



## CIRENCESTER OPPORTUNITY GROUP

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### Policies

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## **Cirencester Opportunity Group (COG) Policy Statement**

Cirencester Opportunity Group is an independent pre-school group where children with SEN can play and learn with other children from the community. The Group is an independent charity (charity number 1160184) and is managed by a Trustee group. We welcome parents' involvement through parents' activities, fund raising or through election onto the Trustees.

### **AIMS**

We aim to provide a positive, happy and caring environment where the children's individual needs are recognised and where each child is encouraged to reach their own full potential. We work in partnership with parents to enable each child to learn and develop. We offer a service that promotes equality and promotes diversity for every child and family.

### **ADMISSIONS**

All children are eligible to be on our waiting list and our admission policy is as follows:

- a) First priority is given to children with additional needs. This is the key objective of Cirencester Opportunity Group – to provide an inclusive Nursery where children with special needs can play and learn alongside other children. In line with our Constitution at least half of our children have special needs.

Although it is difficult to define all likely special needs these may include children with severe learning difficulties or delay; and physical problems. These may be referred by Health Visitors; Doctors; Physiotherapists; by the Speech & Language Therapist for children with language problems; by Health Visitors and Social Care for children of concern, with difficulties at home. It is not necessary for children to be toilet trained.

Preferential consideration may also be given to the following or combinations of the following:

- b) Children with brothers and sisters already attending the nursery, especially if they are close in age and are likely to attend Nursery over the same period.
- c) Children living near the Nursery.
- d) Children living at a distance in isolated rural areas without access to any other children or a nursery in the locality.
- e) Children attending our Family Session.
- f) Position on the waiting list.

All places are offered at the discretion of the Centre Manager in accordance with the above criteria.

## **SETTLING IN POLICY**

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the Nursery and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in their children's wellbeing and their role as active partners with the Nursery.

### **Aim**

We aim to make COG a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of each child and family.

### **Methods**

- Before attending the Nursery, we provide parents with information, which may include our prospectus and policies, displays about activities available within COG, and individual meetings with parents.
- During the term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and parents to visit, usually by attending our Family Session.
- Each child is allocated a Key Person. The Key Person welcomes and looks after the child and parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process to provide a secure relationship.
- We can offer a home visit by a member of staff, to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- When a child starts to attend, we discuss the process of settling-in with parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle. We may encourage a child to bring a small comfort toy to help the settling process.
- If necessary for the child's well-being, the parent, or carer may be asked to stay for some of the session initially, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope. We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others.
- Younger children may take longer to settle in, as may children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their Key Person and other Nursery staff; when they are familiar with where things are and they are pleased to participate in activities.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the Nursery session.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the Nursery without a parent or carer if staff judge that the child finds it too distressing to be left. This is rare, but may especially be the case with very young children.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

COG is committed to valuing diversity and to providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and adults.

We aim to

- Provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.
- Include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity.

We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to COG on the basis of colour, ethnicity, religion or social background, such as being a member of a travelling community or an asylum seeker. We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our Nursery because of any disability and this ethos is actively encouraged by COG.

The curriculum we offer encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to others who are different from them.

We do this by

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves through planned child-centred & developmentally appropriate activities and experiences.
- Ensuring children have equality of access to learning.
- Recognising the different learning styles between girls and boys, making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities.
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable.

We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families. For families whose first language is not English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion. We work in partnership with parents to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met.

We are an Equal Opportunity employer and welcome diversity. Jobs are advertised externally and all applications considered. We provide equality of opportunity regardless of gender, ethnicity, colour, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or marital status.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

We believe that children benefit most from Early Years education and care when parents and Nursery work together in partnership. We recognise parents as the 'expert' on their child, and aim to support them by involving them in their children's education and in the full life of the Nursery. We also offer support to parents with activities and courses.

In order to fulfil these aims we:

- Are committed to ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children, and to offer support to the family.
- Inform all parents about COG's policies and how it is run through access to written information and through informal conversations. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them.
- Encourage parents to play an active part in the running of the group, (e.g. fundraising events.)
- Provide opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to COG and the Nursery;
- Inform parents about relevant courses and training;
- Inform parents on a regular basis about their child's progress, particularly with regard to children with SEN and their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

- Hold meetings at times and venues that are accessible and available for all;
- Inform all parents of the systems for complaints and check to ensure these are understood;
- Provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in the Nursery and about young children's learning, in the Nursery and at home.

