

# St Mark's Church Preschool Staff Handbook



St Mark's Church Community Centre, Calder Rise,  
Bedford MK41 7UY Telephone/Fax 01234 342613  
www.stmarkschurch.com office@stmarkschurch.com Charity No 1164416

## Welcome to St Mark's Church Preschool

We hope your career with us will be both enjoyable and fulfilling. This employee handbook provides you with the employment framework within St Mark's Church Preschool, the main terms and conditions of employment, entitlements and expectations for you as an employee. If anything is unclear or if you require any additional information, please discuss this with the preschool manager.

## Introducing St Mark's Church Preschool

St Mark's Church Preschool is established and governed by The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark, Bedford (Charity Number 1164416). St Mark's Church is a non-profit making charity and we have more than 40 years experience in providing children with the best possible start in life. We are located within St Mark's Church Community Center which is an outstanding location to provide a safe, caring, secure environment where children are nurtured and find enjoyment in developing their skills, knowledge and attitudes. We provide all day care for children from the age of 2 years right through to school age. The aims of St Mark's Church Preschool are

1. To provide safe and satisfactory individual and group play for the fulfilment of social, physical, emotional, educational and spiritual needs of preschool children.
2. To welcome children and parents into the Christian community of St Mark's Church.

At St Mark's Church Preschool our teaching staff are our strength. We have extremely well qualified teachers who have many years of experience and we provide a high teacher to child ratio. Every child is different, every child is special and so we take time to develop unique learning plans for each child to ensure that we fully cultivate each child's individual personality, developing their full potential.

St Mark's Church Preschool was inspected by Ofsted in October 2018 who said that we were 'Good in all areas.' The report praised the extensive support for families.

*'The staff are acutely aware of when families need support and offer a broad range of additional services. All families are warmly welcomed into the pre-school. '*

This employee handbook, issued during the 2019 financial year, replaces any other employee handbooks currently in place. It is for internal use only and must not be reproduced in any way or used externally.

## Employee Declaration

Your contractual terms and conditions of employment are as identified in your employment contract and in this employee handbook. They are the only terms and conditions upon which you are employed by St Mark's PCC and may not be varied except by a document in writing that is issued and signed by or on behalf of the PCC.

## The Reverend Canon Charles Royden

Chair of St Mark's Parochial Church Council

**St Mark's Church Preschool - Staff Declaration**  
*(Please return this page signed to the Preschool Manager)*

Please read the employee handbook, and if you cannot answer yes to all of the following questions, then you must contact your line manager for further clarification.

Do you understand the aims and mission of St Mark's Church Preschool ?	Yes / No
Do you understand what your work responsibilities are?	Yes / No
Do you know how to apply the EYFS as it is relevant to your role?	Yes / No
Do you know the procedure for recording and reporting safeguarding concerns?	Yes / No
Do you know the requirements for reporting sickness?	Yes / No
Do you know where to seek further support?	Yes / No

**Documents and Policies which you must read and understand**

Have you read and understand the Data Protection Policy of St Mark's Church ?	Yes / No
Have you read and Understand the Equalities Policy of St Mark's Church?	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Health and Safety Policy of St Mark's Church?	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Safeguarding Policies of St Mark's Church	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Domestic Abuse Policy of St Mark's Church ?	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Safe Use of Images Policy of St Mark's Church	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Prevent Duty of Care Policy ?	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Whistleblowing Policy	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Fire Safety Procedure ?	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Lifting and Manual Handling Policy ?	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Staff Personal Safety including Home Visits ?	Yes / No
Have you read and understand the Constitution of St Mark's Church ?	Yes / No

If you have answered yes to all of the above questions, please sign and return this slip to the Preschool Manager within seven days of receiving this copy of our employee handbook.

*I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to the conditions as stated in the employee handbook and understand that the version of this handbook that applies will be the latest version issued.*

Name

Signature

Date Handbook received

## Section 1.0 Employee rights

### Annual leave

The annual leave year runs from [1 October] to [30 September]. Annual leave entitlement is outlined in the employee's statement of terms and conditions of employment. Annual leave must be authorised prior to leave being taken and is granted at the discretion of the early years setting. A request for annual leave may be refused, for example, where other employees have already applied to take the same period off, or where the time requested is during a peak period. If a request is declined, you will be able to take annual leave at a later point during the leave year.

If you wish to apply for annual leave please complete an Annual Leave Request form, available from the Preschool Manager return it as far in advance as possible, providing notice of at least twice the number of days that you wish to take as annual leave.

#### *[Optional clauses]*

[You will be required to take annual leave on set days each year. The exact days will be circulated well in advance of the leave dates.]

[The amount of leave that you may take at any time during your first year of employment is limited to the amount that you have accrued at that time. Entitlement during your first year is calculated monthly in advance at the rate of one-twelfth of the full statutory annual entitlement of paid holiday.]

[There will be no carry-over of unused holiday entitlement from one holiday year to the next in any circumstances.]

[In exceptional circumstances, a maximum of [five] days may be carried over from one holiday year to the next, but this can be done only with the prior written approval of your line manager. In any case, any holiday carried over must be taken no later than [state date]. This carry over only applies to leave in excess of the statutory holiday entitlement.]

