



Name:	Date written:
Communications Policy	24/2/22
Written by:	Date of Review:
Emma Holmes/ Louise Lloyd-Evans	14/9/23

Policy Statement

This policy is in place to ensure that the staff at Young Friends Kindergarten uphold an ethos of respectfully sharing information and communicating consistently with each other and children. To carry out role profiles successfully and keep our children and colleagues safe and content, everyone employed by Young Friends must make sure this is at the core of their practice.

Aims and Purpose

Communication is key to any group of people working together successfully and is paramount to individual well-being. We consider good communication as being equally important for all members of our community; staff, children, families and outside agencies. Good communication is an essential tool in achieving productivity, staying safe and maintaining strong working relationships. At Young Friends Kindergarten we know that investing time and energy into delivering clear lines of communication has enabled us to build trust leading to good levels of morale for all stakeholders.

Five key reasons to have a robust communication policy are:

- **Team building** – Building effective teams is really all about how everyone communicates and collaborates. Again, this includes the whole community.
- **Gives everyone a voice** – Everyone’s well-being can rely a lot on having a voice and being listened to.
- **Innovation** – When everyone is enabled to openly communicate ideas without fear of ridicule or retribution, they are far more likely to bring their idea to the table.
- **Growth** – Any growth project relies on strong communication between all stakeholders, whether internal or external.
- **Strong management** – When managers are strong communicators, they are better able to manage their teams. The delegation of tasks, conflict management, motivation and relationship building (all key responsibilities of any manager) are all much easier when you are a strong communicator.

Strong communication is not just the ability to speak to people but to empower them to speak to each other – facilitating strong communication channels is key.

Applicability

Children
Staff
Families

Definition of Terms

Dynamic Risk Assessing - Dynamic risk assessment is an active observation, assessment and analysing of an active work environment while work is ongoing, to identify and manage risk. A dynamic risk assessment builds on the work of existing risk assessments, though are conducted in the field, most likely by the worker carrying out a job. This risk assessment follows the formal risk assessment steps principles.

Sustained Shared Thinking - Sustained shared thinking involves two or more people (adults and children) working together to think about different problems and to analyse different concepts. It is when you are totally absorbed with a child, whether that's in a conversation or an activity.

This process can happen anywhere and at time but requires all participants to be actively involved. There needs to be genuine interest from both parties so they can work towards resolving the problem.

The OWL Technique - OWL stands for Observe, Wait, Listen – and is a technique you can use to help you remember to give your child more time to respond and take their turn in communication

Flattened Hierarchy - A flattening of hierarchy removes management barriers, freeing employees to make independent decisions, which spurs action and innovation. Employee engagement heightens morale and a sense of responsibility. Workers tend to become active rather than passive participants in company agendas.

Overview

Communication with Children
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Communication with Outside Agencies & Organisations
Dynamic Risk Assessing
Family

Procedures

Communication with Children

We understand that interactions are important in a child's early years of development. By engaging in activities and conversations with adults and their peers, children learn about the world through verbal interactions. This enables them to build on their existing skill set and improves their critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and confidence which are useful foundation blocks for future learning. Interactions help maintain a child's attention and interest by actively engaging them in conversation so that they can think about different topics. This helps them think about ideas independently and how to solve problems on their own. An effective way of interacting with children is through questions. This encourages children to analyse and think about different concepts. Questioning makes a child stop to think about what they are doing and why. Verbal interactions which include sustained shared thinking have been proven to be very effective in supporting a child's development.

- Where possible we use sustained shared thinking and collaborative thought processes, for example, starting sentences with "I wonder what would happen if..."

- Staff do not talk about personal issues when in the presence of children. We understand this is for breaks only
- Behaviour management is consistent, intelligent, and calm
- Our team consistently observe, wait, and listen (OWL)
- Our team ensure, through child-initiated conversations that all children feel heard and valued
- Our team reflect on their own practice individually and as a team to ensure consistent improvement (on and in action)
- Our team always thinks from a child's point of view. They find ways to make the child feel heard and understood
- Our team are always patient with children; they take the time to explain
- Our team ensures they speak up if a colleague speaks to a child in a negative way or a way that concerns them in any way
- Our team are always tuned in to look out for safeguarding concerns when a child talks and responds and report appropriately

