters such as religion and politics.

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI is totally committed to providing a working environment in which the rights and dignity of its entire staff are respected, and which are free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment including bullying. This policy means that all staff of LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI has the right to work in an environment free from discrimination, prejudice and all forms of harassment or bullying.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES LANGUAGE POLICY

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI is committed to valuing the language and cultures of all children in this setting and their families. It will endeavour to promote a positive attitude towards bi and multilingualism.

**LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI** supports the children's learning of English as an additional language by:

- *providing dual language books*
- *providing books and stories in other languages and about other cultures*
- *use of welcome signs in different languages*
- *staff learning key words in the child's home language*
- *finding ways of communicating with non-English speaking parents*
- *inviting parents to contribute words for displays in their language*
- *inviting parents to help with story-telling sessions.*

**LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI** will always work closely with families to ensure the needs of their child are met.



# EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY/DIVERSITY

(See also Behaviour Management Policy, Admissions policy and Special Educational Needs)

Little Sponges Montessori works in accordance with all relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, the SEND 0-25 Code of Practice 2014 and the Prevent Duty 2015. Staff at this nursery believes in promoting equal opportunities for everyone and values diversity in children, parents, carers, staff, visitors and all others with whom it comes in contact.

We believe that all children have an entitlement to equal access to a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum. Staff strives to ensure that all children develop self-confidence and high esteem whilst recognising and valuing differences between themselves and others.

The diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected. No person including children, families or staff members are discriminated against.

The member of staff with responsibility for Equal Opportunities and Diversity is: Nicole Bacon, Head. It is this member of staff's responsibility to review, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our inclusive practice. However it is the responsibility of all staff to understand and promote equal opportunities through:

- Attending suitable training.
- Encouraging children to recognise their own unique qualities and the characteristics they share with other children.
- Ensuring children are set appropriate, challenging targets which allow them to experience success.
- Providing a challenging curriculum which allows for different learning styles.
- Working with families to ensure that individual information is gained for each child about such things as family customs and beliefs, home language, dietary requirements etc.
- Monitoring the curriculum and use of resources to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes British values, reflects our culturally diverse society and which is suitable for both active and more passive children.
- Promoting an anti-bias curriculum to actively challenge any negative feelings towards and/or stereotyping of others. This will be partly through using dolls, puppets and books to tell stories which help children to question their own feelings and views and to promote a sense of justice and fairness.
- Challenging negative comments from both children and adults.
- Providing a range of equipment which reflects a diverse society such as dual language books, resources which represent a range of home cultures, stories which reflect the diversity of our society, small world equipment etc.
- Celebrating a wide range of cultural festivals using appropriate teaching materials..
- Help all children to learn and experience 'fairness' and ensure children take responsibility for their own actions.
- All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability will have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable curriculum of learning and development

We aim to achieve educational equality and inclusion by continually reviewing our practice and outcomes, asking these key questions:

- do all the children in our setting achieve their best?
- are there differences in the achievement of different groups of children?
- what are we doing for those children who we know are not achieving their best?
- Is our setting effective?

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

**LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI** is committed to excellent provision for children with special educational needs and Disabilities (SEND). We will have regard to the SEND Code of Practice. We will ensure we have an up to date copy of the Code of Practice and will make this document available to parents if required. We will work closely with parents to listen to their views so as to build on children's previous experiences, knowledge, understanding and skills and provide opportunities to develop in the prime and specific areas of learning:

## **PRIME AREAS:**

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

## **SPECIFIC AREAS:**

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We will observe and monitor individual children's progress throughout the Montessori curriculum and the EYFS. If it appears a child is not making progress either generally or in a specific aspect of learning, we will present the child with different opportunities or encourage alternative ways of learning.

We will discuss our observations and any proposed plans with the parents in a way that encourages them to contribute their knowledge and understanding of their child. We will encourage parents to raise any concerns they may have about the their child's needs and the provision that is being made for them.

We will, with parents' permission, use Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs). These will record information about the short-term targets for the child, the teaching strategies and the provision to be put in place, when the plan will be reviewed, and the outcome of the action taken. We will continually review the PLPs and seek the parents' view on the child's progress.

If a child with SEND is not making adequate progress, we will work in partnership with parents and the other agencies involved in supporting the child, to consider whether a statutory multi-disciplinary assessment may be appropriate. We will support applications to the local authority for assessment of the child and follow the procedures laid out in the Code of Practice.

We will seek support from the Area SEND Co-ordinator. We will continue to develop knowledge of special educational needs by attending training where possible and by reading literature provided to us by the co-ordinators.

**THE NAMED PERSON FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES AT LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI IS MRS. SIMONE ELLIS, DEPUTY MANAGER.**

# VOLUNTEER POLICY

## POLICY STATEMENT

We welcome volunteers to support the work of the setting. Often the help given by volunteers enables us to do additional activities with the children that might otherwise have not been possible.

## Procedure

We have put in place the following procedures in relation to volunteers within the setting to ensure that the safety of the children is not compromised:

- *Volunteers will be subject to DSB clearance.*
- *A DBS check will be carried out on all volunteers over the age of 16 years*
- *Volunteers are asked to provide details of two people (not relations) who can provide a written reference as to their suitability to be working with children.*
- *Volunteers are to only support the work of the staff and are not to be included in child: staff ratios.*
- *Volunteers are not to be left unsupervised with any children.*
- *Volunteers are not to attend to any child's personal needs (i.e. nappy changing, toileting).*
- *Volunteers will be provided with support from staff who has been given responsibility for them.*
- *Volunteers will be provided with clear guidelines as to their role and any responsibilities.*
- *Volunteers are asked to sign a confidentiality statement.*

# ILLNESSES AND ACCIDENTS POLICY

**Name of organisation: LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI**

## Policy Statement

It is the policy of this nursery that children in our care are kept safe at all times.

The nursery understands its duty to promote the good health of the children, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action when they are ill. In this respect the nursery is fully compliant with Section 3: Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

## Procedure

- At LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI, we realise that all children have minor illnesses, such as minor coughs and colds, from time to time, that do not prevent them from attending. In these circumstances nursery staff should allow children to attend.
- The nursery is also aware that some children have longer term illnesses and conditions that, while serious, do not affect their day to day life and that living a “normal” life and attending early years settings is an important part of their coping with that illness. These cases will always be discussed with the parents/guardians at the enrollment stage and, if accepted at the nursery, a suitable plan of care will be agreed which may involve the administration of medication.
- However, the nursery is also aware that some children will have minor or serious illnesses from time to time that should prevent them from attending. It is therefore the policy of the nursery that children who have anything more than a minor illness should be kept at home. This is particularly important in the case of any infectious illness that might be spread.  
**Children with the following signs or symptoms will be excluded from the nursery:**
  - Diarrhea and/or vomiting**
  - Doubtful rash**
  - Conjunctivitis**
  - Infectious illness, e.g. chicken-pox, mumps or measles**
  - Fever or temperature.**
- Parents/guardians should be advised that their children might not return to the nursery until 48 hours after they have been symptom free.
- If a child arrives at the nursery ill, the Head will take the decision as to whether the child is fit to attend or not. If not, the parent will be asked to take the child home.
- If a child becomes ill while at the nursery or has an accident then the duty first aider will be asked to see the child immediately and the child's parents/guardians should be called and asked to collect the child. While waiting for the parents/guardians the child will be monitored and comforted and given the chance to rest in a quiet area. If the child's condition worsens such that it causes concern to the first aider and staff then suitable medical treatment should be arranged in the form of a GP, an ambulance or transport to Accident and Emergency as appropriate and the parents/guardians informed.
- In the event of an illness or accident requiring hospital treatment, the person in charge will try to inform the parents/guardians immediately and arrange to have the child taken to hospital. The person who takes the child should stay with the child until the parents/guardians arrive.
- If the parents/guardians do not arrive or are unable to be contacted, the member of staff should stay with the child until the appropriate treatment has been given and follow the advice of a responsible doctor. Where appropriate they should return with the child to the nursery where he or she would be cared for until the arrival of the parents/guardians.
- In all cases the first aider will complete a detailed report of what happened and action taken.
- Any illness, accident or injury to a child will be recorded in the accident book and, in the case of a serious injury, an appropriate report made to Ofsted as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. Reports should be made via the Ofsted Contact Centre on 08456 404040.

The setting requires written and signed consent in advance from parents which clearly shows the date, dosage and expiry date of any medication (prescription and non-prescription) and the circumstances in which it should be given. All prescription medicines (including those containing aspirin) are only administered where they have been prescribed for the child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Records will be kept each time any medicine is administered. Training for staff where administering medicine requires medical or technical knowledge is provided.

Any medication left with staff for administration must be in its original container and bear its original label. The label must be legible and have the name of the child on it.

## MEDICINES

### ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION POLICY

#### Aim

This organisation puts the well being of the children in its care at the very core of its services. The organisation is keen to help children to attend, where appropriate, even if they are taking medication and to enable this to happen staff are trained to administer medication on site.

#### Procedure

In order for medication to be administered the following procedure must be adhered to by parents and staff:

- *The setting requires written and signed consent in advance from parents which clearly shows the date, dosage and expiry date of any medication (prescription and non-prescription) and the circumstances in which it should be given. All prescription medicines (including those containing aspirin) are only administered where they have been prescribed for the child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Records will be kept each time any medicine is administered. Training for staff where administering medicine requires medical or technical knowledge is provided.*
- *Any medication left with staff for administration must be in its original container and bear its original label. The label must be legible and have the name of the child on it.*

#### *Wash their hands*

*Refer to the permission to administer medication form and to the administration record and carefully check that all details are correct*

*Be certain of the identity of the child to whom the medication is being given.*

*Check that the prescription on the label of the medication is clear and unambiguous*

*Check the name of the medication matches the permission/administration form*

*Check the name of the child on the label matches the permission/administration form*

*Check the dose and method of administration*

*Check the expiry date*

*Check that the child is not allergic to the medication*

*Administer the medication as instructed on the label and as specified in the permission to administer medication form*

*Keep clear and accurate, signed records of all medication administered, withheld or refused*

*Monitor any children taking medication and report any side effects immediately to the person in charge*

*Inform parents/guardians that the medication has been given when they pick up their children. All medication should be kept securely in the cupboard provided. Unused or surplus medication should be returned to the parent/guardian.*

*If a child refuses to take their medication staff should never attempt to force or coerce compliance. They should note the refusal in their records and follow any agreed procedures set out in the individual child's health care plan. Parents should be informed of the refusal on the same day.*

*If a refusal to take medicines results in an emergency, the setting's emergency procedures should be followed.*

- *LITTLE SPONGES will administer certain non-prescription medication but insist that a permission form, which is signed by the parent/guardian, accompanies any request for this. Staff can administer non-prescribed medication for a maximum of three days, after which time they will no longer be able to continue giving the medication. At any time during the three days, if the staff deems that the child's health has deteriorated or they have concerns for his/her health, the parent/guardian should be contacted and asked to collect the child (or make arrangements for the child to be collected by another named person) and refer them to their GP.*
- *Written permission is required for emergency treatment of chronic illnesses, such as asthma where inhalers may need to be given on a long-term basis.*
- *Staff will be asked to attend general training in the administration and monitoring of medication and to meet specific needs concerning administration, or other health-related matters.*
- *Staff should sign a consent form to say they are willing to administer medicine. This is a voluntary decision by staff and no pressure will be brought by the management to perform this role.*
- *In an emergency situation the first aider should be called, an ambulance called for and parents informed immediately.*
- *The management should monitor staff to ensure the procedures are being carried out, and that they are clear to all. Staff will be asked to feedback at meetings any areas of concern or to identify training needs that they may have.*

# ASTHMA

**Setting name: LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI**

## Policy Background

This setting understands asthma to be a common disease involving the respiratory system in which the airways constrict and become inflamed, causing symptoms such as wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing. These episodes may be triggered by such things as exposure to an environmental stimulant such as an allergen, environmental tobacco smoke, cold or warm air, perfume, pet dander, moist air, exercise or exertion, or emotional stress. In children, the most common triggers are viral illnesses such as those that cause the common cold. This airway constriction responds to medication such as bronchodilators, which is often administered via an inhaler.