### Sickness reporting

St Mark's Church has a detailed Sickness and Absence Policy and this outlines your specific responsibilities in relation to any sickness or absence and it must be complied with in all circumstances. The policy outlines the following

It is your responsibility to:

- attend work at the expected time
- inform your line manager, in accordance with agreed arrangements, prior to any absence, or as soon as is reasonably practicable
- provide a reason for all absences and if possible the anticipated length of absence, plus

details of any work which needs to be covered urgently

- keep your line manager informed of progress and your likely date of return, if the period of sickness continues
- comply with health and safety requirements
- comply with certification arrangements as outlined below:

Length of sickness absence	Responsibility of employee
For sickness up to seven days	Complete a Self-certification of Sickness form on the first day of your return to work.
If sickness extends beyond seven days	Obtain a fit note from your GP and continue to provide fit notes promptly if the period of sickness continues.

- give as much notice as possible of the date and time of return, and report directly to your line manager on return from sickness absence
- comply with your line manager's request to take care of your health generally
- contact your manager immediately before you return to work if your GP has issued you with a fit note which states that you are 'fit for work' with recommended adjustments

It is important that you follow the sickness reporting responsibilities. If you do not, we may have to take disciplinary action against you. As part of the normal managerial process for managing sickness absence, the early years setting has put in place a number of interventions including:

- return to work interviews and appropriate sickness absence meetings, to establish causes and agree remedies for absences
- sickness reporting systems

We may request a fit note that confirms fitness to work following sickness absence in cases where the prognosis is unclear or where there has been a protracted or repeated period of sickness absence. In these cases, we also expect you to familiarise yourself with the Fit for Work service ([fitforwork.org/employee](http://fitforwork.org/employee)), for occupational health advice.

Recommendations are not binding on the setting, but will be carefully considered.

### *Serious illness*

In order to meet our obligations under food safety and health and safety legislation, it is very important to let your line manager know if you are suffering from or have been in contact with a carrier of any serious illness, if it is:

- contagious
- infectious
- likely to cause food poisoning

#### *Medical and dental appointments*

We prefer you to make appointments with your doctor, dentist or hospital outside working hours or at the beginning or the end of the working day. Where this is not possible, agree a mutually convenient time with your line manager and give at least 48 hours' notice.

#### **Flexible working**

All employees who have been employed for 26 weeks or more are able to make one request in a year to work flexibly. When making your request you must state:

- the effect(s) that you think the change(s) will have on the early years setting
- the date you would like the change(s) to commence
- how you think that any such effect(s) might be dealt with

Once you have made a request for flexible working, we will follow the statutory procedure, which involves the following steps:

- We will invite you to a meeting to discuss your request. You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague.
- We will write to you, either agreeing to the request and specifying the contract variation and when it is to take effect, or explaining why the request has been rejected. If your request is refused, our reply will state the specific business grounds for the refusal and why these are relevant in your particular case.
- We will inform you of our decision within three months of the request.
- We will grant you the right of appeal against any refusal of a flexible working request.

We will normally deal with your request (and any appeal), within three months of receiving your request in writing.

#### **Antenatal rights**

Entitlement to leave (and pay) for antenatal appointments is as follows:

- Pregnant employees are entitled to reasonable paid time off for antenatal care. For a first baby, women can expect to have up to 10 antenatal appointments and will need to show documentation confirming appointments to their employer after their first appointment. If an employee has previously had a baby then they may have about seven antenatal appointments.

- Fathers, partners and civil partners of pregnant women are entitled to unpaid time off to attend two antenatal appointments.
- Surrogate parents could also be entitled to attend two unpaid antenatal appointments if they expect to satisfy the conditions, and intend to apply, for a Parental Order for the child.
- Employees who are adopting a child are entitled to take paid time off. The main adopter is allowed to take paid time off for up to five adoption appointments and their partner is entitled to take unpaid time off for up to two appointments.
- Time off for each appointment is capped at six and a half hours. If longer is required, this will need to be taken as annual leave. Anyone requesting time off will need to sign an Antenatal Appointment Declaration form, available from [name].

An employee or agency worker (after 12 weeks in the same role) has a qualifying relationship with a pregnant woman or her expected child if he or she:

- is the husband or civil partner of the pregnant woman
- lives with the pregnant woman in an enduring family relationship, although is not her parent, grandparent, sister, brother, aunt or uncle
- is the father of the expected child
- is an intended parent in a surrogacy situation who meets certain conditions (for example, is a potential applicant for a Parental Order in respect of the expected child)

Time off for the pregnant employee is not restricted to medical appointments and could include other antenatal care made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, such as relaxation classes and parenting classes. You must show the setting an appointment card which shows that the appointment has been made.

## **Maternity benefits**

In order to claim the right to any level of maternity leave and/or pay, you are required to:

- advise the early years setting of the fact that you are pregnant
- provide medical evidence from a registered medical practitioner or midwife stating the Expected Week of Confinement (EWC), such as your MATB1 (this will be required for the purpose of claiming Statutory Maternity Pay)
- provide written notice of when you intend to start taking maternity leave and/or pay by the end of the 15th week before the EWC

Your line manager can provide full details of what you are required to do and your entitlements, including the obligation to take at least two weeks' maternity leave following the birth of your child.

We request that you notify your line manager of your pregnancy as early as possible. Following

notification, your line manager will confirm full maternity entitlements including paid and unpaid leave, and time off for antenatal care. This will also enable us to make any necessary arrangements for your safety at work during the pregnancy.

### *Keeping in touch days*

You may carry out up to 10 days' work for the early years setting during your statutory maternity leave period without bringing your maternity leave to an end. The purpose of this provision is to allow you to 'keep in touch' with the workplace. Work includes any work done under the contract of employment and may include training or any activity aimed at keeping in touch. Any work carried out in the course of a day constitutes one day's work.