Communication with Families

- Each Pod writes a Feedback message on the whiteboard by their door at around 3:30 each day. This tells the children's families what they have been doing that day to help with chats about nursery, at home.
- If a parent needs to speak to the nursery, Emma and Jes are always available either by phone or on Famly. They will try and address any concerns or requests in this way or, if needed, arrange a meeting in person.
- Verbal feedback is meaningful, individual to each child and not general. Staff understand that it is important for parents/families to feel welcome and valued.
- Four photos a month are taken by the key person and put onto the child's learning journey. They are assessed 4 times a year, once a season.
- Learning journeys are added to according to the Learning and Development Policy
- The Statutory Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage was revised in September 2021, and stipulated that Key Persons should spend time with their children and not on paperwork, so time away should be kept to a minimum.
- Staff check Famly messages at the start of their shift only. At all other times parents should message the manager, Emma or the Deputy Manager, Jes, and they will pass messages on – this is to maximise staff time with children and ensure messages are relayed
- Staff ensure we post children's vitals throughout the day for parents to see – varying as per our systems for different ages and requirements
- Staff only telephone parents with permission from Pod Leads or manager
- Staff are always polite and respectful and follow our code of conduct
- Staff try to ensure grammar and spelling is correct before any posts or updates are sent out. Each post is checked by a Pod Lead or management.
- Communications with families should be professional and informed.
- Messages should never be subjective. This means no personal opinions, just polite facts
- Key people or buddies should communicate with parents/carers of their key children only unless there are extra requirements which require assistance from Pod Leads or Management
- We have a strict anti-bias policy. Staff will not favour some parents/families over others- they will all be treated the same

- Any general updates will not mention individual children in any form this is reserved for learning journey observations only
- If a parent or person picking up contravenes their code of conduct, or is rude to us we will respectfully tell them/or alert our Pod Lead or manager – see codes of conduct
- Our website contains detailed information on our curriculum, ethos, policies, procedures and routines. The parent section password is: mychildwillsaveourplanet

Zoom Calls and Meetings

- Parent consultations can be offered on zoom or face to face
- Zoom calls should be from the nursery account only and on the Nursery computer or laptops
- Zoom/Teams calls could be recorded, with the agreement of the parent

Communication with Colleagues

- Our team understands there is a flattened hierarchy in rooms with regards to jobs to be done. This is separate to the chain of command which is firmly in place. We share jobs. Everyone has a voice and is valued
- Our team are helpful to each other. They support and work together to lighten the load for colleagues, regardless of status or qualification
- Our team always communicate respectfully with each other
- Our team have monthly reflective meetings where all staff members take part. This is to reflect on practice, discuss and plan learning support plans and other room business.
- Our team communicate freely throughout the day to reflect and work together to consistently improve and ensure the smooth running of the day and outcomes for children
- All team members should take constructive comments and criticism well and learn from them to improve their practice
- All team members welcome professional discussions, positive and negative, because they help improve practice and professionalism
- All team members work on their own confidence daily with regards to equality of roles in the nursery
- All team members use their individual radios to communicate throughout the day, maximise time with children and communicate with the entire nursery

Radios

- These are for all communications with each other, throughout the nursery during the day
- Staff must always have theirs with them and ensure they are looked after. They must not be left unattended, especially not in the garden
- Children can use radios every now and then to talk to children or adults in other groups. Encourage calm communication and do not let children have them unsupervised
- Radios and the trip phone must go out on all trips and kept on, enabling communication with the nursery.
- Do not talk too loudly into radios, keep volume at sensible level so doesn't interrupt children 'in flow'.

- Radios should also be used to communicate accidents and support needed from colleagues
- Radios are used to communicate parent messages at start of and throughout the day between staff
- Radios are also used to call the office to tell them something has run out/needs replacing etc.
- Radios must ALL be located at the end of the day and placed in their charging block.
- If the office walkie talkie is off (sometimes this might happen if in a meeting etc.) and you urgently need a manager please use the nursery phones -there is one in each room
- Children's initials, not names, should be used when communicating via radios
- Confidential information should not be spoken about via radios
- Conversations should be kept to a minimum over radios so as not to disturb children and staff interactions. Important messages will be written in a message on Family

Texting Nursery Phones

- This should happen at 7:30 (no earlier and not in the evening) to all pod leaders phones.
- Please see Sickness Policy for exact instructions for when you are ill
- All mobiles are off during the day so if staff need to contact the nursery, they must call nursery landline
- Staff should not expect an answer to any messages out of working hours

Severe Weather

- In severe weather situations e.g. heavy snowfall or a hurricane there is a possibility the nursery might be closed
- You should check the Social Hub and Family (parents only) in these instances for updates
- You should assume the nursery is open unless there is a post for all staff on these two platforms
- You will be kept well informed in such situations
- If you live in a place where you are less likely to be able to come in than others please keep us informed of your situation in the morning at 7:30 as per our texting/messaging on Family system detailed above