This setting believes that children who suffer from asthma should have the opportunity of being able to play a full and active role in life and should not suffer from exclusion or discrimination in any way due to their condition.

## Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to enable this setting to ensure that children suffering from asthma have effective care and support while attending the setting.

## Policy

- This setting recognises that asthma is a widespread and serious but controllable condition and that children with asthma can and do participate fully in all aspects of life.
- Children with asthma will be welcomed and included in all of the activities of the setting.
- We recognise that pupils with asthma will need immediate access to reliever inhalers at all times.
- We will keep a record of all children with asthma and the medicines they take.
- We will ensure that the whole setting — including the physical, social, sporting and educational environment — is favourable to children with asthma.
- We will ensure that children with asthma are not stigmatised or treated differently or discriminated against and we will help all children attending the setting to better understand asthma.
- All staff (including bank staff and support staff) that comes into contact with children with asthma will know what to do in the event of an asthma attack..

## Medication Arrangements

The setting understands that in the case of an asthma attack immediate access to reliever medicines, usually an inhaler is essential.

In order for medication to be administered the following procedure must be adhered to by parents and staff:

- The setting requires written and signed consent in advance from parents which clearly shows the date, dosage and expiry date of any medication and the circumstances in which it should be given.
- Any medication left with staff for administration must be in its original container and bear its original label. The label must be legible and have the name of the child on it.

### In this setting:

- reliever inhalers will be accepted into the setting as described under Medication Arrangements, above
- inhalers must be properly labelled for use by the child for whom they are prescribed; this label must display an expiry date which will be checked by staff when they accept the medication
- reliever inhalers will be kept in the medication cabinet, which is designed to be accessible in the event of an emergency
- parents/carers will be asked to ensure that the setting is provided with a labelled spare reliever inhaler in case the first one runs out
- where a child requires their inhaler staff will check that the correct inhaler is given to them and, where possible, allow them to administer it themselves. Where the child is too young or cannot administer the inhaler themselves they will be helped by a member of staff specially trained in helping with medication
- any administration of medication will be recorded and reported to the parents/carers when they collect their child.
- Medicine that has not been prescribed for a child must not under any circumstances be given.

## Training

All new staff will be made aware of this policy on induction. Staff training regarding healthcare issues, including asthma will be a regular feature of staff development programmes. Staff will be asked to attend general training in the administration and monitoring of medication and to meet specific needs concerning administration, or other health-related matters.

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

## CHILD PROTECTION

### Policy Statement

Everyone employed by LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI has a responsibility in relation to child protection. In most cases this will be the referral of concerns to the Head of Little Sponges Montessori. In day-to-day contact with children at risk, staff has an opportunity to note concerns and to meet with parents and other associated adults.

This policy aims to outline the role that LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI will have in relation to Child Protection, the procedures that staff should take and guidance on issues related to child protection generally. It is not exhaustive. All staff should use as a rule of thumb the needs and safety of the child as being at the centre of any decision they make.

### The aims of this policy are:

- *to raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse*
- *to provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases*
- *to provide guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse*
- *to provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison*
- *to identify strategies and interventions available to support children at risk.*

## Procedure

### DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSO)

**MRS. NICOLE BACON (Head of Little Sponges)** is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has the **lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection**. Advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters are given. The Deputy Safeguarding Lead is **MRS. SIMONE ELLIS (Deputy Manager)**.

### ROLE OF THE DSL

#### Manage Referrals

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is expected to:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care;
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalization concern as required; Support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child, to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

#### Work with Others:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is expected to:

- As required, liaise with the "Case Manager" and the Designated Officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member); and
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies. Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff;



## Training

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) undergoes training to gain knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training is updated every two years.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy and all staff undertake Prevent Awareness training
- In addition to the formal training, knowledge and skills are refreshed (via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads and reading safeguarding developments (at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to the role.
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessment;
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands Little Sponges' Child Protection Policy and Procedures, especially new and part-time staff;
- Are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special education needs and young carers;
- Understand the requirements of the Prevent Duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures Little Sponges may put in place to protect them.

## Raise Awareness

The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Ensures that Little Sponges' Child Protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- Ensures the nursery's Child Protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly,
- Ensures the Child Protection Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the nursery in this; and
- Links with the local LSCB to make sure staff is aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

## Child Protection File

Where children leave the nursery, the DSL ensures that the Child Protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible. This is transferred separately, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

## Availability

The DSL (or a deputy) is always available (during hours of operation) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

## EARLY HELP ASSESSMENT (EHA)

All staff are made aware of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at Little Sponges. They should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help in order to provide support as soon as the need arises and discuss early help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Information on Early Help can be found in Chapter 1 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018).



## POLICY ON DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ABUSE

**All staff should refer concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should:**

- believe the child and take him/her seriously
- remain calm and caring
- reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing in talking to them
- make notes of the conversation as soon as possible, using the child's own words where possible
- explain what will happen next and who will be told.

**Staff should not:**

- promise confidentiality
- postpone the discussion until a different time]interpret what they have been told
- probe or ask leading questions

**Where the staff member suspects that a child is being abused they should:**

- immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead about their concerns
- make factual notes of what has occurred, using the child's own words where relevant, and any action taken.

## MAKING A REFERRAL

Where an individual has concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, these should be recorded and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If there is uncertainty about the action that should be taken, concerns can also be discussed, without necessarily identifying the child in question, with the appropriate designated officer or team at the Local Authority.

If, after discussion, concerns remain and it seems that the child and family would benefit from other services, a decision should be made about making a referral to children's social care. The provider should not make its own decision about referring what appear to be borderline cases, but should take advice and if in doubt refer. If concerns arise about a child who is already known to social care, the allocated social worker should be informed of these concerns.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow the procedure below:-**

- Where possible, discuss concerns with the child and their parents and obtain agreement to make a referral to Greenwich Safeguarding and Social Care unless this discussion would put the child at increased risk of significant harm
- Seek professional advice if unsure about whether or not to talk to parents first by calling the Safeguarding Consultation Line 0208 921 2267
- In an emergency situation immediate contact should be made with the **Greenwich Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** - telephone number 0208 921 3172. This number is easily accessible to staff in the event of needing to make a referral.

It is neither the role nor responsibility of those working with children to assess, diagnose or investigate whether a child is at risk of or is suffering harm or abuse. This is the role of children's social care. However, it is the responsibility of schools and early years services to report concerns appropriately.

According to *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, key principles should be:

- never delay emergency action to protect a child from harm
- always record in writing concerns about a child's welfare, including whether or not further action is taken
- at the close of a discussion, always reach a clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action, or that no further action will be taken.

In most cases concerns should be discussed with the family prior to referral. Where possible agreement should be sought. However, this should only be where such discussion will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.

The consent of a parent or carer is not required to make a child protection referral.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, a referral to local agencies will be made within 24 hours of the safeguarding issue being raised. For children in need of additional support from one or more agencies, the nursery will seek advice from the Initial Referral and Assessment Service 0208 921 3172.

## Confidentiality

Relevant information about the protection of children must be shared with the investigative agencies, but only on a "need to know" basis. Staff should be careful in subsequent discussions and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Little Sponges is aware of the additional barriers that exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

Disabled children are at a greater risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect than non-disabled children. Disabled children at greatest risk of abuse are those with behaviour/conduct disorders. Other high risk groups include children with learning difficulties/disabilities, children with speech and language difficulties, children with health-related conditions and deaf children. Bullying is a feature in the lives of many disabled children.

### Factors that increase risk and lessen protection for disabled children include:

- attitudes and assumptions – e.g. a reluctance to believe disabled children are abused; minimising the impact of abuse; and attributing indicators of abuse to the child's impairment
- barriers to the disabled child and their family accessing support services

## CHILD ABUSE AND RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which someone often in a position of power harms children. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* defines it as any form of maltreatment of a child. It states that somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abusers might be an adult or a group of adults, or they may be other children. A child may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them. More rarely strangers may abuse them, such as through online abuse. It is not the responsibility of staff to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report these to the appropriate party. The health, safety, wellbeing and protection of a child are paramount. Staff at Little Sponges Montessori is trained to recognise **the signs of possible abuse**.

### The following main categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.

However, it is recognised that abuse rarely consists of “stand-alone events” that are covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse is non-accidental and deliberately inflicted. It can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Signs of possible physical abuse include:**

- refusal to discuss injuries
- Improbable explanations of injuries
- untreated injuries or lingering illness
- admission of punishment which appears excessive
- shrinking from physical contact
- fear of returning home or parents being contacted
- fear of undressing
- fear of medical help
- aggression/bullying
- overly compliant behaviour
- running away
- significant changes in behaviour
- deterioration in work
- unexplained pattern of absence.

The majority of injuries to children occurs accidentally and can be explained simply. However injuries, which do not adequately fit the explanation given by the child or their carer, may indicate abuse. In young children, especially babies, crying due to internal injuries such as fractures or bleeding may initially be mistaken for other causes of distress, especially when there are no external signs of trauma. In some cases excessive force may be used when feeding or changing a child's nappy.

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. This might include:

- physical contact — including penetrative or non-penetrative acts
- non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at pornographic materials or watching sexual activities
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Possible signs of sexual abuse include:**

- bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks
- scratches, abrasions or persistent infection in the anal or genital regions
- pregnancy
- sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age
- frequent public masturbation
- attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places
- aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
- withdrawal from friends.

Sexually abused children are frequently obedient to adults and anxious to please but have poor peer group relationships.

**NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect might include:

- failure to provide adequate food and clothing
- failure to protect a child from physical and emotional harm
- failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers
- failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- unresponsiveness to a child's basic physical needs.

**Possible signs of neglect include:**

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene
- inappropriate clothing
- frequent lateness or non-attendance
- untreated medical problems
- low self-esteem
- poor social relationships
- compulsive stealing or scrounging
- constant tiredness.

When children are seriously neglected then their health or development may be impaired. An

example of emotional neglect is if a parent refuses to give love and affection to their child

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional or psychological maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This could include:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved
- inappropriate expectations being imposed on the child with respect to their age or level of development
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- serious bullying
- the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Possible signs of emotional abuse include:**

- continual self-deprecation
- fear of new situations
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- self-harm or mutilation
- compulsive stealing/scrounging
- drug/solvent abuse
- neurotic behaviour — obsessive rocking, thumb-sucking, etc
- air of detachment — “don't care” attitude
- social isolation
- attention-seeking behaviour.

There is increasing evidence regarding the adverse long-term consequences for children's development where they have been subject to persistent emotional abuse. Emotional abuse has an important adverse impact on a child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem.

Children who are emotionally abused often feel worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of a particular person. Children who are overprotected and limited from exploring and learning or normal social interactions may be being emotionally abused.

## Specific Safeguarding Issues

While physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect are widely recognised as the principal forms of child abuse, the staff at Little Sponges is aware of specific safeguarding issues.