### **Paternity leave**

Eligible employees can choose to take either one or two consecutive weeks' paternity leave, paid at the Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) flat rate, during the weeks immediately following their child's birth. If you have average weekly earnings below the lower earnings limit for National Insurance purposes, you will not qualify for SPP.

You will need to satisfy the following conditions in order to qualify for ordinary paternity leave. You must:

- have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing
- be the biological father of the child, and/or the mother's husband or partner; or be the adopter's spouse or partner
- have worked continuously for the setting for 26 weeks leading into the 15th week before the baby is due, or, if you are adopting, the week in which you are notified of being matched with a child
- be taking the time off to support the mother and/or care for the baby

Paternity leave must be completed within 56 days of the actual date of birth of the child or the adopted child's placement. You will be required to inform your line manager of your intention to take paternity leave by the 15th week before the baby is expected, or within seven days of you being notified by your adoption agency that you have been matched with a child (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

You are required to provide a self-certificate (government forms SC3 for parents and SC4 for adopters, available online from HMRC) as evidence that you meet these eligibility conditions. By providing a completed self-certificate, you will be able to satisfy both the notice and evidence conditions for paternity leave and pay.

## Adoption leave and pay

Adoption leave and pay will be available to:

- eligible employees who adopt
- one member of a couple where a couple adopt jointly (the couple may choose which partner takes adoption leave)

The other member of a couple who are adopting jointly, or the partner of an individual who adopts a child, may be entitled to paternity leave and pay. Paid adoption leave and paid paternity leave are available where an approved adoption agency notifies the adopter of a match with a child. To qualify for adoption leave, you must:

- be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved agency (adoption leave and pay are not available in circumstances where a child is not newly matched for adoption, for example, when a step-parent is adopting a partner's child)
- have worked continuously for the early years setting for 26 weeks leading into the week in which you are notified of being matched with a child for adoption

During your adoption leave, you may be entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay. If you have average weekly earnings below the lower earnings limit for National Insurance purposes, you will not qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay. Those who do not qualify can obtain information about additional financial support from the local Jobcentre Plus.

You will be required to inform the early years setting of your intention to take adoption leave within seven days of being notified by the adoption agency that you have been matched with a child for adoption, unless this is not reasonably practicable. You will need to inform the early years setting as to:

- when the child is expected to be placed with you
- when you want your adoption leave to start
- the date you expect payments of Statutory Adoption Pay to start, at least 28 days in advance, unless this is not reasonably practicable

You are also required to provide the early years setting with a matching certificate from your adoption agency as documentary evidence of your entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay. Your line manager can also ask for this certificate as proof of entitlement to adoption leave. It is your responsibility to ask the adoption agency for a completed matching certificate.

## Shared parental leave

Shared Parental Leave and Pay for mothers, fathers and adopters is designed to encourage parents and adopters to share leave around their child's birth or placement.



If you are a new mother and eligible for Shared Parental Leave, you can choose to end your maternity leave and take the remaining leave entitlement in blocks, with periods of work in between. Eligible partners can also share the balance of the maternity leave. Shared Parental Leave is also available to adoptive and Parental Order parents.

### **Parental leave**

Parents are entitled to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave per child, to be taken before the child's eighteenth birthday.

To qualify for parental leave, you must have completed one year's continuous service with the early years setting.

If you have taken part of your parental leave with a previous employer then you may only take the balance of the parental leave due. In this case, we may request evidence of the amount of parental leave already taken with one or more previous employers.

### **Dependants' leave (emergency leave)**

You have the right to take a reasonable period of time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant, and not to be dismissed or victimised for doing so. Circumstances where you can take time off include:

- when the dependant is unexpectedly ill (including mental illness), gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- when a dependant dies
- when a dependant's school or nursery is unexpectedly closed
- when care arrangements are unexpectedly withdrawn

A dependant is a person (adult or child), who regularly and continuously relies on the employee to provide the sole or principal care required. The employee need not be related to the dependant but must live in the same household. In cases of illness or where arrangements break down, if the employee is the principal carer or is relied upon in an emergency, then the dependant need not live in the same household. Dependency leave cannot be granted where an employee normally provides care only on an ad hoc basis.

In addition, dependency leave cannot be granted where it would be reasonable to expect the carer to have made appropriate arrangements to cover the situation that has arisen.

It must be sufficiently serious to require care as an essential necessity, not as a preference.

Dependency leave will not be granted where:

- the childminder is on holiday or is not available for any reason where advance notice would

be expected to be provided

- the school or nursery is closed for the holidays
- appointments with the hospital, doctor or dentist are planned (i.e. known in advance)

This is not an exhaustive list.

## Redundancies

We aim to manage our business in such a way that redundancies are unlikely to become necessary. However, in the unlikely event that our circumstances change and fewer employees are needed, then some redundancies may become necessary. In this case, we will take appropriate steps to keep the number of redundancies to a minimum, while taking into account the needs of the business.

If it becomes necessary for us to consider redundancies, a genuine and thorough consultation process will take place. The objectives of the consultation will be to discuss:

- the reason why there is a need to make redundancies
- the proposed changes and their implications
- the process to be followed
- the best way redundancy can be implemented as fairly as possible
- the criteria for selecting which employees are to be made redundant (where the whole setting is not closing)
- ways of avoiding or reducing the number of redundancies
- details of suitable alternative employment
- details of the process of applying for voluntary redundancy

An employee who is made redundant will be eligible for a statutory redundancy payment provided that she or he has at least two years' continuous service.