Nursery Landline

- This is for any contact with nursery during the working day if you are not at work
- Messages are checked in the mornings and evenings
- All messages relevant to anyone in the nursery will be passed on by the office

Social Hub

- This is a place of fun and team building and to keep high levels of staff morale
- It is for all staff to post uplifting messages and posts. The more the merrier so get posting, liking, and commenting
- The Social Hub is also used to arrange team drinks or other activities
- Pod Leads, Leaders and Managers should lead the way if there is ever a lull in posts
- It is also for interesting articles about childcare and our ethos

- We never put anything offensive or demeaning to team members, children, animals, cultures, gender or other – even if you think its humorous! Good clean fun please
- Staff should not put posts up on the Social Hub after 9pm on any evening. Weekend daytimes are fine.
- The Social Hub is an inclusive space for all staff

WhatsApp Group

- This is used for the team to communicate weekly shifts, transport hold-ups (at the beginning of shifts) and shopping for supplies etc.

Staff and Pod Meetings

- Staff Meetings occur once a month out of working hours (but paid) from 6:15 to 8:15
- During meetings in house training is provided and important issues discussed
- Agendas are written and provided for team members prior to the above meetings. Minutes are recorded and available to staff post meeting. All meetings must be read by all members of staff and relevant leader ensures they are available whether this be pod leads, manager or PA.
- All team members are expected to attend, and actively take part in all meetings
- If a team member cannot attend it is their responsibility to ensure they read minutes and discuss content of the meeting with pod leads where necessary
- Team meeting minutes are added to Famly for the above reasons the day following the staff meeting by management
- All team members are expected to be respectful and listen to each other

Emails

- When staff cannot work for any reason and the nursery needs to contact them, they must not log into Famly for safeguarding reasons, so communication will be via management email or Whatsapp only. Any staff newsfeeds will be copied into an email to the member of staff in this instance by management
- If you have an email and you are working, you will be notified on Famly to tell you one is there
- If staff are on holiday or on long term sickness leave and an important update comes out you will receive this via email

Communication with Ofsted

If there are any significant changes to any of our information after registration or anything significant happens, we must by law notify Ofsted if these changes have a negative impact on our setting or safety of children. As the registered provider, we should notify Ofsted of significant events as soon as reasonably possible, and no more than 14 days from when the event happened.

Examples of significant events may include:

- involvement with safeguarding partners and statutory agencies about incidents or concerns that might affect someone's suitability, for instance child protection, welfare or safety investigations. These agencies and organisations could include: the police, your local authority (and services within it), mental health services, drug/alcohol services, fire services, environmental health, and building control and planning departments
- a device containing children's information being stolen

- an incident where a child or children may have been at risk of harm, for example:
 - you were involved in a car accident when transporting children and the police are investigating a possible offence
 - a child was able to leave a setting or was missing for any period
 - a child was not adequately supervised (such as being left unattended in a car)
 - an unauthorised person gained access to the childcare premises
- if you have been the victim of a crime that occurred on the childcare premises, such as assault, harassment or vandalism
- any incidents of domestic abuse
- any incidents of self-harm or overdose
- any one-off or ongoing incidents on or around your premises that may affect children, such as violence, criminal or sexual exploitation and gangs, county lines activity, grooming and child trafficking
- the disqualification of an employee or any person who lives or works on the premises where childcare is provided (see applying to waive disqualification)
- changes to health of the registered person

Events we do not need to tell Ofsted about

- referrals you make to other agencies following a concern about a child in your care, such as a child protection referral
- complaints about fee disputes
- minor injuries
- changes to the health of managers, staff or volunteers at early years settings
- admissions to hospital for routine operations or check-ups that have no effect on your ability to care for children

Communication with Outside Agencies & Organisations

Transferring from/to Another Setting

- We gather information about a child when they start, obtaining information about any other Ofsted registered EYFS provision that a child attend
- After discussion and permission from parents, we send a curtesy email to the other setting letting them know our contact details and the days and times that the child attends together with their 'funding' status.
- The relevant Local Authority are informed about the funding status of a child who transfers mid-term or who is still attending another setting.
- If a child starts going to another setting during their time at Young Friends, parents must inform us immediately so that we can liaise.
- The Two-Year-Old check is undertaken where a child spends most of their time. Parents are encouraged to share the Progress Check at Age Two with the other setting that the child attends.
- If we are concerned about a child's development or level of safety we will liaise with the other setting and provide a 'joined up' approach for the safety, learning and wellbeing needs of the child.
- If we are contacted by another setting for information, we will ask that they put this request in an email, so that we can add this easily to the child's notes.
- We invite parents to comment on a child's records as part of liaison with another setting