In compliance with National Standard 12 the following documentation is in place:

- Admissions policy
- Complaints procedure
- Record of complaints and
- Activities provided for children.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/DISABILITY POLICY**

Cirencester Opportunity Group will, at any time, have at least 51% of registered children with a special educational need. We provide an environment in which all children are supported to reach their full potential. It is our policy to ensure, whenever possible, that vacancies are held throughout the year to accommodate children referred to the group by Speech and Language Therapists, Paediatricians, Health Visitors, Social Care and the Local Authority.

In order to fulfil these aims we:

- Identify the needs of children with SEN and meet those needs through a range of strategies;
- Work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual children's needs;
- Maintain close links with other professionals involved with our children.

The role of Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) for COG is jointly shared by Julie Morriss and Jane Pilgrim, and will have regard to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

The Co-ordinator will

- Liaise with other professionals,
- Include parents/carers in all decisions with regard to their child;
- Ensure appropriate IEP's and review procedures are in place and that relevant background information is collected, recorded and updated;
- Ensure regular reviews are held with parents, staff and professionals;
- Ensure staff are involved in any ongoing specific training (e.g. signing) that may be appropriate.

The provision for children with SEN is the responsibility of all members of COG. Our inclusive admissions policy ensures equality of access and opportunity. We ensure that our physical environment is as far as possible suitable for children with disabilities.

## **VALUING AND RESPONDING TO APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR**

Children who attend Nursery are encouraged to follow certain standards of behaviour.

1. Respect for other children and adults.
2. Toys and equipment to be treated safely and with respect.

Acceptable behaviour will allow all members of the group to enjoy the facility while active learning takes place within a secure environment, encouraging children to acquire skills of self-control and tolerance whilst enjoying the company of others.

This will be encouraged through:

- Positive reinforcement (praise, encouragement, smiles and hugs)
- Planning of regular, familiar routines.

Skilful intervention by adults.

Provision of developmentally appropriate & stimulating activities

All rules adopted will be:

Clear and simple & supported visually where necessary

Few in number

Understood by the children

Consistently enforced by staff and helpers.

Unacceptable behaviour is any behaviour that:

a. Hurts or endangers any member of the group.

b. Interferes with the emotional, social and intellectual well-being of the group members.

c. Hinders the development, performance and enjoyment of the group members.

Unacceptable behaviour can often be prevented by the skilful anticipation and intervention of sensitive adults.

All staff receive regular training on behaviour management and are aware of the behaviour policy. They understand that the children may display a wide range of challenging behaviours and recognise the complexity and diversity of the situations, needs and problems that they and their families may face. Problem behaviour will be dealt with swiftly and fairly. Any action taken will take into account the stage of development of the child, the severity of the behaviour and its context and incidence. Physical punishment, frightening or humiliating the child, or lengthy withdrawal from the group will never be used as a sanction. We rely upon the professional integrity of staff to make decisions regarding the severity of the behaviour, under leadership of the Centre Manager and the Deputy. We will:

a. Praise and reward good behaviour.

b. Reason with the child, explaining why their behaviour is unacceptable.

c. Distract them from whatever is causing their bad behaviour.

d. Remove the child from the situation for a short period if necessary, explaining why we are doing this.

### **PERSISTENT CHALLENGING AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

The Centre Manager will be responsible for ensuring that staff/volunteers provide consistent behaviour expectations for each child and maintain confidential links with the parents about any problem behaviour and sanctions taken. In the unlikely event of any behaviour requiring physical intervention, the incident will be dealt with by the Centre Manager. Physical intervention will only be considered appropriate and necessary if there is physical danger to that child, another child or an adult. Full details of the incident will be recorded on an incident form and recorded in the child's file. Parents will be informed so that they are aware that physical restraint was necessary. Once the incident has been dealt with, the leader or deputy will reassure the parents that the matter is now closed.

Part of this process will include ongoing formal review of the situation with parents to ensure that all possible strategies are in place at home and in the nursery to manage and improve the behaviour patterns. It is the responsibility of the Centre Manager that we work in partnership with child and family to ensure that every possible solution is explored to secure the best interest of every child and the Health and Safety of staff and other members of the Group, in accordance with COG policy.

It is the Centre Manger's responsibility to consult with staff and professionals involved with the child if it is considered that another specialist Nursery would be more suitable to meet the needs of the child, and with regard to the health and safety of other children and staff and when all available behaviour management strategies have been implemented. Every effort should be made to ensure the best possible outcome to enable the child to reach their potential. At this stage a formal panel review should be conducted by the Centre Manager to include representatives from COG staff, parents and carers, and

all professionals involved with this child, and may, if considered appropriate, include a member of the Group Trustees. The result of that review should determine the best possible outcome for the future of the child in a specialist Nursery in agreement with parents and professionals. The parents and Trustees will be informed at all stages of this process.