The amount of any statutory redundancy payment is based on three factors: an employee's age, salary and length of service. An employee is entitled to receive:

- half a week's pay for each year of employment in which the employee was aged 21 or under
- one week's pay for each year of employment in which the employee was aged between 22 and 40
- one-and-a-half week's pay for each year of employment in which the employee was aged 41 or over

The maximum number of years of employment that can be taken into account is 20. There is also a cap on the amount of weekly pay which can be used to calculate redundancy pay.

OR

[Please insert the early years setting's own redundancy payment scheme].

## **Retirement**

St Mark's Church Preschool does not operate a compulsory retirement age for employees.

We are committed to equality and diversity and recognise the contributions of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older employees. We believe that employees should, wherever possible, continue working for as long as they wish to do so. As an employee you may voluntarily retire at a time of your choosing.

*Last reviewed 20 November 2019*

## Section 2.0 Policies and procedures

### Equality and diversity

All employees will be expected to follow the Equality Policy of St Mark's Church.

St Mark's Church Preschool is committed to recognising, valuing and respecting the diversity of its employees, service users, volunteers and job applicants. We aim to ensure that all individuals involved with our setting will be treated in a fair and consistent manner.

We recognise that certain people face discrimination based on factors such as their age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation, (protected characteristics). With this in mind, we will work within the current legislative framework and within the sphere of best practice in order to promote equality and value diversity, and work to address unfair treatment, discrimination and prejudice where found within the workplace.

It is expected that the principles of diversity and equality will underpin all of our work, and the work of our employees. All employees will be expected to follow the Equality Policy of St Mark's Church.

### Induction and probation

Through our induction practices, we seek to ensure the effective integration of new employees into the organisation for the benefit of both new employees and the early years setting. Your induction programme will normally consist of physical and organisational orientation, health and safety information, an explanation of the terms and conditions of employment and a clear outline of the role and its requirements.

Your line manager will arrange for you to have a comprehensive and useful induction.

All employees, except those on short term contracts, are placed on probation for a period of [six months]. The objectives of the probation period are to:

- set and assess performance with standards and targets
- discuss future objectives, priorities and targets
- determine training needs
- discuss personal development
- ensure that you are capable of and willing to fulfil the requirements of the job

During the probation period, and throughout any extension of the probationary period, employment may be terminated by either you or St Mark's Church giving one week's notice in writing.

Thereafter, termination will be governed by the notice period detailed in your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.

As probation periods can be extended, regular performance reviews should continue during the

extended period.

If your contract of employment has been terminated as a result of the probationary process, you will have a right of appeal.

## **Supervision**

Supervision meetings are a two-way discussion between the employee and line manager. For these meetings to be effective, each person must recognise the value of supervision and take equal responsibility for ensuring effective communication and co-operation.

Supervision meetings seek to ensure that you are clear about what your job involves, what the setting wants you to do, and for you to be supported to do your job well. The meetings are there to set and communicate standards, and to ensure that you understand how you are expected to meet them. Areas for discussion could include:

- the development and well-being of your key children, agreeing a schedule of actions
- your workload
- concerns or team issues
- relationships with parents/carers
- your individual performance and objectives
- individual action required to ensure that the setting achieves and maintains at least a good Ofsted rating
- the performance of the setting as a whole
- training and development
- progress following the previous supervision
- time management
- requests for annual leave
- any changes in your circumstances, e.g. change of address or police caution, court order, reprimand or warning that affects your suitability to work with children

You are expected to produce work to the expected standards and strive for continuous development. We also expect an open, non-defensive response from you when your work is being discussed. In return you will be supported to deliver excellent performance.

## **Mandatory training**

The following mandatory training is required:

- Understanding of the policy documents of St Mark's Church. Including; Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety, Domestic Abuse, Equalities, Safe Use of Images, Data Protection and Manual Handling.

## **Working hours**

We expect you to work your full contractual hours each week. If you do not perform your full contractual hours, your salary payment will be adjusted accordingly. We will also meet with you to address this in line with our policies.

## **Overtime**

From time-to-time you may be required to be available to work overtime in excess of your normal working hours, although we do not guarantee that overtime will be available to you.

## **Part-time employment**

Part-time employees, irrespective of hours worked, will be entitled to the same contractual benefits on a pro-rata basis as any full-time employees doing the same job, unless there is an objective reason for offering a different level of benefits.

## **Managing sickness absence**

It is our practice to support employees who are genuinely sick and unable to come to work and to act reasonably at all times in its dealings with employees. Our process for managing sickness is outlined in our Staff Sickness Policy.

We manage attendance by encouraging all employees to attend work regularly. To achieve this, we will:

- review your sickness record to assess whether action needs to be taken
- consult with you
- obtain up-to-date medical advice
- advise you when your employment is at risk
- meet with you to discuss the options and consider your views on continuing employment
- review whether there are any other jobs that you could do prior to taking any decision on whether to dismiss
- allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss you on grounds of long-term ill health
- hold an appeal meeting if an appeal is requested

## **Resignations**

When resigning, it is important that your resignation is in writing to avoid confusion about your

resignation date. Your required notice period is set out in your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment. As part of this process we will ask you for feedback on your decision to resign, in order to improve our retention practices, where appropriate.

### **Notice periods**

The notice period that needs to be given by you and the setting to end your employment, both during, and after completion of your probationary period, can be found in your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.

We may agree to release you from the requirement to serve your full notice period. In these circumstances, we will not pay you for the portion of the notice period that you do not work. You will be asked to sign a letter confirming the agreement reached.

In the event of termination of the contract of employment by either party, your line manager will confirm your final day of employment.

### **Claiming expenses**

Normally, expenses must be agreed in advance and a receipt for all expenses should be submitted with all claims. Expenses should only be incurred wholly and exclusively on business that relates to the early years setting.