*Keeping Children Safe in Education* states that this can include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- children missing education
- children missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- domestic violence
- drug misuse
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- hate crime
- “honour” based violence
- mental health
- missing children
- private fostering
- radicalisation
- relationship abuse
- sexting
- trafficking.

### Domestic violence

Child abuse is often linked with high levels of domestic violence in a family.

Domestic violence is the physical, sexual or emotional (including verbal and financial) abuse inflicted on a man or woman by their partner or ex-partner. Children might witness a significant number of the abusive incidents that take place.

All children who witness domestic violence are being emotionally abused.

In some cases, children might be encouraged by the abusive parent to take part in bullying or threatening the other parent.

Children may feel that they are in some way to blame for the abuse or that they ought to be able to stop it. They may want to stay at home to protect the parent or be scared to leave them because of what might happen.

### “Honour based” abuse

So-called “honour-based” violence (HBV) includes crimes committed to protect or defend the “honour” of a family or a community. It can include issues such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage, etc.

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV, they should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children’s social care.

### Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in the UK and constitutes a serious form of abuse.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases face disciplinary sanctions.



Staff must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.

The 2018 edition of *Working Together* requires Local Authorities in England to have clear procedures and processes for cases relating to female genital mutilation or the sexual exploitation of children.

### **Forced marriage**

A forced marriage is defined as one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales.

### **Sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is defined as when people use the power they have over children to sexually abuse them. Their power may result from a difference in age, gender, intellect, strength, money or other resources. It often involves gifts of something a child wants or needs being exchanged for sex. It can be perpetrated by individuals or by organised gangs.

Recent years have seen truly alarming prosecutions of organised groups involved in grooming and abusing young children.

Statutory guidance, *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation: Supplementary Guidance*, should be followed.

### **Radicalisation**

Little Sponges has a duty to do all it can to help prevent radicalisation and to protect children from being drawn into terrorism and belief systems that preach hate, extremism, intolerance and violence.

The national strategy to safeguard children and young people from being drawn into terrorism is called the **Prevent duty** and all staff has received training.

*The Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales* incorporates requirements made under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The guidance reminds early years providers of their safeguarding duties and encourages them to help children to, in an age appropriate way:

- learn right from wrong
- mix and share with other children and value other's views
- know about similarities and differences between themselves and others
- challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.

The DfE published non-statutory guidance in June 2015 for schools and nurseries, *The Prevent Duty — Departmental Advice for Schools and Childcare Providers*.

The guidance states that:

- protecting children from extremism and radicalisation should be considered an important part of the safeguarding agenda
- staff should use risk assessments to identify children who are vulnerable
- staff should know what to do if they are concerned about a child
- providers should help to build a child's resilience to radicalisation by promoting their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development
- providers should engage with parents and families, advising them if there are concerns.

The **Prevent Duty** has been designed to be seen as part of existing safeguarding duties and not an additional duty and is linked to the **Channel programme**. (**Channel** is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation).

## Race, ethnicity, faith and culture

When considering areas such as FGM, HBV, forced marriage, radicalisation and faith crime, early years practitioners need to be sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles and to differences in child-rearing patterns across racial, ethnic and cultural groups. However, it must be strongly emphasised that child abuse can never be condoned for religious or cultural reasons.

Little Sponges will work with the support systems available within families, ethnic groups and communities wherever possible, and always act to safeguard and promote a child's welfare.

The particular needs of children of mixed parentage and refugee children should be taken into account.

## Online safety

Please refer to the *E-Safety* policy as well as the policy for the Use of iPads in the Setting, which cover adult, and children's usage of digital technologies, such as computers, tablets and mobile phones.

Computers and networks are fitted with appropriate protection, such as a firewall and anti-virus software. Suitable filters are in place to prevent access to inappropriate Internet sites.

Cyber bullying refers to the use of Internet social networks, email or mobile phones to threaten, tease, upset or humiliate someone else. Early years staff should be encouraged to be alert for any signs of such bullying and report it.

A policy is in place covering the use of camera and mobile phones and the taking of photographs. Any official photographs taken by staff must have signed parental consent.

## PHYSICAL CONTACT

All adults who come into contact with children and young people in their work have a duty of care to safeguard them and promote their welfare. Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure.

There is no legal ban on physical contact between children and practitioners. The Children Act 1989 places the wellbeing of the child at the centre of keeping them safe and does not prevent staff from helping with ordinary basic physical needs. All staff working in LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI knows that inappropriate behaviour with or towards a child or children is unacceptable.

### Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all physical contact between adults and children in LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI promotes the child's/children's safety and welfare. This policy is part of our Safeguarding Policy and is used in conjunction with our Behaviour Management Policy. It also forms part of our Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers and is underpinned by the DCSF *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People*, published in November 2007.

### The principles underlying this policy are taken from this guidance.

- In accordance with the Children Act 1989, the welfare of the child is paramount and all members of staff in the nursery are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of each child attending.
- Each staff member is responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct, which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- The same professional standards are always applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- All members of staff encourage children to take responsibility for their own behaviour, using a range of approaches, which help to safeguard each child and promote their welfare. These approaches will include: positive role modeling; **providing a range of planned interesting and stimulating activities setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations giving positive feedback.**

There are occasions, however, when a child's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require physical handling. This policy sets out expectations for the use of physical handling.

There are three main types of physical handling that staff in the nursery may use.

### **Positive Handling**

The positive use of touch is part of normal human interaction and may be appropriate in a range of situations, such as: giving guidance to children, such as how to hold a paintbrush; providing emotional support, for example placing an arm around a distressed child; giving physical care, such as assistance with toileting or changing a nappy or wet or soiled clothing and providing first aid.

The staff at LITTLE SPONGES will use appropriate care when touching children and will be sensitive to those children for whom touch may not be appropriate, such as a child who has a history of physical or sexual abuse, or is from a particular cultural group. In all such cases, discussion will take place with parents/carers about the most appropriate forms of promoting the child's welfare.

### **Physical Intervention**

This may include mechanical or environmental means, such as a locked gate. Such measures are used to ensure a child's safety and promote their welfare.

### **Restrictive Physical Intervention**

This involves the intentional use of force by a staff member to restrict a child's movements against the child's will. Generally this will be through the use of the adult's body rather than by the use of mechanical or environmental means.

#### ***Types of Restrictive Physical Intervention***

- Where restrictive physical intervention is needed staff will:
- aim for side-by-side contact with the child and avoid positioning themselves in front (to reduce risk of being kicked) or behind (to reduce risk of allegations of sexual misconduct)
- aim for no gap between the adult's and child's body when side-by-side to minimise the risk of impact and damage
- aim to keep their own back as straight as possible
- be aware of head positioning to avoid head butts from the child
- hold children where there is the least likelihood of causing damage, i.e. by the "long" bones rather than the joints
- ensure that there is no restriction to the child's ability to breathe, avoiding holding the child round the chest cavity or stomach
- avoid lifting the child.

Staff at **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI** will use restrictive physical intervention only in the context of positive behaviour management, in extreme cases to prevent a child hurting themselves or others or causing damage to property.

Where possible staff will make use of other strategies, such as saying, "stop" and/or diverting the child to another activity. They will use restrictive physical intervention only when necessary and in conjunction with other forms of intervention. Where restrictive physical intervention is necessary, staff will use the minimum force that is proportionate to both the child's behaviour and the harm that they may cause. Physical intervention will not be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.

### **Recording and Monitoring**

All incidents requiring restrictive physical intervention will be recorded as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. This record will include:

- who was involved
- the reason physical intervention was considered appropriate
- how the child was held
- the date and time of the incident
- the length of time the physical intervention had to continue
- any injuries or subsequent distress
- the action taken.

Parents will be informed and given a copy of the record form.

Intervention will be monitored and any necessary adjustments made to keep the child/children safe and promote their wellbeing.

# ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

## Policy Statement

Ofsted requires all registered providers to have a policy regarding allegations being made against an adult working in the setting, whether they are a member of staff or a volunteer.

Appropriate policies and procedures, as well as following the principles of good practice, protect both children and adults. However, an allegation may be made and in such circumstances the setting's procedures should be followed.

### Procedure to follow when an allegation is made against a member of staff

The member of staff against whom an allegation has been made should always be:

- *treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns and the processes involved*
- *kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for themselves, e.g. disciplinary or related processes*
- *kept informed about events in the workplace if they have been suspended.*

Suspension does not need to be automatic. It should be considered in cases where:

- *it is suspected that a child(ren) is at risk of significant harm*
- *the police are investigating the allegation*
- *there are grounds for dismissal due to the nature of the allegation.*

If the individual returns to work following suspension, the employer should consider what help and support might be appropriate and how best to manage the staff member's contact with the child concerned if they are still attending the setting.

Any allegation should be treated seriously and objectively, with those concerned keeping an open mind.

**They should not:**

- *investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification*
- *make assumptions or offer alternative explanations*
- *promise confidentiality (reassure that the information will only be shared on a "need to know" basis).*

**They should:**

- *make a written record of the information given, including the time, date and place of the incident(s), persons present and what was said; sign and date the written record*
- *ensure that the setting's procedures are followed.*

### Procedures to help protect staff from allegations of abuse

**Staff should follow the provision's Code of Staff Conduct, particularly ensuring the following:**

- The safety and welfare of the child is always paramount.
- Staff must fulfill their responsibilities and duties towards children by working in partnership with parents.
- Staff relationships with children and families are conducted in a professional manner at all times.
- All the setting's Policies and Procedures are followed, those listed below are particularly relevant:
  - Parents as Partners
  - Behaviour Management
  - Equal Opportunities/Inclusion/Special Educational Needs.
- Staff must be vigilant in health and safety matters, eg recording any bruises/marks a child has on arrival in their incident book (separate pages for each child to ensure confidentiality).
- Comprehensive reporting of all children's' accidents should be made to parents, for their signature. Where possible any written account should be witnessed by a second staff member.
- Any training needs identified in team members should be passed on to the Head of Little Sponges.
- Advice, help and/or support are sought if they find a child's behaviour is persistently challenging or difficult to manage.

# STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

The Code of Conduct forms part of an employee's contract. All staff must strive to be the best role models to the children and conduct themselves in a warm, consistent, transparent and professional manner.

**All staff should respect their colleagues. Little Sponges will not allow any kind of discriminatory behaviour, harassment or victimisation. Employees should conform to our Equal Opportunity policy in all aspects of their work.**

## **Personal appearance**

Staff is expected to dress smartly and appropriately for work and present themselves in a professional manner. Staff should fulfill their duties with integrity and respect toward children, their families, visitors and colleagues.

## **Absenteeism and lateness**

Staff is expected to be punctual when coming to work and if absent through sickness or any other reason, staff must advise by telephone with sufficient notice or as soon as possible.

## **Communication**

All staff must be open for communication with each other and work as part of a team.

All employees should read and follow Little Sponges'

policies **Staff taking medication/other substances**

- ┆ Inform the Head of any medical conditions or medication that may affect their daily work
- ┆ Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substances that may affect their ability to care for children.
- ┆ Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored and out of reach of children at all times.

## **Medical/ Dental Appointments**

- ┆ Due to the nature of the nursery, staff is requested, if possible, to attend doctor, dentist or hospital visits outside of the nursery's hours of operation.

## **Staff Illness/ Absence**

- ┆ Staff should personally inform the Head or Deputy Manager of any reason for absence.
- ┆ Staff should telephone the Head or Deputy Manager as soon as possible to inform of an absence so that cover can be found before the session starts.