### **APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR WITH PARENTS/CARERS**

COG places considerable value and emphasis on working with parents with mutual respect to support their child's learning and development. We ask that parents/ carers respect staff, volunteers and other parents and behave according to our code of conduct that finds the following behaviour unacceptable.

- Aggressive, offensive or abusive behaviour of any sort including physical violence or threats of violence
- Verbal abuse including shouting, screaming, offensive language or swearing
- Bullying; intimidation or harassment
- Unwelcome physical contact including threats of physical contact and including that of a sexual, intimate, racial or threatening nature
- Unwelcome telephone calls, emails, texts, messages or comments on social media.

The above includes unacceptable behaviour outside of COG premises, including stalking; threatening or abusive behaviour during or after working hours.

In the event that a parent or carer uses unacceptable behaviour that is considered unsafe; intimidating or harmful and refuses to stop the behaviour when asked by staff that parent will be asked to leave COG premises immediately. If the parent refuses to leave then staff will call the police for the safety of staff and children. If a parent or carer uses unacceptable behaviour whilst a staff member is visiting them at home, the staff will leave the home immediately.

### **BRINGING AND COLLECTING CHILDREN**

Morning sessions start at 9.00am when the children are welcomed into the Group by a member of staff, and end at 12.30pm. Afternoon sessions start at 1.15pm and end at 3.45pm.

Each child must be collected from the premises by a parent/guardian or by another responsible adult as indicated on the child's registration form. If the parent needs another adult to collect the child a signed Occasional Permission Form must be completed by the parent/guardian, by arrangement with senior Nursery staff. The group cannot be responsible for any child before or after the session times.

### **NON-COLLECTION OF CHILDREN POLICY**

#### **Statement of intent**

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session, the Nursery puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure an experienced and qualified practitioner who is known to the child cares for the child safely.

#### **Aim**

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult, we will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

## Method

- Parents of children starting at the Nursery are asked to provide specific information which is recorded on our Registration Form, including:
  - Home address and telephone number - if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbour or close relative
  - Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable)
  - Mobile telephone number (if applicable)
  - Names, addresses, telephone numbers and signatures of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from COG, for example a childminder or grandparent
  - Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child
  - The person who has parental responsibility for the child
- On occasions when parents are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they record how they can be contacted in our Collection Book.
- On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect the child, they record the name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child in our Collection Book. We agree with parents how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child.
- Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can commence back-up procedures. We provide parents with our contact telephone number. We also inform parents that - in the event that their children are not collected from the Nursery by an authorised adult and the staff can no longer supervise the child on our premises - we apply our child protection procedures as set out in our child protection policy.

### **If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we follow the following procedures:**

- The Collection Book is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
- If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the Nursery - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Form - are contacted.
- All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form and in the Collection Book.

### **If no-one collects the child after one hour and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children.**

- The Centre Manager or Deputy will contact our Local Authority Social Services department (telephone number 01285 881000)
- The child stays at COG in the care of two fully-vetted workers until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social worker.
- Social care workers will aim to find the parent or relative. If they are unable to do so, the child will be admitted into the care of the local authority.
- Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent, nor will they take the child home with them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.

- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.
- OFSTED will be informed (telephone number 0300 123 1231)
- Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) will be informed (telephone number 01452 426994)

**If staff consider an adult to be unfit to collect and take charge of a child an alternative contact will be arranged.**

## **FOOD AND DRINK POLICY**

We regard snack and meal times an important part of the session. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children learn about healthy eating, as well as providing opportunities for trying different food.

At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We aim to meet the full requirements of the National Standards for Day Care on Food and Drink (Standard 8).

- Dietary needs and allergies are included on the registration form, and signed by the parents. All specific dietary needs are fully discussed and planned with parents.
- The dinner menu is displayed daily.
- A nutritious dinner is cooked daily in our kitchen, using fresh ingredients, and avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. Meals use a variety of foods from the 4 main food groups.
- Fresh drinking water is always available for the children.
- Meal times are used to develop social and independence skills, with suitable utensils for the children to feed themselves.
- Special diets are catered for, including any medical, cultural or religious needs, and the requirements of vegetarians. Any dietary needs/allergies are clearly displayed in the playroom and kitchen for all Nursery & kitchen staff's awareness.
- Staff are aware of children's dietary needs and deal with each one sensitively.
- Nut or nut products are not served to the children.
- A varied healthy snack is served at all sessions.
- Hot drinks for adults must not be served or taken in during any children's sessions.
- Children are encouraged to drink from a cup where possible and appropriate.