Failure to follow this procedure could result in your claim being declined and disciplinary action being taken against you.

If you require further guidance, please contact your line manager.

### **Change of personal details**

If you change your address, contact details, next-of-kin details or bank account, you are required to immediately inform us to ensure our records are kept up-to-date. If you change your name by marriage or deed poll, then the original relevant legal document must be presented to us for review e.g. marriage certificate.

### **General Data Protection Regulation**

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) intends to protect people's privacy by controlling the use of personal information held about people. You must read, understand and comply with the Data Protection Policy of St Mark's Church.

St Mark's Church processes the data it collects about you during your employment. The details of the data we collect about you and how it is used are all set out in our Data Protection Policy. All data is treated with absolute confidentiality and security measures are taken at all times.

If you are dealing with personal data relating to the early years setting or its users, then the data can only be processed if certain conditions are met. These conditions include:

- the data must have been obtained lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner
- the data is collected only for specified purposes
- the data must be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purposes of the processing
- the data must be accurate and, where necessary, kept up-to-date
- the data must not be kept for longer than is necessary for the processing
- the data must be protected (by appropriate measures) against unauthorised or unlawful processing, disclosure, accidental loss, damage or destruction and must be treated as confidential

Following these conditions will protect St Mark's and its employees from any liabilities. We expect all employees to comply with the GDPR when collecting, processing and storing early years setting related data. As part of your induction process you will be given appropriate training on GDPR. You will also be required to read our relevant policies and procedures.

## **Computers and electronic communications**

### *Email and internet use*

We encourage our employees to use email and the internet at work where this can save time and expense. However, we require that you ensure that your communication is well structured and professional.

Staff must not use the setting's IT equipment for personal use during working hours, unless authorisation is sought in advance.

### *Personal blogs*

You are free to set up personal 'blogs' on the internet, provided that they do not breach the law; disclose any of the early years setting's confidential information; breach copyright; defame the organisation or its suppliers, customers or employees; bring the organisation into disrepute; or disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach the General Data Protection Regulation.

### *Social networking websites*

St Mark's Church respects employees' right to a private life. However, we must also ensure that confidentiality and our reputation are protected. If you use social networking websites, we require you to:

- ensure that you do not conduct yourself in a way that is detrimental to the early years setting
- take care not to allow your interaction on these websites to damage working relationships between employees and service users of the early years setting



## *Cyberbullying*

We are committed to ensuring that all of our employees are treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in the workplace. Cyberbullying methods could include using text messages, mobile phone calls, instant messenger services, by circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on web sites, blogs or in chat rooms. Personal blogs that refer to colleagues without their consent are also unacceptable.

## *Telephone use*

We provide employees telephone access for work-related purposes only.

[However, if there is an urgent personal call that you need to make, then you are able to use the early years setting's telephone or your personal mobile, provided that this does not interfere with your work, nor take up an unreasonable amount of time. You will need the permission of your line manager.]

## *Monitoring*

We reserve the right to monitor any and all aspects of its electronic resources. This includes: data, email and voice mail boxes, and other employer provided electronic storage systems. We reserve the right, for business and security purposes, to audit and monitor the information on all systems, electronic mail, telephone and information stored on computer systems or media, without advance notice. We also reserve the right to retrieve the contents of any employee communication in these systems.

This process is in place to maintain the integrity of our electronic systems, the rights of the other users, and to ensure compliance with our policies and obligations.

If you are unsure about whether something you propose to do might breach this guidance, then you should seek advice from your line manager.

## **Copyright**

Under the provision of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act (1988), the copyright of any material (whether written, graphic or in any other medium) which is created by you in the course of your employment with the early years setting, is the property of St Mark's Church.

## **Drugs and alcohol**

We aim to promote the general well-being of all employees, to avoid unnecessary illness, absences and accidents, to improve work performance and to provide a working environment which ensures, as far as possible, the health and safety of all employees.

If you suffer from an alcohol or drug addiction, then you are expected to notify your line manager. It is a disciplinary offence to attend work where the use of either alcohol or illegal drugs (including psychoactive substances, which may have previously been referred to as legal highs), impairs the

safe and efficient running of the setting, or the health of our employees and service users.

### **Employees working for other employers**

We recognise that employees may want to take up other employment in their spare time, whether paid or unpaid, and/or pursue outside business interests in their spare time, while remaining in the employment of the setting. Although we have no wish to unreasonably restrict your external activities, we must protect our own interests and those of all our employees. For this reason, we require you to seek written permission from your line manager prior to undertaking any other paid or unpaid work.

We will not permit you to undertake any outside business activities, whether paid or unpaid, or take on any other work outside working hours, where we consider that this is in conflict with our interests.

These conditions do not apply to employees on a zero hours contract, as legislation prohibits employers requiring exclusivity in these circumstances.

### **Anti-bribery**

St Mark's Church requires that all staff comply with the Bribery Act 2010. This means that you agree not to offer, promise, give, request, nor agree to receive or accept any bribes:

- in the course of your employment
- when conducting business on behalf of the setting
- when representing the organisation in any capacity

A bribe means a financial payment or other form of reward or advantage, whether direct or indirect, that is intended to induce or influence, or has the effect of inducing or influencing, an individual, company or public body to perform their functions, including business and public duties, improperly. Improper performance includes:

- not acting in good faith
- not acting impartially
- not acting in accordance with a position of trust

## Section 3.0 Resolutions

### Dignity at work

We are committed to ensuring that you are treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Examples of what we deem to be unacceptable behaviour include:

- unwanted physical contact
- spreading offensive or malicious rumours, insulting, ridiculing or demeaning someone, or setting them up to fail (particularly on the grounds of what are known as 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation)
- insulting behaviour or gestures
- deliberate exclusion from conversations or social activities
- unfair treatment
- misuse of power or position
- unwelcome sexual advances e.g. touching, display of offensive materials or jokes
- offensive or suggestive literature or remarks
- embarrassing, threatening, humiliating, patronising or intimidating remarks
- deliberately undermining a competent worker
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- using electronic means or social networks to bully, harass, demean or offend someone
- physical or verbal assault
- damage to property

If you feel that you have been treated in a way you find unacceptable, please speak to the Preschool Manager in the first instance.