## **Staff Risk Awareness and Health and Safety**

All staff are required to adhere to the guidelines of the Health and Safety and Risk Assessment policies as part of their induction process.

## **Mobile Phones – refer to Mobile Telephones/Camera Policy**

Staff can give out Little Sponges' telephone number if they need to receive an urgent, personal telephone call.

**Staff Code of Conduct for ICT and Social Networking Sites – refer to these policies: *Safeguarding, Mobile Telephone/Camera, E-Safety, Social Media and Use of iPads in the Setting policies.***

All staff are required to adhere to their professional responsibilities at all times and report any incidents of concern regarding children's safety to the Head of Little Sponges.

**Holidays**

Due to the nature of the nursery, staff is requested not to take holiday during term times.

**Disciplinary Action**

All staff must be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Staff Code of Conduct Policy, being aware of my obligations and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and appropriate and professional conduct in all areas, both inside and outside Little Sponges Montessori.

Staff Name: -----

Staff Signature: -----

# BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI**, we aim to work with the children to enable them to develop self-discipline and self-esteem in a safe environment of mutual respect and encouragement. We promote positive behavior and have developed strategies for dealing with unwanted behaviour. We work closely with parents to support children who may be demonstrating unwanted behavior, sharing strategies and providing additional one-to-one time for the child if they are in need of extra emotional support.

**The Head of LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI is the named person for the management of Behaviour.**

**To promote positive behavior we have implemented the following.**

- *We have developed some simple rules for the setting called HOUSE RULES. These are explained to everyone and the children are involved in helping to agree rules wherever possible*
- *A poster displaying the rules is displayed.*
- *All adults in the setting ensure that the rules are applied consistently, so that children have the security of knowing what to expect and learning right from wrong. POSITIVE LANGUAGE is always used when addressing the children.*
- *All staff tries to provide a positive role model for the children with regard to friendliness, care and courtesy. Modelling polite manners such as saying "please" and "thank you".*
- *Staff praises and encourage desirable behavior such as kindness, turn taking and willingness to share.*
- *We will take positive steps to avoid a situation in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behavior.*

**When children behave in undesirable ways we will follow the procedure outlined below.**

- *Children who misbehave will be given one-to-one adult support in talking about what was wrong and why and how to behave more appropriately. Where appropriate this might be achieved by a period of "time out" with an adult.*
- *In cases of serious misbehavior, such as racial, bullying or other abuse, the unacceptability of the behavior and attitudes will be made clear immediately, but by means of explanations rather than personal blame. Parents will be informed.*
- *In any case of misbehavior it will always be made clear to the child or children concerned that it is the behavior and not the child that is unwelcome.*
- *Staff will not shout or raise their voices in a threatening way.*
- *Physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking, will **NOT** be used or threatened. Such behavior from any member of staff in the setting would be classed as gross misconduct, which could lead to instant dismissal.*
- *Children will never be sent out of the room by themselves.*
- *Techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children such as a "naughty chair" will not be used.*
- *Staff will make themselves aware of and respect a range of cultural expectations regarding interactions between people.*
- *Staff will be aware that some kinds of behavior may arise from a child's special needs. They will work with the SENCO to develop strategies to support the individual child's behavior.*

**Other relevant policies regarding behavior include, anti-bullying, biting and restraint.**

## Anti-Bullying

We will not permit any form of bullying at **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI**.

**Bullying can be:**

- *physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, biting etc*
- *verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, rumour spreading and teasing*
- *emotional: excluding, ridicule, humiliation, tormenting*
- *racist: taunts, graffiti and gestures.*



## Anti-Bullying Procedure

### If your child is being bullied:

- *we will reassure them that the bullying is not their fault*
- *tell them that we care about them and are on their side*
- *we will give them lots of praise, encouragement and responsibilities to help them feel valued*
- *we will work with you to help the child to develop techniques to deal with the bully — assertiveness, walking away etc.*

### If your child is the bully:

- *we will reassure your child that we still care about them but it is their behaviour we do not like and implement strategies to help them overcome this type of unacceptable behaviour;s*
- *we will discuss the matter with you, not in front of your child, to see if there are any problems that may have triggered the bullying.*

If you have any concerns regarding your child please discuss them the HEAD OF LITTLE SPONGES. It is much better to deal with these problems before they become major issues.

## Biting

Biting can be an uncomfortable subject for parents of both the biter and the child who is bitten. We hope that this policy will explain how we deal with biting at LITTLE SPONGES. Please do discuss any concerns you may have regarding this issue with the Head.

If your child is known to bite we would prefer to know in advance.

Children bite for a variety of reasons. This may be because they are teething, frustrated, exploring using their mouth, asserting their independence and wanting to gain control, maybe of a toy , or they could be stressed. It may also be because they want to gain attention.

We will work with you and your child to establish when and why they are biting. We will observe the child closely to see if certain conditions or situations trigger the behaviour and then work with them to try and avoid the incidents occurring. This may involve altering the child's routine, giving them more one-to-one attention, or if it is because a child is teething, ask the parent to provide suitable teething resources.

We will ensure that if a child is bitten that they are comforted and given lots of attention. We will ensure that any first aid is applied correctly if required and the incident will be recorded in the Incident book and parents will be asked to sign it.

If your child bites then we will remove him/her from the situation. We will explain to the child, according to their age and understanding that biting is unacceptable behaviour. For younger child this may be by the tone of voice and facial expressions rather than lots of words. It may be necessary for the member of staff dealing with the incident to exclude the child from an activity and use "time out" until they are calm enough to return. We will also encourage the child to apologise to the child they have bitten and work with them to develop strategies to help them deal with the reasons.

## Restraint

Staff at **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI**, are not permitted to use any form of corporal punishment. In some exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to physically restrain a child in order to prevent:

- *personal injury to themselves*
- *personal injury to another child or adult*
- *Immediate danger of death to themselves*
- *Immediate danger of death to another child or adult*
- *serious damage to property.*

Under these circumstances staff will not be in breach of the law.

The staff at **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI** will make the judgment to physically restrain a child only when there is a real or potential danger. The child will only be restrained by holding them until the danger has passed and they will be released as soon as it is safe to do so. The child will then be spoken to, preferably in a quiet area. They will be calmed and reassured by the staff. An explanation will be given to the child as to why they were restrained using language appropriate to their understanding. Parents will be informed as soon as possible of the incident.

Any occasions when restraint is used will be recorded on a Restraint Record Form completed by the member of staff responsible for the restraint and include witness's signatures. Parents will be requested to sign the form and be provided with a copy.

# ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (STAFF)

We encourage all our employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work due to sickness. By implementing this policy, we aim to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of our business needs and the genuine needs of employees to take occasional periods of time off work due to sickness. This policy and procedure establish a framework to support individuals and the nursery in time of sickness absence. It ensures that appropriate and consistent advice is provided, and that assistance and support is offered to employees and, where necessary, action is taken.

## Principles

We aim to provide a healthy working environment and demonstrate commitment to health, safety and the welfare of staff in order to maximise attendance.

The Management is responsible for regularly monitoring and taking appropriate action in connection with sickness and other unplanned absences.

## Sickness absence and reporting procedure

Reporting sickness absence should be done using the following guidelines. Failure to follow these guidelines could delay any sick pay due to you and could possibly result in disciplinary action.

1. On your first day of absence, you must:
  - ┆ Telephone the nursery and speak to the Manager or Deputy Manager;
  - ┆ Give brief details of your illness and your expected length of absence;
  - ┆ Telephone and speak to someone yourself. Text messages and emails are not an acceptable form of communication for this purpose. Contact someone within an hour of your normal start time.
2. If you have been unable to determine how long the absence will last, and it exceeds the third day, you must contact the Manager again on the fourth day;
3. On returning to work you must complete a copy of the 'Employee's statement of sickness self-certification form'. This should be signed by the Manager;
4. For absences of more than seven consecutive days, you must provide a 'fit note' completed by a qualified medical practitioner for the period of absence;
5. After returning to work from any sickness absence leave, a 'return to work' interview may be undertaken by the employee and Manager. This will not happen in all circumstances, and we may hold such meetings at our discretion. However, such meetings will normally be held in the following circumstances:
  - ┆ Where the absence has exceeded 14 days;
  - ┆ Where the nature of the illness means that duties on return to work may need to be altered and clarification and/or consultation is required;
  - ┆ Where a member of staff has had two or more absences in 12 weeks.

During the return to work interview the following will be discussed:

- ┆ The reason for absence;
- ┆ Whether adjustments to the role (on a temporary or more permanent basis) are required and what they are.;
- ┆ Future requirements and expectations., e.g. improved attendance;
- ┆ The return to work interview should be recorded and signed by both the Manager and employee and a copy attached to the employee's file.

Where an employee's attendance record gives cause for concern because of the duration or frequency of absence this should be brought to the attention of the employee through a discussion with the Manager.

The abuse of sick leave and pay regulations may be classified as misconduct and will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

### **Frequent and/or persistent short-term sickness absence**

Short-term absence may be short periods of one or two days occurring frequently.

Absence of this nature can be identified by one of the following indicators and should be classed as a trigger:

- ┆ Four self-certified spells of absences in one calendar year;
- ┆ A total of 10 working days or more of self-certified absence in one calendar year;
- ┆ Patterns of absence over a period, e.g. an individual regularly taking Mondays or Fridays off;
- ┆ Where an employee's attendance is significantly worse than those of comparable employees, or absence problems have gone on for a considerable length of time.

### **Long-term sickness absence**

For the purposes of the policy, long-term sickness absence is defined by the nursery as absences lasting over one month.

Where absences have lasted over 10 working days or more, the Manager should contact the member of staff concerned to obtain an initial assessment of the problem and to offer any further help or assistance.

At this point and where felt appropriate after further assessment of the problem, the Manager will arrange a face-to-face meeting between themselves and the member of staff. The meeting should:

- ┆ Seek to confirm the reasons and nature of the absence and its likely duration;
- ┆ Ensure that the member of staff is aware of the nursery's concern regarding their health and necessary absence from work;
- ┆ Consider any personal problems being encountered and discuss possible ways of helping the individual to resolve these;
- ┆ Advise the member of staff that in their best interests, they may be asked to see a registered medical practitioner or occupational health provider appointed by the nursery to enable a medical report to be prepared;
- ┆ Alternatively, and if appropriate, gain agreement from the member of staff to contact their doctor in order to establish the likely length of absence and the long-term effect on capability in relation to job performance and attendance at work.

If all other avenues have been investigated, the absence continues or, following return to work, the attendance record does not improve, a subsequent meeting should be arranged. At this point, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe there will be an improvement in the foreseeable future, the Manager should inform the member of staff that long-term sickness absence due to ill health may put their employment at risk and the possibility of termination by reason of capability or suitability to work with children might have to be considered, considering any medical information available.

The position will be reviewed periodically and ultimately it may become necessary from a business perspective to consider termination of employment. In these circumstances, the nursery will:

- ┆ Review the employee's absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal;
- ┆ Consult the employee;
- ┆ Obtain up-to-date medical advice through Occupational Health;
- ┆ Advise the employee in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility;
- ┆ Meet with the employee to discuss the options and consider the employee's views on continuing employment.

Any decision to terminate employment will be taken by the Head, making sure the capability procedure has been exhausted.

### **Occupational health**

The nursery reserves the right to request employees to attend an appointment with an Occupational Health Advisor (e.g. consultant, GP) during their employment, if it is reasonably deemed necessary due to sickness absence, changes in health or where it is necessary to seek an expert medical opinion as to whether or not the employee can fulfil their job.