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

COG works with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

**COG's key commitment for safeguarding children:**

- Our designated officer, a Trustee, who oversees this work is **Peter Stone** through training and regular meetings with senior management staff.
- COG has 3 trained staff Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Staff are committed to ensuring that children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of service delivery.

- Staff will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with procedures set down in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (DFE 2015).
- Staff are committed to ensuring that ongoing relevant training provides awareness of child abuse issues and that children are empowered to become strong and resilient.

We aim to do this by:

- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our Nursery that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
- Working with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.
- Promoting children's rights by enabling them to have the self confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

Some of the legal framework for this is the Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters) and The Protection of Children Act 1999.

- We follow the guidelines as set out in the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board procedures. There is a copy of the GSCB procedures available on [www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk).
- COG has a copy of 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- Any incident or accident and any changes in arrangements affecting the well-being and safety of the children will be reported to OFSTED & GSCB.

#### **Staffing:**

- Designated Safeguarding Leads - Hilary Morris, Senior Outreach Worker; Catharine Fowler, Centre Manager and Nicola Curtis, Outreach Worker, co-ordinate child protection issues and report to the Trustees.
- All Nursery staff are trained in Child Protection procedures and there is always at least one member of staff during group sessions trained in identifying child abuse and in the current local child protection procedures.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- All members of staff and volunteers undergo 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the relevant authority, in accordance with OFSTED requirements.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We have procedures in place for visitors to COG and ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

#### **Responding to suspicions of abuse:**

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional and sexual as well as neglect.

- When children are suffering from neglect, or physical, sexual or emotional abuse this may be demonstrated through the things they say or do not say, their play or behaviour or through changes in their appearance.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of concerns and discusses what to do with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. This information is stored in the child's file.
- Any concerns that any child is suffering from abuse must be reported to the Centre Manager and/or available DSLs immediately.
- Staff should ensure that they do not influence the outcome by asking questions of the child or through the way they speak to them.

#### **Allegations against staff:**

- We follow the guidance of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within COG, which may result in an allegation of abuse.
- We ensure that if such an allegation takes place, the details of the incident are recorded.
- We refer any such complaint to the local authority's Social Care for investigation and we will co-operate entirely with any further investigations.
- Our policy is to suspend the member of staff for the duration of the investigation; this is not an indication or admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- Ofsted will be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises within 14 days of the allegation being made

#### **Disclosures:**

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that staff member will:

- Offer reassurance to the child.
- Listen to the child.
- Reassure the child what action will be taken.
- The staff member will not question the child.

#### **Recording incidents or suspicions of abuse:**

Staff will make a record of:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child
- Date and time of the observations or disclosure
- An objective record of the disclosure or observation
- Exact words spoken as far as possible
- Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time
- Names of any other person present at the time
- These records are stored in the child's file
- All members of staff are aware of these procedures.

#### **Informing parents:**

- Parents are usually the first point of contact
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of GSCB does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser and in these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

**Confidentiality:**

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of GSCB.

**Supporting families:**

- The staff aim to build trusting and supportive relationships with families.
- Parents are made aware that COG has clear guidelines for its role and responsibilities for Child Protection, by reporting concerns, providing information and monitoring the well-being of the child.
- The staff continue to welcome the child and their family whilst investigations of any alleged abuse are taking place.
- A child's confidential records are shared with the child's parents or those with parental responsibility in accordance with the procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of GSCB.

**PREVENT POLICY**

- COG supports British values of diversity and equality and has due regard for the need to prevent children being drawn into extremists groups.

**ESAFETY AND USE OF PHOTOGRAPHY AT COG**

COG ensures that practitioners support children's development and engage parents in children's learning through photographs that record their activities and achievements. All parents are asked to consent to the use of photographs for this purpose. Parents' consent will also be obtained for their child's photograph to be used for any promotional materials. The use of staff personal cameras or any technical device capable of recording is not permitted in order to safeguard the children in our care. Whilst Data Protection does not prevent parents taking photographs of their children and friends participating in COG events, COG promotes the safety of all children by restricting the use of parents' and visitors' cameras, including mobile phones or any technical device capable of recording at such events. The use of children's or staff's photographs on any social website such as 'Facebook' is not permitted.