- When a child leaves us to attend another EYFS provider, we complete a summative assessment and share this information with the new provider.
- We will not allow another setting access to Family or accept access to another settings online journal.
- We will provide a key person time to liaise with a new key person in another setting to support the transition of a child

Outside Agencies

(For example, BHISS, SaLT, AMAZE)

- Sometimes our children and their families need some extra help, beyond our skill set. We can liaise with or signpost to these agencies.
- Sometimes it is necessary for the nursery to link with other organisations e.g. Ofsted, The Council, Front door for Families.
- Management or SENDCO will lead any liaisons with other agencies, with input, where needed from key people.
- Communication must always be professional, sensitive and factual.
- While doing this, various policies come into play e.g. SEND, Parent Partnership, Staff Code of Conduct, Parent/Carer Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Children, depending on the situation.

Dynamic Risk Assessing

- Our team understand that this is central to ensuring children, colleagues and animals are safe
- Our team understands that at times childcare can cause stress levels to rise for different reasons. We therefore always communicate with colleagues/each other if this is happening so support can be provided and everyone stays well and safe
- We understand that it is important to communicate ad hoc risks with colleagues to keep children safe in all areas of practice
- We understand the importance of respectfully voicing if a colleague should be supporting more to ensure adults and children are consistently safe, well and engaged
- We understand it is our duty to point out to colleagues, or pod leads, if a colleague is doing anything deemed by you to jeopardise a child or colleagues' safety, well-being and/or engagement

Family

- Staff are not permitted to use Family at home unless specific permission is given.
- Family is used by staff during working hours only, staff are not permitted check or message colleagues, management, or families outside of these hours for safeguarding and well-being purposes
- Documents used by staff e.g., accident and incident forms, existing injury form, role profiles, staff handbook are stored on Family and in the Staff File in the Staff Room, and accessed by staff during working hours only
- All policies and procedures are found on Family and our website and must be read and understood by all staff.
- Family is used to keep parents updated on topics via the newsfeed. Ad hoc messages are for important issues only that cannot wait until the monthly newsletter

- Family likes and comments can be disabled. Queries, comments etc. from parents should be addressed to management directly in a private message
- Family is checked at 7.30 am by staff opening up and checked again later in the afternoon when early children have left. Key people check Family at the start of their shift and at the end. Family is not checked at any other time by nursery staff except for signing in and out for staff and children.
- Key people will give more updates when a child first starts as per our Key Person Policy. If a child is taking a little longer, then more (professional but friendly) messages can be written on an individual basis
- Management will check Family for messages throughout the day and inform the team via radios if messages need to be passed on using initials only
- Children's food, nappies and sleeps are noted for parents up to 2 years old
- Children of 2 years old and up have sleeps only noted on Family, with verbal communication re meals/nappies if asked on doorstep
- Children with additional requirements have food, nappies and sleeps noted on Family for the duration of their time with us
- Staff must display flexibility and understanding with the above e.g. if allergy testing, have additional requirements that mean families need to know. Staff must communicate this to each other
- Staff are included where relevant in parent newsfeed messages and understand that they are for information only
- Family is also used to issue formal notifications for employed staff
- Staff should always read newsfeeds and messages from management or pod leads and understand this is part of their roles and responsibilities. All messages are important and not checking Family is considered a disciplinary matter
- Staff holidays and sick days will be added to Family by Jes
- Family calendar should be checked at 7.30 am by staff member opening the nursery, to check for events that effect their group that day
- The manager must be tagged in all posts and messages on Family by all members of staff
- All staff members that have had an absence for any reason must fill in a Back To Work form and upload it in a message to Emma and Jes as part of your roles and responsibilities

External Links and Organisations

BHISS - [Brighton & Hove Inclusion Support Service \(BHISS\) \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](http://brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Ofsted - [Ofsted - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk), [Childcare: significant events to notify Ofsted about - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Front Door for Families - [Front Door for Families \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](http://brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Relevant Policies and Documents

Safeguarding Children Policy
 Listening To Children Policy
 Staff Code of Conduct
 Parent/Carer Code of Conduct
 Whistleblowing Policy
 Two-Year-Old Progress Check Policy
 Behaviour Management Policy
 Learning and Development Policy

Outdoor Trips Policy
Sustainability Policy
Acceptable Use of Technology Policy

Authorisation

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Lloyd-Evans', written in a cursive style.

Louise Lloyd-Evans
Owner and Director

Young Friends Nature Nursery
89 Holland Road
Hove
East Sussex
BN3 1JP