### Disciplinary procedure

Our disciplinary procedure is designed to encourage all employees to achieve high standards of conduct, attendance and work performance. The procedure provides a fair, effective and consistent method of dealing with disciplinary matters. You are expected to know the standard of conduct or work performance expected of you. You will be allowed to respond to any alleged fault or failing.

You are always entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or a recognised trade union representative at a disciplinary meeting. For minor or isolated infringements of rules or expected

behaviour, the early years setting may give you informal advice, coaching and guidance. If your conduct or performance fails to improve as a result of this advice, coaching or counselling, or where the offence is more serious, then the disciplinary procedure will be applied.

We consider the following issues to constitute gross misconduct:

- theft, fraud and deliberate falsification of records, expenses, qualifications and other offences of dishonesty
- physical violence
- serious bullying or harassment
- deliberate damage to property
- conviction of a criminal offence relevant to the employee's role
- gross negligence
- serious insubordination
- misuse of the setting's property or name
- misuse of electronic communications which defames individuals or brings the organisation into disrepute
- bringing the organisation into serious disrepute
- serious incapability whilst on duty brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs (including psychoactive substances, including those formerly known as "legal highs") or any prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for the user
- serious negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- serious infringement of health and safety rules
- serious failure to comply with policies, procedures and legal requirements, including those that safeguard children
- serious breach of the early years setting's and statutory policies
- serious breach of confidentiality (subject to the Public Interest (Disclosure) Act 1998)
- defaming or bad mouthing the setting on social networking sites
- serious breaches of the General Data Protection Regulation
- bribery and corruption

This is not an exhaustive list.

## Capability procedure

Our capability procedure is designed to ensure that cases of unsatisfactory performance are dealt with similarly and fairly, with the prime objective of improving an employee's performance to the required level. The procedure seeks to establish whether a concern about work performance is a misconduct or capability issue. Performance concerns due to lack of knowledge or skills are normally addressed through the early years setting's capability procedure. For example, if you are incapable of working to required standards through no fault of your own, then the setting's capability procedure will come into effect. Concerns about work performance due to carelessness, neglect or lack of effort are dealt with through the disciplinary procedure as misconduct.

## Grievances

If you have a complaint about your individual circumstances at work, then you are entitled to raise a grievance. The key steps for resolving a grievance are:

- Discuss ordinary day-to-day issues informally with your line manager through supervision meetings, or if necessary request a separate meeting. Where this is not possible, you should raise your concerns verbally with the next level of management, prior to raising a formal grievance.
- If after seeking to resolve your concerns informally you are not satisfied, then write to the early years setting, explaining your grievance.
- We will invite you to a meeting to discuss the grievance. You will have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to you in writing.
- You will have the right of appeal. Following an appeal the final decision will be confirmed to you in writing.

## Whistleblowing

It is important that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by employees, or people engaged in the organisation's business, is reported and properly dealt with. We encourage all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the early years setting or the way in which the early years setting is run.

We recognise that effective and honest communication is essential if malpractice is to be effectively dealt with and the organisation's success ensured. Whistleblowing relates to all those who work with, or within, the early years setting, who may from time-to-time think that they need to raise with someone in confidence certain issues relating to the organisation. Whistleblowing is separate from the grievance procedure. If you have a complaint about your own personal circumstances, you should use the grievance procedure. If you have a concern about malpractice within the organisation, then you should use the whistleblowing procedure outlined below.

- Report any concerns to your line manager. If this is not possible, then report your concerns to a more senior manager [or the owner/a director/a trustee].
- All employees and those involved with the early years setting should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing within the organisation. You should be watchful for illegal, inappropriate or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that you become aware of.
- You should be mindful and report any wrongdoing, which could include:
  - abuse of a child or vulnerable person
  - a child, parent, employee or volunteer being put at risk of harm
  - unsafe working practices
  - a failure to comply with statutory or legal obligations
  - a criminal offence which has or is about to be committed
  - the use of unsafe equipment
  - falsification of records
  - bribery and/or corruption which has taken or is about to take place
  - covering up wrongdoing or malpractice
- Any matter you raise under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation will be reported back to you.
- You will not be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that your continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training will not be prejudiced because you have raised a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualifying disclosure (something that it is in the public interest to disclose) will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure, the early years setting's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- If you make a malicious, vexatious or false allegation, this will be considered to be a disciplinary offence and disciplinary action will be taken against you.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If you are told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority, such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent. In this event you should report the matter to the Chair of St Mark's Parochial Church Council who is the Vicar of St Mark's Church.

## Section 4.0 Early years standards

### Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Provision for the development and learning of children from birth to five years is guided by the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered at St Mark's Church Preschool helps children to continue to do this by providing all children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

You are required to understand the EYFS as it applies to your role, as well as review and understand all of our EYFS policies and procedures, and implement them in your role.