**DATA PROTECTION / CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, whilst ensuring that they access high quality care and education in our Nursery. Our policy ensures that confidentiality is maintained and that staff and Trustees have a commitment to maintain security within COG, with clear procedures and responsibilities. Responsibility for data control is held by the Centre Manager, and Deputy Manager, with responsibility to ensure that all staff have clear guidance on these procedures, both with regard to paper and computer files. All computers and systems are protected by secure passwords.

We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

We keep two kinds of records on children attending COG:

1. Developmental records – these include observations of the children in the Nursery, samples of their work and assessment records.
2. Personal records – these include registration forms, signed consents, and correspondence concerning the child from other agencies, (e.g. Speech and Language Therapist) records of relevant meetings with parents and other agencies, and observations by members of staff on any confidential matter concerning the child.

These confidential records are stored in a locked cabinet. Some files may be stored on computer with secure passwords and these are backed up securely. All sensitive and confidential emails are sent using a secure encrypted service.

Parents have access to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.

Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality & of secure systems.

Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personal decisions.

All staff are aware of the importance of confidentiality on social websites such as 'Facebook' and staff are therefore not permitted to have current parents as 'Facebook Friends' to ensure that absolute confidentiality is maintained.

## **MISSING CHILD**

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing:

- Senior staff should carry out a thorough search of the premises, including outdoors.
- A full register should be carried out by staff to ensure that no other child is missing
- Security of the building should be checked e.g. gates etc.
- If the child is not found parents will be contacted immediately and the missing child is reported to the police.

## **OUTINGS**

- Parents will be advised of any planned outing and signed permission obtained.
- A thorough individual risk assessment of the outing will be carried out by staff to ensure the safety of children and to ensure appropriate staff: children ratios are met.
- If a child goes missing from an outing, all children should be told to stand with their designated person to carry out a headcount to ensure no other child is missing.
- Staff member to search the immediate vicinity.
- Person in charge should remain at the site as point of contact.
- The remaining children should return to the Nursery with staff.
- Parents of the child are contacted and the missing child reported to the police using one of the COG mobile phones.
- A full investigation should be carried out by the Trustees, taking full written statements from all staff. These should include date, time, and venue of outing, where the child was last seen and the estimated time of child's disappearance.

- OFSTED is informed.
- A conclusion should be drawn by senior staff as to how the security breach occurred.
- A full incident report is made and reported under RIDDOR arrangements.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Approved regular voluntary helpers may work with the staff. These may be people helping out at least once a week for a period of at least half a term. They have been assessed through vetting procedures and relevant checks as being fit to care for young children, but will at no time be left in charge of children without supervision from a trained member of staff. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in training opportunities with the staff. We occasionally have student trainees and work experience placement students. These people are not included in the staff ratio. Volunteers/students are informed of the need for confidentiality, including the use of social media.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

COG believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We need to do occasional parent questionnaires suggestions to make any necessary improvements and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of COG. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff.

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of COG's provision, should first of all, talk over their concerns with the Centre Manager. Most complaints should be resolved amicably at this stage.
- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, the parent should put their concerns in writing to the Centre Manager and the Chair of the Trustees. If the Trustees feel it is appropriate, they will seek the help of the Early Years Consultant from the Local Authority.
- Any parent who is not comfortable with making written complaints will be supported by senior staff to complete their complaint.
- Complaints will be stored in the child's file (and possibly in a specified file for all related information).
- The Centre Manager, Catharine Fowler, will meet with the parent to discuss the outcome of the investigation.
- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome, a meeting will be arranged with the Manager and/or Trustees. The parent should have a friend or supporter present.
- A written record of the discussion and any decisions will be kept and signed by all parties.
- A mediator may be involved if negotiations are unsuccessful in reaching agreement and all discussions are confidential.
- Parents may contact OFSTED at any point in this procedure. In addition, any possible breaches in COG's registration procedures should be notified to OFSTED to ensure the Every Child Matters outcomes are adhered to.
- The telephone number for OFSTED is 0300 123 1231. Their website is [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### **Complaints (Staff or Trustees)**

In the event of a complaint from a member of staff, this should be directed to the Trustees in a verbal or written form. If the grievance persists, a sub-committee should discuss the matter with the employee, who may wish to be accompanied by a friend. All complaints and grievances will be dealt with fairly. If the Trustees cannot deal with the complaint, it will be taken to an outside agent, such as a Local Authority (LA) Early Years Consultant.

In the event of a complaint by a Trustee, the procedure would be the same as for the staff. The matter would be discussed verbally, put in writing and if necessary taken to an outside agent, such as LA Early Years Consultant.

Full Disciplinary and Complaints procedures are issued to staff at the commencement of employment. (See attached copy).