The nursery will seek to engage the services of an independent Occupational Health Advisor in situations where expert medical opinion is required and work with them to identify the best course of action in circumstances of sickness absence.

### **Access to medical records**

The Access to Medical Records Act 1988 gives individuals the right of access to medical records relating to themselves which have been prepared by a medical practitioner for employment purposes. The Act provides that:

- ┆ Employers must gain the consent of employees before requesting reports from medical practitioners;
- ┆ Employers must inform employees of their rights in respect of medical reports.
- ┆ The employee has the right of access to the report before the employer sees it, provided appropriate notification is given;
- ┆ The employer is responsible for notifying the medical practitioner that the employee wishes to have access;
- ┆ The employee may ask for a report to be amended or may attach a statement to the report;
- ┆ Having seen the report, the employee may wish to withhold consent to it being supplied.

Where the nursery requests further medical information about the health of staff from an individual's General Practitioner or Specialist, or its own occupational health provider, the provisions of the Act will be followed.

### **Sick Pay**

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid in accordance with Department for Work and Pensions requirement and no payment will be made for the first three working days in a period of incapacity for work.

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY - for staff

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI realises that social media and networking websites have become a regular part of everyday life and that many people enjoy membership of sites such as Facebook, MySpace or Twitter. However, it is also aware that these sites can become a negative forum for complaining or gossiping and care must be taken not to breach Little Sponges' confidentiality policy or offend anyone when using these services.

The following policy has been designed to give staff clear guidelines as to what Little Sponges Montessori expects of them when accessing these sites.

**As an employee of Little Sponges Montessori you must adhere to the following restrictions when using social networking sites:-**

- Staff must NOT mention the nursery, staff, parents or children during discussions on any social networking sites.
- Staff must NOT use social networking sites during working hours; this includes during breaks and lunches.
- Staff members must NOT have parents as friends on these sites. If parents have any questions / concerns regarding their child, nursery or staff, then this should be discussed in a professional manner with the management at the nursery.
- Staff must NOT mention their place of work on their personal profile page.
- Staff MUST not post any pictures of the nursery, children or staff on these sites.
- If / when your employment at the Little Sponges Montessori terminates, then you must continue to follow restrictions such as discussing the nursery, staff, parents or children on any social networking sites.

If any staff member does not adhere to this policy then disciplinary action will be taken. This could lead to instant dismissal depending on the restrictions you have breached.

I have read, fully understand and agree to follow Little Sponges Montessori's SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY and that if I breach this policy then it will lead to disciplinary action and instant dismissal depending on the restrictions breached.

STAFF NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATED:

# MOBILE TELEPHONES/CAMERA POLICY

In view of safeguarding children, the use of mobile telephones and cameras is prohibited during the hours of operation at Little Sponges. Staff, parents and visitors are not allowed to use their mobile telephones or take photographs of any child while at Little Sponges.

All staff at Little Sponges Montessori are required to leave their mobile telephones in the safe which is located in the understairs cupboard when they arrive for work. If staff need to be contacted during the working hours, they should give the telephone number of Little Sponges where they can be contacted.

# E-SAFETY POLICY

This policy is a guideline for the safe use of digital technology and gives practical advice to staff and volunteers in safeguarding children from the risks associated with digital technology as well as ensuring that staff protect themselves through safe and responsible working practices.

We support children in using a range of ICT resources, which may include cameras, CD players, tape recorders and programmable toys in addition to computers.

In order to promote safer use of ICT, Little Sponges safeguards the privacy of children when taking or recording of images. Written consent by the parent is given to take and/or display photographs.

***It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of children for their own personal use.***

**Only authorised equipment will be used to take photographs will be used.**

## **Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Use**

Care is taken to ensure that safe and secure Internet access, appropriate for both adults and children is made available. Little Sponges uses a secure web-based system to monitor and record the children's learning journey with a secure login Parent Site.

There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children on the Internet are illegal. Adults who are involved in this activity will be viewed as a threat to children and will be subject to a criminal investigation that if proven will result in them being barred from working with children.

- ┆ Adults should not use equipment belonging to the setting to access pornography;
- ┆ Adults should ensure that children are not exposed to inappropriate images or websites. Appropriate controls are in place to prevent this, for example, through use of filters and personal passwords.

Where indecent images are found, this must be reported immediately to the Head of Little Sponges who will immediately alert the Police and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Adults who discover such images should not attempt to investigate the matter themselves as this could compromise an investigation

## **Communication**

Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. Email communication should be professional in

## **Use of Social Networking Sites – See Social Media Policy**

Staff should ensure that their personal use of social media does not conflict with their professional duties. Staff must observe confidentiality and not discuss work-related matters online or bring the nursery into disrepute.

## **Policy for the Use of iPads – See Policy for the Use of iPads**

Personal staff mobile phones or devices (e.g. iPads or iPhone) should not be used for any apps which record and store children's personal attainment or photographs. Only Little Sponges' issued and authorized devices may be used for such activities (iPads and iPhone (belonging to the Head).

## **Personal Data**

*Personal data is defined as any data that enables an individual to be identified including names, contact details, etc.* Sensitive data, photographs and videos of children should not be stored on the nursery's devices which leave the premises.

## **Mobile Telephones/Camera**

– please see Mobile Telephones/Camera Policy.



# LOST CHILD POLICY

## POLICY STATEMENT

The safety of the children is paramount and the setting will make every effort to ensure that whilst on outings all children are closely supervised to ensure they remain safe and within the group. Please see our Outings Policy for the procedures we have in place.

## Procedure

In the extremely unlikely event that a child was to become detached from the group and become 'lost' then we have the following procedure in place.

- *All staff and helpers to be alerted and a search made of the immediate and surrounding areas.*
- *Depending on location, others alerted, for example if in a shop then the shop staff.*
- *If the search proves negative then parents, police and Ofsted are to be informed.*
- *Staff must ensure the welfare, both physical and emotional, of other children in their care.*
- *The Head or Deputy to be responsible for gathering all relevant information and liaising with the required authorities and parents.*

Parents are kindly requested to inform the Head of Little Sponges or the Deputy if there is any risk of abduction from an estranged parent.

Staff is unable to prevent a parent taking their own child unless they have been given copies of any legal injunction preventing the parent having access.

# UNCOLLECTED CHILD

## POLICY STATEMENT

If a parent or authorised adult fails to collect a child at the appointed time, the setting still has a duty of care towards the child and should follow the procedure outlined below.

## Procedure

If a parent fails to collect a child at the appointed time. Staff should:

- *ensure that there are two members of staff still on duty*
- *wait for 15 minutes after the appointed collection time before taking any action*
- *contact the parent, where possible, or any other adults normally authorised to collect the child*
- *contact either the police or the Local Authority Social Care for Children, if no authorised person is able to collect the child after all reasonable attempts have been made to contact them*
- *ensure that the child does not leave the premises with anyone other than the parent or the people authorised by them*
- *not take the child to the child's home or to another house, nor transport them in a staff member's own car.*
- *The provider may reserve the right to charge the parent for the additional time the child is at the provision, in increments of 15 minutes.*

The staff must ensure that all contact information for parents and other nominated carers, e.g. grandparents, is kept up to date, including mobile phone numbers if possible.

# VISITORS

## POLICY STATEMENT

It is our policy to encourage visits to the setting by various people who could help the children's learning and development, such as health professionals, police, fire fighters, as well as entertainers and storytellers. Parents and students may also visit to act as helpers for various activities.

## Procedure

All staff should follow the procedure below for all visitors.

- *Visitors should be required to sign in, giving their name, and company if relevant, purpose of visit and time of arrival and departure.*
- *Visitors should not be left alone with the children at any time.*
- *Regular visitors, i.e. those visiting more than once a month, must have suitability checks carried out on them by the Head of Little Sponges.*
- *Staff ratios should be maintained at all times, including when visitors are being escorted.*

# OUTINGS POLICY

## POLICY STATEMENT

Outings are a significant part of a child's learning and development, providing them with opportunities to explore the natural world and understand more about their community. However their safety on outings is of paramount importance.

## Procedure

We have developed the following procedures to enable the children to experience a wide variety of outings safely.

All outings are well planned. This involves a member of staff visiting the venue prior to the visit and carrying out a full risk assessment of both the journey and venue. This risk assessment is recorded and any identified hazards highlighted. Plans are then put in place to eliminate or minimize the risk to children and staff.

Staff is trained in how to supervise the children more closely during outings. The required ratio of staff to children is always enhanced for outings, i.e. more staff is available to support smaller groups of children.

Volunteers, in the form of parents, extended family and friends are welcome to join us on the trips.

Most of the outings do not require vehicular transport as they are in and around the local environ. If, however, a visit is planned that requires transport, the vehicles that transport the children will be correctly insured for the purpose and driven by named drivers. If public transport is to be used parents will be informed.

A checklist of essential records and equipment has been devised for outings, ensuring that emergency situations can be dealt with effectively.

Children will be given wristbands with the name and the telephone number of the setting written on it, in case they should become detached from their group. A lost child policy is also in place. Children will wear high visibility vests on all outings

Parents will be asked to cover the additional costs of the outing (entrance fees, transportation etc) and to provide additional clothing/footwear (if required).

# NAPPY CHANGING/INTIMACY POLICY

Little Sponges Montessori recognises the need to attend to the safety and comfort of the children at all times and respect the personal dignity of each child. When providing the intimate care required in changing children's nappies, staff will follow the following procedures:

Only staff will be involved in changing a child. Every member of staff will adhere strictly to Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures. Any concern will be reported to the designated persons who will inform parents and these will be recorded.

A parents who visits Little Sponges will only change his or her own child.

Staff will inform colleagues that they are going to change a child's nappy.

Staff will use disposable gloves.

A changing mat will be used for the sole purpose of changing nappies and will be disinfected with antibacterial spray after use. All staff will follow normal hand-washing procedures.

Soiled nappies will be placed in the Nappy Disposal bin, operated by a foot pedal - the bag will be disposed of at the end of the day.

This procedure will include taking children to the toilet although staff allow the children independence in this self-care skill and will offer help if and when needed.

All staff at Little Sponges Montessori are aware of this policy which they have signed.

# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

## **Definition:**

Whistleblowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation.

Little Sponges Montessori is committed to high quality Montessori practice and service, promoting accountability and maintaining staff confidence.

This policy provides staff at Little Sponges with protection from victimisation or punishment where they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the organisation.

The policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace. The Act covers behaviour, which amounts to so:

- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with any legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Danger to health and safety of an individual and/or environment
- Deliberate concealment information about any of the above

It is not intended that this policy be a substitutive for, or an alternative to the formal Grievance Procedure, but is designed to nurture a culture of optimises and transparency, within the organisation, which makes it safe and acceptable for employees to raise, in good faith, a concern they may have about misconduct or malpractice.

An employee who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise such a concern should normally report the matter to the Head who will advise the employee of the action that will be taken in response to the concerns expressed. Concerns should be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.

If an employee feels the matter cannot be discussed with the Head, he or she should contact OFSTED's 'whistleblowing hotline' by telephone or write to Whistleblowing Hotline, Ofsted, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA for advice on how to proceed.

A disclosure in good faith to the Head will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained whenever possible and the employee will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of raising any genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice within Little Sponges Montessori.

# COMPLAINTS

## Policy Statement

**LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI** encourages parents to share their concerns regarding the running of the nursery and suggestions for improvement as early as possible to avoid a subsequent complaint.

Parents should be aware of the complaints procedure and urged to use it in order to try and minimise concerns escalating before they are resolved.

