



Staff Code of Conduct - 2025/26

At St Richard's Nursery we offer children a welcoming and inspiring place full of opportunities. We are an inclusive setting and we provide families with support and the secure knowledge that there is a rigorous approach to understanding and responding to their children's needs.

In order to provide this, we understand that our trained staff are the most important and valued resource in our setting. Their exemplary work ethic, behaviour and interactions with each other set the highest standards for the children. Always, whilst promoting an enthusiasm for learning and an awareness of the needs of others, we will treat the children, their families, colleagues and other professionals with respect and dignity. We set out a Code of Conduct which we all hold as a benchmark for our best practice.

Working as part of a team

Expectations of Staff

- Provide a warm welcome to all who visit our setting.
- Familiarise yourself each day with daily routines, timetables, next steps and planning.
- Have high expectations at all times and work towards our shared goals.
- Have high expectations of the children and always use positive and encouraging language.
- Show respect and consideration for your colleagues.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Attend staff meetings and make your contributions to the development of the setting.
- Prepare for half termly Supervision meetings so that you can share your planning for individual children and any concerns you may have. You will be encouraged to contribute ideas about both your personal training needs and the development of our setting.
- Understand that all staff have a duty to disclose any concerns to the manager. You must share any worries that you may have about the conduct of other staff, volunteers and students with the manager in confidence.
- Support students and give them encouragement and advice.
- If you move to another area, ensure that non-members of staff are not left on their own.

Interacting with children

High quality interactions help us to:

- build warm relationships
- know and understand children better
- model language
- model the process of thinking
- scaffold learning
- affirm and consolidate children's learning
- extend children's knowledge and understanding

When deciding to interact, stop and think, what, when, whether.

- What: Is the child managing well? If not, could I say or do something to help?
- When: Is the child grappling or struggling? If I step in now, will I support the child's efforts, or will they feel disempowered?
- Whether: Would it be best to say or do nothing? Maybe the answer to "whether" is "not yet".
- Remember that your response could be verbal or non-verbal.
- Give time for children to respond.
- Use positive language and body language.
- Use a quiet voice and a calm manner.
- Use specific praise and promote children's positive self-image.
- Avoid too many questions, but sometimes use open-ended questions, e.g. I wonder where that train is going?
- Use our positive behaviour procedures and conflict resolution to reinforce boundaries and routines in a meaningful way.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the child, e.g. removing barriers to allow all children, whatever their additional needs, to participate in the full life of the setting.

Supporting children in their communication

Communication and language development should be a priority, along with the other two prime areas, physical and personal, social and emotional development.

When interacting with the child, use all the strategies above and ensure that you:

- Face the child and use their name to gain their attention.
- Use short, simple sentences, concentrating on key words.
- Listen and observe their play for cues.
- Comment on play, describing what you see in simple terms.

- Use props and visual aids.
- Give the child longer to respond.
- For children with EAL, read "Understanding the steps of learning for children with English as an Additional Language in the Early Years", which is kept with the EAL register in the SEND file.

Observing children

Observation is itself direct engagement with the child's thinking.

- Get down to their level. It can be difficult to hear what the child is saying.
- Let children explore and investigate for themselves.
- Wait, watch and wonder! Working out what the child is thinking can be more valuable than looking at what they are doing.
- Record written observations if you witness a "wow" moment of progress for the child. These written observations will provide evidence in the child's Learning Journal. Make sure they are factual and concise.
- Read our Key Person Policy and Procedures, which contains further details.
- If you are concerned about a child, make regular observations and share with the SENCO and colleagues.

Parent partnership

We recognise the importance of a partnership approach between nursery and parents and our Key Person system promotes this. By working together and sharing information both parents and practitioners can improve children's learning outcomes. When children see positive communication between their parents and staff, they begin to learn it is important to build healthy relationships. Be flexible in your approach to communication with parents. Think about how you might need to adapt to suit different parents, for example those with English as an additional language or a specific learning need. Also, make sure it's the right time to share information without having to rush off, especially when you feel emotions are involved.

When building a relationship with parents you should consider the sensitive feelings of the parent and think carefully about how you communicate, particularly when you have difficult things to say. It is crucial to be clear and honest, always keeping the conversation on a professional level.