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

The health, safety and well being of all children attending the group is of paramount importance. We make COG a safe and healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers. We aim to minimise all risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

### **Sickness**

- Any child or adult suffering from any infection or illness is not allowed to attend the Group and should remain at home with due regard to advice from Health Protection Agency. (Copy of Guidance available in COG Office).
- Any notifiable illness, with regard to Health Protection Agency advice, will be notified to Health Protection Unit telephone 01242 533506, with due regard to RIDDOR.
- In the event of any child being taken ill during a session, a member of staff will contact the parent by telephone to collect the child, or telephone the emergency contact if the parent is unavailable.
- Children with head lice are not excluded, but must be treated to remedy the condition.
- Parents are notified if there is a case of head lice in the group.
- Parents are notified of any infectious diseases, such as chicken pox contracted by anyone attending the Centre.

### **First Aid**

- There is at least one member of staff with a current First Aid certificate in every session.
- The First Aid kit is regularly checked by a designated member of staff and restocked as necessary.
- The First Aid kit is kept locked and out of reach of the children.
- All accidents are recorded in the accident book and parents are informed.
- At the time of admission, parents' written permission for emergency medical advice or treatment is sought.
- Parents sign and date their written approval.

### **Medicines Policy**

- Signed parental agreement must be obtained before any medicines can be administered. (Form 3A) and signed by senior Centre staff.
- A record of medicine administered to any child must be made (Form 5) and records will be kept in locked cabinet in the Medicines file.
- Parents will always be informed and asked for their signature (Form 5) when medication has been administered.
- Staff training in the use of medication e.g. Rectal Diazepam & Epipen must be up to date and recorded (Form 8)
- Separate authorisation is required with Doctor's consent for Rectal Diazepam. (Form 9).
- Any regular medication to be stored on the premises clearly marked and named in locked First Aid cabinet in the bathroom area or refrigerated if necessary.

- In no circumstances is medication to be carried by a child but should remain locked in suitable storage.
- Any medical condition requiring emergency aid and medication will have a written accident procedure in place.
- All trained staff are aware of procedures in the event of the need for regular medication and emergency treatment e.g. Rectal Diazepam.
- Non-prescription or short term medication, e.g. anti-biotic medicines, may only be given in extreme circumstances and with specific prior permission from parents (Form 3B). Parents may be asked to administer the medication during session times.
- In the case of the need to call emergency services, a notice *Contacting Emergency Services* will be displayed in the office.
- The Medical file will contain details of the following: Action Procedures for individual children; Parental Agreement - Form 3A; Occasional Parental Agreement – Form 3B; Record of medicines administered – Form 5; Staff training records – Form 8; Doctor’s consent for Rectal Diazepam – Form 9.

### **Incident Book**

- An incident form is completed regarding any incidents, including those that are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive.
- Incidents include: break in, theft, fire, and flood, an attack on a member of staff, any racist incident, death or serious injury to a child.
- Incident report will include date & time of the incident, nature of event, who was affected, and resulting action, police reports, crime numbers and insurance claims.
- Concerns regarding a child will not be recorded in the incident book but in the child’s own file.

### **Risk Assessment**

A full risk assessment procedure is in place and is regularly reviewed and includes:

- Checking for hazards and risks, indoors and outside, and in our activities and procedures. Our assessment covers adults and children.
- The risk assessment covers all health and safety issues.
- All staff are aware of H & S issues and policies and signed records are kept to show staff involvement and awareness.

### **Insurance Cover**

COG has public liability insurance and employers’ liability insurance. The current certificate is displayed on the office noticeboard.

### **Children’s safety**

- All staff are checked for criminal records by an enhanced disclosure from the relevant authority/vetting service.
- Children are supervised by adults at all times, adhering to the correct ratio of staff, for both inside and outside activities.
- Our premises are secure and systems for children’s safety are reviewed regularly.

### **Safety**

- Systems are in place for the safe arrival and collection of children.
- Visitors are required to sign in and out, using the visitors’ book in the foyer.
- The safety of the children is the responsibility of every staff member.

### **Kitchen**

- Children are not allowed in the kitchen at any time.

- Hot drinks are kept well out of the reach of children and are not served in any area where children are present.

### **Electrical equipment**

- All electrical equipment conforms to safety standards and is regularly checked.
- Sockets are properly guarded when not in use.