## The Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- *to set out the procedures to be used for making a complaint to the **HEAD OF LITTLE SPONGES**, either verbally or in writing*
- *to establish the procedures to be followed when dealing with a complaint*
- *to set out the procedures to be used when a complaint has been made directly to Ofsted about the provision.*

## Complaints procedure

- *All concerns and complaints will be dealt with courteously and promptly.*
- *Confidentiality of those concerned in the complaint (adults and children) will be maintained, with only those who 'need to know' being aware of their identity.*
- *If no agreement can be made then the parent should put the complaint in writing to the **HEAD OF LITTLE SPONGES** who will then record the complaint and investigate it, keeping the parent informed. At all times the provider will seek to resolve the concern and agree a course of action with the parent.*
- *Written complaints will be investigated and the outcome reported back to the complainant within 28 days.*
- *Verbal complaints will also be considered and resolved promptly to reach a satisfactory outcome for both the complainant and the provision.*

The final stage in the **COMPLAINT** procedure is that the parent may wish to complain to **OFSTED**, whose address is given below:

**OFSTED, OFSTED NATIONAL BUILDINGS UNIT, Royal Exchange Buildings, St. Ann's Square, Manchester M2 7LA**

Any complaint received from Ofsted will be dealt with accordingly within the time frame set by Ofsted and written records will be kept of all investigations and outcomes. Where appropriate **LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI** will agree the appropriate course of action with Ofsted.

Written records of complaints must include the date of the complaint, how it was made, the details of the complaint itself, who the complainant was, the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) requirement to which it relates, how the complaint was dealt with and by whom, actions proposed or taken, whether the record has been shared with the complainant and when and they must be signed and dated by the staff member who completed the record.

# FIRST AID

**LITTLE SPONGE MONTESSORI** is committed to providing sufficient numbers of first-aiders to deal with accidents and injuries at work. It will provide information and training on first aid to employees to ensure that statutory requirements and the needs of the nursery are met.

The person responsible for the implementation of this policy is MRS. NICOLE BACON who holds the appropriate and up to date paediatric first aid certificate.

## FIRST AID TRAINING

All staff at Little Sponges are trained in Paediatric First Aid and hold current Certificates. In line with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, (update April 2017) all new staff will be required to have undergone training in Paediatric First Aid.

- *First-aid personnel are employees who have volunteered for the role and have been assessed as suitable. LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI will ensure that a first aider suitably trained in paediatric first aid is on duty at all times when children are in the nursery. It will also nominate an appointed person to take charge if a first aider is unavailable in exceptional circumstances. First aiders are qualified personnel who have received training in accordance with HSE requirements. First-aid personnel will be provided with refresher training at regular intervals to keep their skills up to date and all staff will be expected to have first aid training.*

## First-aid Boxes

First-aid boxes will be provided within the nursery to ensure there are adequate supplies for the nature of the hazards involved. All boxes will contain at least the minimum supplies suggested by L74: *First Aid at Work. Approved Code of Practice*. Only specified first aid supplies will be kept. No creams, lotions or drugs, however seemingly mild, will be kept. The location of first-aid boxes and the name of the person responsible for their upkeep will be clearly indicated on notice boards.

## Portable First-aid Kits:

Portable first-aid kits will be available for staff members required to work away from the normal workplace, where access to facilities may be restricted.

## Recording Accident:

All accidents, however minor, must be recorded. LITTLE SPONGES will provide an accident book in which all incidents must be noted. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure they complete an entry in the accident book as soon as possible after an injury.

## First-aid Supplies:

For the purposes of maintaining first-aid supplies, first aiders should keep a record of supplies used, by whom and for what reason.



# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## POLICY STATEMENT

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI acknowledges the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work, Act 1974 (s.2(1)), which states that it is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees, and (s.3(1)), which states that it is the duty of every employer to conduct his or her business in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons who are not in his or her employment but who may be affected by it are not exposed to risks to their health and safety, and accepts that it has a responsibility to take all reasonably practicable steps to secure the health and safety of children, parents and carers, staff and others using its premises or participating in its activities. It believes that the prevention of accidents, injury or loss is essential to the efficient operation of the school and is part of the good education of its pupils.

### Duties of the Employer

In the discharge of its duty the employer will:

- make itself familiar with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 and any other health and safety legislation and codes of practices which are relevant to the work of the school, in particular the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No. 3242)
- ensure that there is an effective and enforceable policy for the provision of health and safety throughout the provision
- periodically assess the effectiveness of this policy and ensure that any necessary changes are made
- identify and evaluate all risks relating to:
  - accidents*
  - health*
  - all activities, including work experience*
- identify and evaluate risk control measures in order to select the most appropriate means of minimising risk to staff, pupils and others
- In particular the employer undertakes to provide a safe place for staff to work and for children to be cared and developed, including safe means of entry and exit; statutory requirements; codes of practice whether statutory or advisory; welfare facilities.
- So far as is guidance whether statutory or advisory; supervision, training and instruction so that all staff and pupils can perform their school-related activities in a healthy and safe manner.

### Risk Assessment

LITTLE SPONGES will ensure that a risk assessment survey of the premises, methods of work and all activities are conducted annually (or more frequently, if necessary). This survey will identify all defects and deficiencies, together with the necessary remedial action or risk control measures.

### Emergency Plans

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI will ensure that an emergency plan is prepared to cover all foreseeable major incidents which could put at risk the occupants or users of the provision. This plan will indicate the actions to be taken in the event of a major incident so that everything possible is done to:

- Save life
- Prevent injury
- Minimise loss.

This sequence will determine the priorities of the emergency plan.

The plan will be agreed by the employer and be regularly rehearsed by staff and children. The result of all such rehearsals will form part of the regular risk assessment survey and the outcome will be reported to the employer.

### First Aid

- The arrangements for first aid provision will be adequate to cope with all foreseeable major incidents.
- All staff will undertake First Aid training.
- Supplies of first aid material will be held at various locations throughout the building. They will be prominently marked and all staff will be advised of their position. The materials will be checked regularly and any deficiencies made good without delay.
- Adequate and appropriate first aid provision will form part of the arrangements for all external visits.
- A record will be made of each occasion any member of staff, child or other person receives first aid treatment either on the school premises or as part of a provision's activities.

# RISK MANAGEMENT

## POLICY STATEMENT

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI aims to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment for all staff, children, parents, carers and visitors to the provision. We recognise that this policy alone cannot ensure safe, secure and healthy working conditions. Only good practice will ensure safety and security. It is everybody's responsibility to ensure that individual conduct ensures that our provision is as safe as it can reasonably be and that risk is managed to the benefit of all who participate here.

This policy explains our approach to risk management and lists the responsibilities of the employer and staff. However, it is important to acknowledge that responsibility for identifying and managing risk is a routine part of the role of all. Risk cannot be eliminated but everyone has the right to be protected as far as is "reasonably practicable".

### The Aims of the Policy

The aims of risk management are:

- To maintain a safe and secure working and care and development environment
- To make sure a balance is reached between safety and security and the need to take measured risks
- To foster an open and receptive approach to solving risk problems
- To ensure clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

### Procedure

Risk management is the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the activities of the nursery in order to minimise the potential for accidents.

In order that our aims can be fulfilled, the following are the responsibilities for key people within the school:

### Responsibilities of the Employer

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI has a fundamental role to play in the management of risk within the provision. Its role is to supervise the culture of risk management. It will ensure that all new staff is aware of this policy and the approach to risk management. It will ensure that relevant risk assessments are completed on a regular basis. Little Sponges will also ensure that incidents and hazards are recorded and reported and that action is taken to prevent them happening again.

### Visitors, Visiting Staff and Volunteers

Regular visitors and other users of the premises will be required to observe the health and safety guidance for the provision including risk assessments for the activities they engage in.

### Children and parents

Parents and carers are requested to encourage their children as far as it is reasonably practicable with consideration to the age of the child to:

- Follow the provider's code of conduct
- Observe all the health and safety arrangements as requested
- Refer any concerns they may have to staff.

Parents on the provider's premises are subject to the same risk assessments as members of staff and children. Additional consideration will need to be given to any specific physical needs of additional adults.

# FIRE SAFETY

At Little Sponges Montessori, we make sure that the Nursery is a safe environment for children, parents, staff and visitors through our Fire Safety policy and procedures.

The designated Fire Marshal, Mrs. Nicole Bacon, makes sure the nursery premises are compliant with fire safety regulations, including following any major changes or alterations to the premises and seeks advice from the local fire safety officer as necessary.

The designated fire marshal has overall responsibility for the fire drill and evacuation procedures. These are carried out and recorded for each group of children every half-term. These drills will occur at different times of the day and on different days to ensure evacuations are possible under different circumstances and all children and staff participate in the rehearsals.

## Registration

An accurate record of all staff and children present in the building is kept at all times and children/staff are marked in and out on arrival and departure. An accurate record of visitors is kept in the Visitor's book. These records are taken out along with the register and emergency contacts list in the event of a fire.

## No Smoking Policy

The Nursery operates a strict no smoking policy – please see this separate policy for details.

## Fire Drill Procedure

### On discovering a fire:

- *Calmly raise the alarm by ringing the bell;*
- *Immediately evacuate the building under guidance from the Fire Marshal;*
- *Using the nearest accessible exit, lead the children out, assemble in front of the Convent wall, 38 Hyde Vale, near the post box;*
- *Close all doors behind you wherever possible;*
- *Do not stop to collect personal belongings on evacuating the building;*
- *Do not attempt to go back in and fight the fire;*
- *Do not attempt to go back in if any children or adults are not accounted for;*
- *Wait for emergency services and report any unaccounted persons to the fire service/police.*

### **If you are unable to evacuate safely:**

- *Stay where you are safe*
- *Keep the children calm and together;*
- *Wherever possible, alert the Manager of your location and the identity of the children and other adults with you.*

### **The Fire Marshal is to:**

- *Telephone emergency services: dial 999 and ask for the Fire Service;*
- *Pick up the children's and staff register, parents' and contact details, mobile phone, keys, Visitor's book and Evacuation pack;*
- *In the Fire Assembly point area – in front of the Convent wall, 38 Hyde Vale, near the post box, check the children against the register;*
- *Account for all adults: staff and visitors;*
- *Advise the Fire Service of anyone missing and possible locations and respond to any other questions they may have;*
- *Contact parents when safe to do so.*

### **Remember:**

- *Do not stop to collect personal belongings on evacuating the building;*
- *Do not attempt to go back in and fight the fire;*
- *Do not attempt to go back in if any children or adults are not accounted for.*

### **Legislation:**

*Little Sponges Montessori complies with the following legislation:*

- *Health and Safety Act Work etc. Act 1974*
- *The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005*
- *The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.*

# CRITICAL INCIDENT

At Little Sponges Montessori, we understand we need to plan for all eventualities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the children for whom we care. With this in mind, we have a Critical Incident policy in place to ensure our nursery is able to operate effectively in the case of a critical incident. These include:

- ┆ Flood
- ┆ Fire
- ┆ Burglary
- ┆ Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- ┆ Bomb threat/terrorism attack
- ┆ Any other incident that may affect the care of the children in the nursery.

If any of these incidents impact on the ability of the nursery to operate, we will contact parents at the earliest opportunity, e.g. before the start of the Nursery day.

## **Flood**

There is always a danger of flooding from adverse weather conditions or through the water/central heating systems. We cannot anticipate adverse weather, however, we can ensure that we take care of all our water and heating systems through regular maintenance and checks to reduce the option of flooding in this way. Our central heating systems are checked and serviced annually by a registered gas engineer and they conform to all appropriate guidelines and legislation.