To meet the requirements of the EYFS, St Mark's Church Preschool provides a framework for partnership work between childcare providers, practitioners, agencies and partners, and parents and children. Effective teamwork is therefore essential. Your line manager will provide you with opportunities and support to develop and maintain effective ways of working as part of a team, by sharing common values and beliefs, and working towards the same set of guidance and principles.

*Last reviewed November 2019*

## Section 5.0 Safeguarding children

St Mark's Church Preschool is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We follow the guidelines set out in the Church of England Policy 'Promoting a Safer Church'. It is a requirement of all staff that they share this commitment and follow this policy and its procedures to promote a culture of safeguarding across the whole organisation.

### Checks on staff suitability

Checks undertaken by the early years setting will include:

- an explanation from you for any gaps in your employment
- checking you have the appropriate level of qualifications, training, skills and knowledge
- ensuring you have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in your care
- references, with at least one being from your current or most recent employer
- a satisfactory enhanced DBS check and subscription to the DBS update service (having a conviction will not automatically prevent you from taking up employment)
- a request to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct or equivalent from the relevant countries, if you have lived abroad in the past five years (excluding UK residents who have worked or travelled abroad, for example, on a gap year, or a person who has travelled extensively but has not remained in any country for sufficient time to establish a history)
- proof of essential qualifications
- Ofsted approval, where relevant
- completion of a medical questionnaire that is satisfactory to the setting
- proof of your identity (via the production of documents on an approved list)
- proof of the right to work in the UK (via the production of documents on an approved list)

Any false information provided may leave your continued employment at risk.

### DBS

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides a barring and criminal records disclosure service. Its role is to ensure that anyone who presents a known risk to children and vulnerable groups is prevented from working with them. To achieve this, the DBS is responsible for making independent barring decisions. It maintains two constantly updated lists, one for those barred from working with children, the other for those barred from working with vulnerable adults. It is an offence for a person on the DBS children's barred list to work in a childcare role. It is also an offence for a childcare provider to knowingly employ a barred person in a childcare role. In



circumstances where individuals have demonstrated a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, childcare employers are legally obliged to refer information about the concerns to the DBS.

### *DBS Update Service*

To ensure we safeguard the children in our care, [name of setting] requires employees to subscribe to the DBS Update Service which has been set up to allow regular checks for new information on employees' suitability. If you have already subscribed to the service, we require your consent to perform checks as required. If you have not yet subscribed, you will need a new enhanced DBS check, and we require you to subscribe to the DBS Update Service within 30 days of receiving your new certificate. You must maintain this subscription throughout your employment with us.

As subscription to the DBS Update Service is transferable between jobs, you are personally responsible for the cost of subscription. [If you fail to register or maintain your subscription, the cost of any subsequent checks will be deducted from your pay.]

### *Disqualification*

You have an obligation to disclose to the setting if you:

- are prohibited from working with children (in accordance with the Childcare Act, the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018 (Disqualification Regulations), the Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) Regulations 2012, the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 or otherwise)
- are on the DBS children's barred list
- have been cautioned subject to a court order, bound over, received a reprimand or warning or found guilty of committing any offence against a child
- have been cautioned for or convicted of violent or sexual criminal offences whether against children or adults (including, without limitation, offences committed overseas)
- are subject to an order made relating to the care of children which prevents them from having unsupervised access (including, without limitation, where an order or child protection plan is made in respect of a child under the person's care)
- have had parental responsibility for a child that has been taken into care
- have had Ofsted registration refused or cancelled (except where the sole reason is non-payment of fees) in relation to childcare or children's homes, or has been disqualified from private fostering

For further guidance, please visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006))

## **Reporting concerns**

You have an obligation to report any concerns relating to the health, safety or welfare of children within the early years setting. If you have any concerns, these should be communicated using the line management or whistleblowing arrangements.

## **Police investigation, caution or charge**

You have an obligation to report any incident, which you are subject to, which leads to a police investigation, caution or charge, which is related to your employment (e.g. a child related offence). If you are uncertain as to whether to report being subject to a police investigation, caution or charge you must speak to your line manager.

## **Other investigations**

If you are involved in any incident which leads to an investigation by a government department or statutory body and which is related to your employment, you have an obligation to report it to the setting. If you are uncertain as to whether to report being subject to an investigation, you must speak to your line manager.

## **Mobile phone use**

You must ensure that you do not have a personal mobile phone in your possession during working hours. Personal mobile phones must be switched off [and kept in the staff room] during working hours, although they can be used [in staff rooms or] outside of the premises during lunch or rest breaks. You may give the setting's telephone number as an emergency contact.

Where trips are taken outside of the setting (either outings or home visits) and mobile phones are not provided by the setting, employees may use a personal mobile, which is fully charged and switched on for the duration of the trip. This number is recorded in the outings record [and you will be reimbursed for any use associated with the trip accordingly].

## **Cameras, video phones and tablets**

The use of cameras, video phones and tablets in the setting, especially to photograph children in the setting or on trips, is subject to the same restrictions as mobile phones. They may not be used at work for the purpose of photography unless express permission has been granted.

Employees found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to an investigation, which may lead to disciplinary action. Employees who breach this policy could also face criminal prosecution under various laws.