### **Hygiene**

- COG keeps up to date with recommendations from the Department of Health and the Health Authority and our premises are checked regularly in line with regulations.
- Staff ensure that daily routines encourage the children to learn about personal hygiene.
- COG has a daily cleaning routine which includes the playroom, toilet area and kitchen.
- Staff implement good hygiene by cleaning tables between activities, using colour-coded cloths.
- Individual hand towels are provided for each child, and these are regularly washed on the premises.
- Children can visit the toilet independently, washing their hands with soap and water and drying them on their own towels. We ensure children wash their hands before having refreshments and lunch.
- All staff changing children's nappies or cleaning any body fluids should wear protective gloves and wash hands thoroughly after completion of task.
- Soiled nappies, blood or vomit should be double sealed in nappy bags and disposed of in the outside bin.

### **Fire Safety**

- Fire doors are clearly marked and easily opened from the inside.
- Smoke alarms and fire fighting appliances conform to BSEN standards, and are checked as specified by the manufacturer.
- Emergency evacuation procedures are clearly displayed in the premises and are regularly practised every half term.
- Prams and pushchairs should not obstruct doorways in case of fire or accident.

### **Records**

In accordance with the Every Child Matters outcomes & guidance, we keep records of Adults –

- Names and addresses of all staff on the premises, including volunteers.
- Names and addresses of members of the Trustees.
- All records relating to the staff's employment with COG including application forms, references, results of checks undertaken, records of all training.

Children –

- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of parents and adults authorised to collect children from COG;
- The names, addresses and emergency contacts in case of children's illness or accident;
- The allergies, dietary requirements and illnesses of individual children;
- The times of attendance of children, staff, volunteers and visitors;
- Accident and medicine administration records.

### **VISITORS**

All visitors will be required to sign in and out in the Visitors Book in the front lobby. This is essential for roll call in the event of an emergency.

In addition, the following procedures and documentation in relation to Health and Safety are in place:

#### Staying Safe

- Risk assessment
- Record of visitors
- Fire Safety procedures
- Fire safety records and certificates
- Nursery and Office doors with coded entry systems

#### Being Healthy

- Administration of medicine
- Prior parental consent to administer medicine
- Record of the administration of medicine
- Prior parental consent for emergency treatment
- Accident record
- No Smoking

#### Action in the event of an emergency

In the event of an emergency the appropriate emergency services will be informed and action taken to safeguard the children. The Centre Manager, or Deputy, should assess the situation and make decisions regarding the safety of the children. Should evacuation of the premises be required, a roll call will be taken, using the register, of all children and adults present. All children would be assembled in the car park away from the building and any danger, or if this should be dangerous, in the nearby grounds of Cirencester Primary School. Regular fire drills are held to ensure that children and adults are familiar with emergency action.

#### STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY

We aim to ensure that all children attending Cirencester Opportunity Group, and their parents, are offered high quality early years care and education through the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS). To meet this aim we use a ratio of 1 adult to 3 children for children aged two, and a minimum of 1 adult to 6 children for children aged three to five years.

- There is a minimum of 3 members of staff in any one session.
- COG Nursery uses a key person system to ensure each child has a named member of staff.
- Staff hold weekly meetings to undertake curriculum planning and to discuss children's progress, their achievements and any concerns we might have.
- Our staff are trained and knowledgeable about the EYFS curriculum, child development and Early Years education. They understand the importance of the welfare of the children with regard to developmental progress, health and safety.
- There is a regular liaison between the staff and the Trustees, concerning all aspects of the running of the group and the Centre Manager attends Trustee meetings.
- Parents are always kept informed of matters concerning their children.
- Our Centre Manager, Deputy and Nursery Assistants hold relevant qualifications or are working towards them.
- Our staff are expected to take regular opportunities to further their knowledge by attending local training sessions.
- There is always at least one member of staff present who holds a current first aid certificate.

- All members of Nursery staff are trained to identify child abuse and are aware of current local child abuse procedures.
- The Centre Manager ensures that the correct ratio of staff to children is maintained.
- Staff observe, assess and record each child's progress within the group and the information is shared with the parents.
- All staff have job descriptions which set out their roles and responsibilities.
- COG welcomes applicants from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on their suitability for the post, regardless of gender, marital status, age, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.
- COG works towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and responsibilities.
- COG ensures that regular supervision and appraisals are held for all staff and induction procedures are maintained for new staff.

## **STUDENT PLACEMENT POLICY**

### **Statement of intent**

COG recognises that qualifications and training make an important contribution to the quality of the care and education provided by Early Years settings. As part of our commitment to quality, we offer placements to students on school work experience or those undertaking Early Years qualifications and training.

### **Aim**

We aim to provide for students on placement with us experiences that contribute to the successful completion of their studies and that provide examples of quality practice in early years care and education.