If flooding occurs during the nursery day, the Manager will make a decision based on the severity and location of this flooding, and it may be deemed necessary to follow the Fire and Emergency Evacuation procedure.

In this instance, children will be kept safe and parents will be notified as outlined in the Fire Safety Policy and the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan.

Should the nursery be assessed as unsafe through flooding, fire or any other incident, we will follow our Emergency Evacuation procedures and contact parents as the Nursery will cease to operate until safe to do so.

## **Fire**

Please refer to the Fire Safety policy.

## **Burglary**

The management of the nursery follows a lock up procedure which ensures all doors and windows are closed and locked before vacating the premises. Alarm systems are used and in operation during all hours the nursery is closed.

The Manager will always check the premises when arriving in the morning. Should a discovery that the Nursery has been broken into, the following procedure will be followed:

- ┆ Dial 999 with as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what you have found and emphasise that this is a nursery and children will be arriving soon.
- ┆ Contain the area to ensure no-one enters until the police arrives. The staff will direct parents and children as appropriate. If all areas have been disturbed, staff will follow police advice, including following the procedure under 'flood' wherever necessary to ensure the safety of the children.
- ┆ The Manager or Deputy will help the police with enquiries, e.g. by identifying items missing, areas of entry etc.
- ┆ The Manager or Deputy will be available at all times during this time to speak to parents, reassure children and direct enquiries.
- ┆ Management will assess the situation following a theft and ensure parents are kept updated with developments relating to the operation of the Nursery.

### **Abduction or threatened abduction of a child**

We have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe while in our care, including safety from abduction. Staff must be vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on Nursery property immediately.

Children will only be released into the care of an authorised adult. Parents are required to inform the nursery of any potential custody battles or family concerns as soon as they arise so that the nursery is able to support the child. The nursery will not take sides in relation to any custody battle and will remain neutral for the child. If an absent parent arrives to collect their child, the nursery will not restrict access **unless a court order is in place**. Parents are requested to issue the nursery with a copy of these documents should they be in place.

If a member of staff witnesses an actual or potential abduction from nursery, we have the following procedures which are followed immediately:

- ┆ The police must be called immediately
- ┆ The staff member will notify management immediately and the Manager will take control
- ┆ The parent(s) will be contacted
- ┆ All other children will be kept safe and secure and calmed down where necessary
- ┆ The police will be given as many details as possible including details of the child, description of the abductor, care registration number if used, time and direction of travel if seen and any family situations that may impact on this abduction.

### **Bomb Threat/Terrorism attack**

If a bomb threat is received at the nursery, the person taking the call will record all details given over the telephone as soon as possible and raise the alarm as soon as the telephone call has ended. The Management will follow the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan to ensure the safety of all on the premises and will provide as much detail to the emergency services as possible.

### **Other Incidents**

All incidents will be managed by the Manager or Deputy and all staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene. Any other incident that requires evacuation will follow the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan. Other incidents e.g. no water supply will be dealt with on an individual basis considering the effect on the safety, health and welfare of the children and staff in the Nursery.

# LOCK DOWN POLICY

## **Lock Down procedure:**

We will use the lock down procedure when the safety of the children and staff is at risk and we will be better placed inside the current building, with doors and windows locked and blinds drawn.

We will activate this emergency procedure in response to a number of situations, but the more typical might be:

- ┆ A reported incident or disturbance in the local community (with potential to pose a risk to staff and children in the Nursery)
- ┆ An intruder on the nursery site (with potential to pose a risk to staff and children in the Nursery)
- ┆ A warning being received regarding a risk locally, or air pollution (smoke plumes, gas cloud etc.)
- ┆ A major fire or explosion in the vicinity of the Nursery – as long as it is safer staying in the premises than leaving.

## **In this case, the staff will be notified, and the following action taken:**

All individuals (including children) will remain in the area they are in, if safe to do so. If the children are outside, staff is to promptly and calmly direct children into the building, if this will not endanger them. Staff will make efforts to close and lock doors wherever safe to do so.

All individuals will keep away from the windows and doors and children will be occupied in the centre of the room, so they are not placed at risk or are able to see any situation developing outside.

The Manager will ensure all children, staff and visitors are accounted for and safe before returning to the office area to keep up to date with the current situation via updates.

The Manager or Deputy will manage the situation dependant on the situation and the information available. If the Nursery is in immediate danger of an intruder, the police will be called as a matter of urgency. In other cases where the situation has been alerted by the police or Local Area Authority then the Nursery will await further instructions.

Once the all-clear has been given externally, the Manager will issue the all-clear internally. After this time, the staff will try to return to normal practice to enable the children not to be disrupted or upset by the events.

Any children showing worries or concerns will have one-to-one time with a member of staff to talk about these concerns.

Parents will be informed about the situation at the earliest and safety opportunity and will be kept updated when the information changes.

After the event, a post-incident evaluation will be conducted to ensure that each child and staff member was supported fully, and the procedure went as planned.

# FOOD SAFETY

It is the policy of LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI to ensure that all food and drink prepared and consumed on its premises is prepared to the highest standard to prevent any type of illness in the children in its care and its staff. This policy subscribes to the four basic principals of food hygiene to:

- *ensure food areas are clean and a good standard of personal hygiene is maintained*
- *cook all food thoroughly*
- *keep food at the right temperature*
- *prevent cross contamination.*

All staff have been trained in Food Safety (Level 2).

We ensure that all snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced and nutritious and information about children's special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and special health requirements are obtained before the child is admitted to Little Sponges.

An area is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks and fresh drinking water is available at all times.

## **The employer will:**

- *adhere to its Cleaning Policy with regard to all food preparation and eating areas*
- *implement and maintain a suitable food safety management system in line with Hazards Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)*
- *provide training for its staff with regard to food safety, food hygiene and personal hygiene*
- *work with parents so that all foodstuffs provided by parents are within these policy guidelines.*
- *Any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises will be reported to OFSTED as soon as practicable and within 14 days of the incident.*

## **Employees will:**

- *maintain a high standard of personal hygiene at all times*
- *inform the Head of Little Sponges if they know or suspect they are suffering from or carrying any disease which may contaminate food, and not to work with food if suffering from such illness*
- *bring promptly to the attention of the Head of Little Sponges any breach or suspected breach of procedures or any action of any person which they feel may compromise the hygienic nature of any food preparation, storage or service.*

# HEALTHY EATING

## Policy Statement

Research has shown that the provision of a nutritionally balanced diet is a vital part in the healthy growth and development of children.

We also understand that high standards of food hygiene in early years settings are critical. Lapses in food hygiene can lead to outbreaks of food poisoning, which for small children can be very serious, even fatal. To ensure high standards of food safety this setting therefore complies fully with all food hygiene and safety standards and regulations including The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2005.

## Policy

Snacks will be nutritional and free of any preservatives. Drinks (water and milk) will be offered when needed and there is a Water Machine available. For those children who stay for the lunch period, the parents will provide a packed lunch, which must complement healthy eating.

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI considers that mealtimes represent an important social occasion for children to which they should look forward. Thus LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI will endeavour to ensure that mealtimes are as enjoyable as possible and that children are taught appropriate ways to behave when eating. Children will also be taught how to lay a table as part of the Montessori activities.

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI will:

- Ensure that staff have basic knowledge about childhood nutrition and the importance of diet in child development
- Ensure that snacks or drinks provided are healthy, balanced and nutritious
- Ensure that those responsible for the preparation and handling of food are properly trained, equipped and competent
- Implement food safety policies by having effective management of food safety systems
- Ensure that all food is stored, prepared, and served in a hygienic and competent way in compliance with all food safety legislation and best practice
- Notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises
- Obtain, record and act on information from parents about a child's dietary needs
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under food hygiene legislation including registration with the relevant Local Authority Environmental Health Department
- Take note in a child's records of any food allergies they have and communicate this to all staff who are involved in the preparation of snack/lunch that foods are appropriately labelled if they contain a severe allergen (e.g. nuts) and are not given to affected children.

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI will display the type of food offered at Snack Time.

We will ensure that:

- Children will be offered suitable foods, including children with special dietary requirements and allergies
- Parents or guardians will be advised if their child is not eating well
- Advice will be given to parents or guardians about suitable food to bring from home, including suitable party foods and healthy options for packed lunches
- Parents of children who are on special diets will be asked to provide as much written information as possible about suitable foods.

The staff at Little Sponges will sit with children while they eat and provide a good role model for healthy eating. Withholding food will never be used as a form of punishment or coercion and food will not be used as an incentive for good behaviour.

Staff at Little Sponges will sit with the children while they eat lunch. Children will be given plenty of time to eat and enjoy the social interaction attached to mealtimes.



# HYGIENE

**Name of setting:** LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI, 38A HYDE VALE, GREENWICH, LONDON SE10 8QH

## Policy statement

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI puts the wellbeing of the children in its care at the very core of its services. It will ensure that it provides a high-quality environment that is appropriate for its purpose, and that the premises are kept in a clean and hygienic condition for all children and users.

## Procedure

- It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that the setting is kept clean and hygienic at all times. Staff will be expected to tidy up and keep the setting clean within the reasonable limits of their role and to report any areas where the setting may be falling below its set standards.
- An adequate number of sinks for hand washing will be provided along with disposable soaps and paper towels.
- All staff will be expected to display high standards of personal hygiene and to wash their hands regularly throughout the day and especially after going to the toilet or before touching food. All staff should help the children to keep clean throughout the day and to wash their hands appropriately, especially after using the toilet or before eating.
- Staff should always ensure that toys and equipment are inspected and cleaned regularly at the end of each session and at the end of each day. Unhygienic toys should be discarded and old and worn-out toys will be replaced.
- Play sand and play dough will be replaced when necessary.
- Cleaning staff will be expected to keep all cleaning materials safely and securely and out of the way of children. They will also be expected to ensure that all of their cleaning work practices include appropriate health and safety safeguards.

All staff will be trained to recognise their role in maintaining good standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

## Potentially Infectious Spillages

- Staff should treat every spillage of body fluids or body waste — such as blood, vomit, faeces and urine — with caution as potentially infectious.
- As with ordinary spillages, potentially infectious spillages must be cleaned up immediately. When potentially infectious spillages occur staff should clean using a product, which combines both a detergent and a disinfectant, is effective against bacteria and viruses, and is suitable for use on the affected surface. They should use disposable paper towels, wear protective disposable gloves and discard the waste safely.
- Mops should never be used for cleaning up blood and body fluid spillages.

# CLEANING

It is the policy of LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI to provide a clean working environment for children and staff as part of its Health and Safety Policy.

All areas of the nursery will be cleaned, as will equipment, surfaces, furnishings, and furniture on a daily basis.

The staff at LITTLE SPONGES will keep all areas clean and tidy as a general part of their everyday work, undertake any cleaning duties as directed by the employer where there is an immediate concern regarding cleanliness, cross contamination, spills, etc, ensure that all cleaning equipment and chemicals are securely stored and always out of the reach of children.

# NO SMOKING

## **Policy Statement**

This policy has been formulated to protect everyone who enters LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI from exposure to secondhand smoke and to assist compliance with the Health Act 2006.

It is the policy of LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI that all workplaces are smoke-free and all who are present within have a right to work in a smoke-free environment.

Overall responsibility for policy implementation and review lies with NICOLE BACON (Owner). However, all those who enter the abovementioned property are obliged to adhere to, and support the implementation of the policy.

Appropriate 'no-smoking' signs will be clearly displayed at the entrance to and within the building.

# ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

At Little Sponges Montessori, we have an adverse weather policy in place to ensure our nursery is prepared for all weather conditions that might affect the running of the nursery such as floods, snow and heatwaves.

If any of these incidents impact on the ability of the nursery to open or operate, we will contact parents by telephone.

We will not take children outdoors where we judge that weather conditions make it unsafe to do so.

## **Flood**

In the case of a flood, we will follow our Critical Incident procedure to enable all children and staff to be safe.

## **Snow or other severe weather**

If high snowfall, or another severe weather condition such as dense fog, is threatened during a nursery day, then the Manager will take the decision as to whether to close the nursery. This decision will consider the safety of the children, their parents and the staff team. In the event of a planned closure during the nursery day, we will contact all parents to arrange for collection of their child.

In the event of staff shortages due to snow or other severe weather, we will contact all available bank/agency staff and group the children differently until they are able to arrive. If we are unable to maintain statutory ratio requirement after all avenues are explored, we will contact Ofsted to inform them of this issue, recording all details in our incident file. If we feel the safety, health or welfare of the children is compromised then we will take the decision to close the nursery.

## **Heatwave**

Please refer to our Sun policy.

# SUN CARE POLICY

At Little Sponges, we are committed to ensuring that all children are fully protected from the dangers of too much sun. Severe sunburn in childhood can lead to the development of malignant melanoma (the most dangerous type of skin cancer) in later life.

We follow guidance from the weather reports and use the following procedures to keep children safe and healthy in the sun.

- ┆ Staff will work with parents to decide and agree on suitable precautions to protect children from burning, including those with more sensitive skin types.
- ┆ Children must have a clearly labelled sun hat which will be worn at all times whilst outside in sunny weather. This hat will preferably be of legionnaires design (i.e. with an extended back and side to shield children's neck and ears from the sun) to provide additional protection.
- ┆ Children must have their own labelled high factor sun cream with **prior written consent for staff to apply**. This enables children to have sun cream suitable for their own individual needs. Staff must be aware of the expiry date and discard sunscreen after this date.
- ┆ Parents are requested to supply lightweight cotton clothing for their children suitable for the sun, with long sleeves and long legs.
- ┆ Children's safety and welfare in hot weather is the nursery's prime objective so staff will work closely with parents to ensure all appropriate cream and clothing is provided.
- ┆ Staff will make decisions about the length of time spent outside depending on the strength of the sun.
- ┆ Children will always have sun cream applied before going outside in the hot weather and at frequent intervals during the day.
- ┆ Children are encouraged to drink cooled water more frequently throughout sunny or warm days, and this will be accessible both indoors and out.
- ┆ Children are made aware of the need for sun hats, sun cream and the need to drink more fluids during their time in the sun.
- ┆ Shade will be provided to ensure children are able to still go out in hot weather, cool down or escape the sun should they wish or need to.

# DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

At Little Sponges, we follow our legal obligations as an employer at all times including dealing with any disciplinary matter in a fair and consistent manner. We have a policy and procedure that sets out our process.

## Legal obligations

Our legal obligations as an employer are detailed in the ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures. This code of practice was introduced in April 2009 and updated 2015. A full copy of the ACAS Code of Practice and the accompanying guidance can be obtained from the ACAS website [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk).

## Objectives and guiding principles

The objective of this procedure is to set out the standards of conduct expected of all staff and to provide a framework within which the Manager can work with employees to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and to encourage improvement where necessary.

It is our policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly and consistently. We will take the necessary steps to establish the facts and to give employees the opportunity to respond before taking any formal action.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. We may also vary this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

The procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service.

Minor conduct issues can often be resolved informally between the employee and the Manager. These discussions should be held in private and without undue delay whenever there is a cause for concern. Where appropriate, a note of any such discussions may be held on the employee's personnel file.

Formal steps will be taken under this procedure if the matter is not resolved, or if informal discussion is not appropriate (due to the serious nature of the allegation against you).

The employee will not normally be dismissed for a first act of misconduct, unless we decide it amounts to gross misconduct or the employee has not yet completed their probationary period.

## The procedure

Our aim is to deal with disciplinary matters sensitively and fairly. All employees must treat all information in connection with the disciplinary procedure and its investigation as confidential.

Where there has been a serious allegation of misconduct or gross misconduct and/or there are serious concerns regarding the employee's capability, we aim to establish the facts quickly and no disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated. The employee will be informed if a formal complaint is made against them, and if necessary, they may be suspended on full pay pending the outcome of the investigation and disciplinary procedure.

## STAGE 1: INVESTIGATION

- We will investigate any allegations/concerns quickly and thoroughly to establish whether a disciplinary hearing should be held;
- interviews The purpose of the investigation is to establish a balanced view of the facts relating to the allegations against the employee. The amount of investigation will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the employee and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents.
- Investigation are solely for the purpose of fact-finding and no decision on the disciplinary procedure will be taken until after the disciplinary hearing;
- The employee is not normally allowed to bring a companion to an investigatory interview. However, we may allow them to bring a work colleague.
- If the investigations lead us to reasonably believe there are grounds for disciplinary action, we will write to the employee outlining the allegations against them, the basis of the allegations and the potential consequences. The employee will be invited to a disciplinary hearing to discuss the matter. They will be sent any copies of evidence which may be referred to in the hearing (e.g. witness statements, or a summary if the statements of the witness's identity is to remain confidential, and minutes of meetings).

## Suspension

- If we believe that you may be guilty of misconduct, which we consider (at our absolute discretion) to be serious misconduct, where relationships have broken down, or where we have any grounds to consider that our property or responsibilities to other parties are at risk, or where we consider in our absolute discretion that your continued presence at the nursery would hinder an investigation, we will be entitled to suspend you on full pay;
- Any such suspension will normally last only as long as required to enable an investigation into the circumstances giving rise to such belief of serious misconduct to be carried out and any disciplinary hearing to be convened;
- Any such period of suspension is not a punishment, nor considered as disciplinary action against you, nor does it imply that any decision has been taken about your case.

## STAGE 2: INVITE TO DISCIPLINARY HEARING

- We will hold the disciplinary meeting to discuss the allegations. The employee will have the right to bring a companion to the meeting and a companion may be a work colleague. The employee must inform us prior to the meeting who their chosen companion is. If their companion is unreasonable, for example, there may be a conflict of interest, we may require the employee to choose someone else;
- If the employee or their companion is unable to attend the meeting, the employee should inform us immediately and we will arrange an alternative time and date. The employee must make every effort to attend the meeting and failure to do so without good cause may be treated as misconduct in itself.

## Disciplinary hearing

- During the meeting, we will go through the allegations against the employee and the evidence that has been collated. The employee will be able to state their case and call relevant witnesses (provided the employee gives advance notice and we agree to their attendance) to support the case;
- We may adjourn the disciplinary meeting if we need to carry out further investigations and the employee will be given reasonable opportunity to consider new information;
- The employee will be notified of the decision in writing, usually within seven working days of the hearing;
- If the employee persistently fails to reply to invitations, or persistently fails to attend the arranged hearing without good cause, it may be carried out in their absence and they will be notified of the decision in writing. The employee will retain the right to appeal.

## Appeal

- The employee will be given the opportunity to appeal the decision. If they wish to appeal, the employee should state their full grounds in writing and the letter should be sent to Nicole Bacon, Head, within five working days from the date the decision was communicated to them;
- The appeal meeting will be conducted impartially by the Head and Deputy Manager;
- The employee will be able to bring a companion to the meeting and the companion may be a work colleague;
- We may adjourn the appeal hearing if further investigations need to be carried out and the employee will be given reasonable opportunity to consider any new information before the hearing is reconvened;
- We will inform the employee in writing of our final decision as soon as possible, usually within five working days of the appeal hearing.

*There is no legal right to appeal beyond this stage.*

## Disciplinary penalties

In the first instance where less serious offences are concerned, we are most likely to give the employee a verbal warning. This warning will be recorded, and a copy kept in the employee's personnel file with a timescale for improvement or to not re-offend.

The usual penalties for misconduct are set out below. No penalty should be imposed without a hearing. We aim to treat all employees fairly and consistently, and a penalty imposed on another employee for similar misconduct will usually be considered but should not be treated as a precedent. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

The employee will not normally be dismissed for a first act of misconduct, unless we decide it amounts to gross misconduct or the employee has not yet completed their probationary period.

## First Written Warning

A first written warning may be authorised by the Manager. It will usually be appropriate for a first act of misconduct where there are no other active written warnings on the employee's disciplinary record.

### **Final Written Warning**

A final written warning may be authorised by the Manager. It will usually be appropriate for:

- a. Misconduct where there is already an active written warning on the employee record;
- b. Misconduct that we consider is sufficiently serious, to warrant a final written warning even though there are no active warnings on their employee record.

### **Dismissal**

Dismissal may be authorised by the Manager. It will usually only be appropriate for:

- a. Any misconduct during the employee probationary period;
- b. Further misconduct where there is an active final written warning on the employee's record; or
- c. Any gross misconduct regardless of whether there are active warnings on the employee's record. Gross misconduct will usually result in immediate dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice (summary dismissal). Examples of gross misconduct are set out below.

### **Levels of authority**

The Manager has the authority to suspend an employee pending investigation.

### **Gross misconduct**

In the case of gross misconduct, the Manager reserves the right to dismiss an employee without notice (or payment in lieu of notice) if, after investigation and a hearing, the Manager is satisfied that there is sufficient justification for so doing.

### **Duration of warnings**

Under normal circumstances, warnings will be valid for the following time periods, although these may vary according to the nature of the occurrence and may therefore be determined by mutual agreement at the time of issue:

- Verbal warning – six months
- First written warning – six months
- Final written warning – 12 months.

On expiry, warnings will be disregarded for future disciplinary purposes.

### **Alternatives to dismissal**

In some cases, we may, at our discretion, consider alternatives to dismissal. These may be authorised by the Manager and will usually be accompanied by a final written warning. Examples include:

- Demotion
- A period of suspension without pay

### **Examples of gross misconduct**

Examples of what would constitute a gross misconduct offence include:

- Failure to inform the employer of a disqualification;
- Theft or the unauthorised possession of property belonging to the nursery, its employees or families;
- Assault on any employee or persons associated with the Nursery;
- Breach of confidence i.e. the divulging of confidential information relating to the Nursery, its employees or families;
- Dishonesty, including the use of any funds, expenses or allowances for any other purpose than that for which they have been delegated by the Nursery;
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst on duty
- Serious or persistent breaches of safety rules;
- Fraud including falsification of work records and expense claims;
- Signing in or out for another employee;
- Physical assault or abuse towards a child e.g. hitting a child in chastisement or harsh disciplinary actions;
- Discrimination/harassment in any way against a person;
- Persistent failure to follow nursery documentary systems and procedures;
- Unauthorised absence from work/unacceptable attendance levels;
- Obscene language or other offensive behaviour;
- Negligence in the performance of the employee's duties.

***Further behaviour that could constitute gross misconduct is not limited by the above list.***



### **Examples of misconduct**

Examples of what would constitute a misconduct offence include:

- Minor breaches of our policies including the Absence Policy, Mobile Phone, and Social Networking Policy, and Health and Safety Policy;
- Minor breaches of the employee contract;
- Damage to, or unauthorised use of, our property;
- Poor timekeeping;
- Time-wasting;
- Refusal to follow instructions and insubordination;
- Unauthorised use of our telephones for personal calls;
- Excessive personal email or internet usage;
- Smoking in the building;

N.B. Some of the misconduct offences above may, dependent on the circumstances and having followed a detailed investigation, also be classed as gross misconduct offence