When having difficult conversations with parents, it will help if you:

- Prepare - make sure you have factual recorded information to hand.

- Practice - practice the opening lines of what you want to say and find the particular words which you want to use to get your point across., e.g. "As you know part of our responsibilities is to assess how children are progressing..."
- Thank them for their time.
- Share good news - where they are doing well, meeting milestones. It is important not to exaggerate.
- Share the focus of your concerns - "now we are focusing on / interested in prioritizing / working on ... with your child."
- Be careful of your emphasis. "In this way I am trying to do the best for your child" rather than, "This is what is wrong with your child"!
- Practice the words to use to close a conversation - "I think we need to bring this meeting to a close now..."
- Feel supported - share planning and thoughts for difficult conversations with your colleagues and the SENCO. Make sure that, if you are worried how a meeting might go, you share this with your colleagues. To bring a meeting to a close, arrange a signal which means come and help!

Positive touch and positive handling

We believe that touch is very important in developing a sound relationship with young children and ensuring that the nursery environment is physically and emotionally supportive. Young children have strong needs to bond with significant adults and touch is clearly significant in helping them to develop such relationships. It is one of the factors which contributes to a healthy emotional environment. Staff are also skilled in other methods of comfort, conflict resolution and the control of undesirable behaviour. We acknowledge that in Early Years Education there is anxiety that allegations of inappropriate behaviour may be made. Therefore, we follow our agreed guidelines for best practice in positive touch to ensure that all physical touch is reasonable, proportionate and necessary. We also have a commitment to safe, positive handling in situations where extreme anxiety or additional learning needs cause a child to pose a risk to themselves or other children.

- Positive touch can give a child the physical reassurance that they may need. This may be on a child's shoulders, arm or hands.
- Appropriate touch is only used in line with the child's own wishes and feelings of security.
- For children with limited language, a physical response may be an essential way of communicating.
- If a child is hurt or extremely upset, you may hold them on your lap for reassurance.
- Hold hands to reassure a child for short amounts of time.
- Touch can gain a child's attention.

- When children indicate that they need comfort, ensure that it is provided in a public setting. Children in distress must receive appropriate comfort.
- Rough handling of children is forbidden.
- Positive handling can be necessary to safeguard a child or children at risk from child in crisis. Boundaries must be discussed and agreed with parents.
- Monitor and evaluate as a staff team any physical interventions necessary as a response to challenging behaviour.
- De-escalation of conflict and challenging situations must be practised to avoid the use of physical interventions where possible.
- Staff must take care over any manual handling to make sure that they protect their backs and avoid any injury to themselves.

Staff Meetings

- There will always be an agreed date for formal meetings.
- Minuted and the minutes circulated and agreed.
- Contribute to the meeting, sharing your thoughts and expertise.
- Respect the contributions of your colleagues.

Session Preparation

- Risk assessments and safety checks are completed before the session begins.
- Note and report any resources or furniture which is broken or incomplete.
- To inspire and invite the children to participate, all areas are prepared before they arrive.
- One member of staff provides a warm welcome on the door, and all staff take turns to greet our children and parents as they come into the nursery.

Safeguarding

- We agree that ensuring the safeguarding of children is paramount.
- The front door is bolted as the last parents have left the premises.
- Children are supervised in all areas, however, independent skills in hygiene and toileting are encouraged.
- Children are collected by an authorised person or, in an emergency, via an agreed password.
- Children who are collected by an authorised person must be signed out in the register.
- Accidents are logged in the accident book, shared with and signed by the parent.

- Medicines, e.g. inhalers, are only given with prior consent and a signed permission form from the parents. Over the counter medicines are not permitted.
- Any child protection concerns must be brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Lead, Diane Wynne, or, in her absence, the Deputy, Niki Harman.
- Smoking is not permitted in any part of the building or the surrounding area.
- Mobile phones must be kept in the kitchen and not used in the nursery or outside area.
- Always be aware of professional boundaries. Do not contact parents on a personal basis outside of working hours or have parents as friends on social networking sites.
- Do not mention the nursery or anyone connected with it on such sites.

Signed _____ Date _____