### **Method**

- COG requires students to meet the 'suitable person' requirements of OFSTED.
- COG requires schools placing students under the age of 17 years with the Nursery to vouch for their good character.
- Staff supervise students at all times and do not allow them to have unsupervised access to children.
- Students who are placed in COG on a short term basis are not counted in COG staffing ratios.
- Trainee staff employed by COG may be included in the ratios if they are deemed competent.
- We have in place employers' liability insurance and public liability insurance, which covers both trainees and voluntary helpers.
- COG requires students to keep to our confidentiality policy, including the use of social websites such as 'Facebook'.
- The use of mobile phones is not permitted and COG requires that all mobile phones are kept in the office whilst on the premises.
- COG co-operates with students' tutors in order to help students to fulfil the requirements of their course of study.
- Staff provide students, at the first session of their placement, with a short induction on how COG and our Nursery is managed, how our sessions are organised and our policies and procedures.
- COG communicates a positive message to students about the value of qualifications and training.
- COG makes the needs of the children paramount by not admitting students in numbers that hinder the essential work of COG, or who it is deemed would be detrimental to our work.

## **USE OF MOBILE PHONES**

To ensure the safety and welfare of children in our care COG operates a personal mobile phone usage policy which stipulates that personal mobile phones cannot be used when in the presence of children, on any part of the premises or when on outings. All staff, volunteers & students will therefore be instructed to keep their mobile phone in the staff room or the office, turned off or on silent.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

We are an Equal Opportunity employer. Jobs are advertised externally, through our website; Facebook page; and local press and all applications are considered. Selection is based on experience, relevant qualifications and also on the candidate's understanding of the ethos, aims and objectives of COG. References will be taken and all employees must be cleared by OFSTED, enhanced disclosure checks through an appropriate vetting service. All people employed by the group must hold a relevant qualification with relevant experience, or be trained to obtain a relevant qualification. We offer induction training and opportunities for staff development. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss planning, training needs and organisational requirements. Members of staff have a contract with terms and conditions of employment. This includes job title, date of commencement of employment, pay, procedures and amount, days and hours of work during school terms, grievance procedure, and notice required for termination of employment.

## **EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES**

We believe that we promote high quality early years care and education by providing children with safe, clean, attractive, developmentally appropriate resources and equipment. We aim to provide children with sufficient resources & equipment to consolidate and extend their skills, knowledge, interests and aptitudes.

- New or replacement items of equipment will be purchased by staff with regard to safety and suitability to curriculum issues. (BSEN standards, Toys Safety Regs 1995)
- Equipment will be regularly checked to ensure it is clean, safe and unbroken.
- We provide resources that promote children's learning, well-being and development, and to meet the needs and interests of all children.
- Equipment & resources should promote positive images of all colours, cultures and abilities, be non-discriminatory, avoiding racial & gender stereotyping.
- Resources should be stored where children can independently select them.

Please feel free to discuss any aspects of this policy with the Centre Manager, the Deputy or a member of the Trustees.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

SENCO	Julie Morriss Jane Pilgrim
CLL (Communication Literacy & Language) Lead	Catharine Fowler
Behaviour policy	Catharine Fowler
Admissions Policy	Catharine Fowler/Glynnis Freeman

First Aid	Catharine Fowler Glynnis Freeman Margaret Hartnell Jane Pilgrim Emiko McGill Sharon Pitts Victoria Chase
Child Protection	Catharine Fowler – Designated Safeguarding Lead Hilary Morris – Designated Safeguarding Lead Nicola Curtis – Designated Safeguarding Lead Glynnis Freeman Victoria Chase Margaret Hartnell Emiko McGill Julie Morriss Sharon Pitts Jane Pilgrim Ben Jayne
Child Protection Trustee	Peter Stone
Vulnerable Adult Protection	Catharine Fowler
Food Hygiene	Ben Jayne Glynnis Freeman Margaret Hartnell Hilary Morris Victoria Chase Sharon Pitts Nikki Curtis
Water Safety	Margaret Hartnell
Forest School	Glynnis Freeman
Health & Safety with responsibility to the Trustees	Catharine Fowler
Risk Assessments	Glynnis Freeman/Catharine Fowler
Data Control	Glynnis Freeman

Circulated and revised by staff and Trustees January 2018.

- Local Authority Designated Officer (01452 426994) of any allegations of abuse against staff within COG without delay.
- Notify the Children’s Helpdesk (01452 426565) of any concerns you have about a child being abused at home.
- Inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises within 14 days of the allegation being made.