The early years setting will make appropriate arrangements for photographs to be taken when necessary, which ensures that permission is obtained from the parent/carer to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

## Section 6.0 Health and Safety

Your health and safety is of prime importance to us. It is important that you follow the Health and Safety Policy of St Mark's Church. We will:

- ensure as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all our employees
- conduct our work in such a way that children, parents and employees are not exposed to risks to their health and safety
- communicate with you on health and safety matters

We expect you to:

- work safely and efficiently in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy
- know the rules relating to health and safety and follow these
- report and record any accidents as soon as possible after they happen
- take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions
- know the fire and evacuation procedures
- ask for guidance if any of the safety rules or processes are unclear
- co-operate with your line manager to ensure that the highest standards of safety are maintained at all times

### Accidents

If an accident or injury happens to you as an employee:

- let your line manager know
- let a first aider know in case treatment is needed
- make sure details of the accident have been entered in the accident record

### Risk Assessments

You must ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure children in the care of the setting are not exposed to risks. Part of the process for achieving this will include contributing to and discussing written risk assessments in relation to specific issues. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment, activities, processes or substances that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

## **Risk assessments for new and expectant mothers**

Employees who are pregnant, breastfeeding or who have recently given birth, must be protected against any risks to their health or safety that might occur as a result of their duties or working environment. For this reason, in the event of us receiving written notification from you that you are pregnant, have given birth within the previous six months, or are breastfeeding, we will carry out a specific risk assessment. If you fall into one of these categories, you are expected to request a meeting and agree a date with your line manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss the risk assessment.

## **Display screen equipment**

A display screen equipment user is defined as an operator who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work. Managers and employees should ensure that display screen equipment is appropriately used and discuss, where appropriate, adjusting the workplace to suit their particular needs before commencing work. You should vary your work and undertake different duties to ensure that you have regular breaks from the screen.

## **Smoking and e-cigarettes**

Smoking is banned within the early years setting and its outdoor space and public walkways. Staff who smoke do not do so during working hours, unless on an authorised break and off the premises. Should you wish to smoke you may do so on the front lawn of the Vicarage.

Staff who smoke must make every effort to reduce the effects of odour and passive smoking for children and colleagues. Smoking is not permitted in any vehicles used by the setting. E-cigarettes are also banned on the premises.

If you breach these rules you are likely to face disciplinary action through the organisation's disciplinary procedure. It is a criminal offence for employees to smoke in smoke-free areas, with a fixed penalty of £50 or prosecution and a fine of up to £200. If you would like support to stop smoking, information is available from the Chair of the Church Council

## **Fire**

Make sure you know the Fire Procedure for St Mark's Church and the procedure for evacuating the building, as explained in your induction. Familiarise yourself with the fire exits and fire alarm call points. Your line manager will advise you what the procedures are in your area. Please ensure that you:

- never block the fire exits or the routes leading to them
- raise the alarm, if appropriate, by breaking the glass on the nearest alarm point
- leave by the nearest exit, if you hear the alarm
- only fight the fire if it is safe to do so and with the right fire extinguisher

## **Food handling and health**

We need to make sure that we maintain the highest standards of hygiene. During your induction, you will have been introduced to our hygiene procedures and, if necessary, you will receive further training. St Mark's has consistently maintained a five star rating with the local authority.

Before a child is admitted to our setting we always obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements. You must always follow our procedure and understand a child's dietary needs prior to providing food.

## **Lifting and manual handling**

Lifting and handling equipment is a common activity in early years settings. If it is done incorrectly it can lead to problems. Guidance will have been provided during your induction. You are expected to make sure that you understand how to lift and handle equipment safely.

## **Dress code**

If you work directly with children, you are required to dress appropriately for your role when in the setting. This includes:

- not wearing high heels
- removing all earrings, nose and lip rings (apart from small studs) prior to commencing work
- removing all unsecure jewellery
- ensuring that you have no loose fastenings or buttons prior to commencing work

This is not an exhaustive list.

## **Mobile phones when driving**

It is illegal for a person driving a motor vehicle on a road to use a hand-held mobile phone.

Accordingly, St Mark's Church Preschool forbids employees to use such phones while driving on company business.

Employees who are driving a vehicle must not make or receive a call on a hand-held mobile phone, unless parked. It is also important that employees are not contacted if you know they may be driving. We encourage employees to allow their phone to take messages and then respond to them when safely parked.

## **Stress at work**

St Mark's Church Preschool will take reasonable steps to reduce health and safety risks from stress in the workplace to as low a level as reasonably practicable. Causes of stress (stressors) will be identified and managed. A suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of these stressors will be undertaken. Identified risks will be reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable through safe

systems of work, suitable equipment and information and training.

You are expected to:

- inform your line manager if you are suffering from excessive pressure or stress at work
- follow appropriate systems for work laid down for your safety

Any reports of stress at work will be investigated and individuals will be provided with appropriate support.

### **Violence at work**

St Mark's Church Preschool considers the risk of work-related violence to be a serious matter and will take reasonable steps to reduce risks from violence to employees and others who may be affected.

The setting will eliminate work-related violence where possible. Where this is not reasonably practicable it will undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of violence. Identified risks will be reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable. Any incidents of violence at work will be investigated and victims will be provided with appropriate support.

All employees are expected to:

- report any work related incidences of violence, including verbal abuse, to your line manager
- avoid putting yourself at risk from a violent attack
- inform your manager of any concerns that you have relating to violence at work

### **Staff personal safety including home visits**

St Mark's Church Preschool believes that the health and safety of staff is of paramount importance. We support safe working, acknowledging the diversity of services and the needs of clients.

- Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff members are provided with a copy of the setting's policy and procedures for staff personal safety including home visits
- Staff are responsible for reading and understanding the *Staff Personal Safety including Home Visits* policy.
- All staff have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- Whenever staff members become aware of a health and safety problem regarding lone working, home visits or issues regarding their personal safety, they must inform their line manager.

*Last reviewed November 2019*