

Staff Policy

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General Overview of the Policy

Bell House Nursery is a 'strength based' nursery that highly values its staff members, and recognises that it is in the best interests of the nursery, that the children and each individual staff member is given the opportunity to develop their personal skills to their maximum and to broaden their knowledge and ability to care for the children.

To facilitate this, we:

- Hold regular staff meetings and room meetings
- Operate an open door policy for staff to raise any concerns with a member of the management team
- Encourage staff to attend external training courses and workshops, where practical
- Encourage staff to pass on their knowledge to those with less experience than themselves
- Conduct supervision meetings to give the staff opportunities to express any concerns or training needs they may have
- Conduct annual appraisals to consolidate and assess progress and to identify any further training needs
- Develop a training plan addressing both qualifications and continuing professional development needs of the setting and of individual staff
- Promote a positive learning culture within the setting

Nursery policies in respect of personnel are governed by:

1. The best interests of the children, their welfare, care and development
2. The Welfare Standards (EYFS) and the Child Care register
3. Compatibility between all members of staff and the building of a good team spirit
4. Consideration will be given to the advancement of each member of staff both by internal and external training, to help him or her achieve maximum potential

5. Compliance with the current legislation
6. The provision of a job description for each member of staff
7. When recruiting members of staff, the applicant should be made aware of the policies and procedures, especially those relating to discrimination
8. Prior to commencement of employment the successful applicant will need to have their DBS in process and have passed the identification process for this, they will need to have 2 references, one of which is from their previous employer. Following this they shall be provided with an offer letter (conditional on Disclosure and Barring System clearance and 2 satisfactory references) with a job description and induction procedure
9. Harassment of any member of staff that can be classed as sexual or racial is not acceptable. This includes unwanted verbal or physical advances - the key factor in assessing harassment is whether it is unwanted.

Probationary Period

All staff will be subject to a probationary period of three (3/6) months. During this period, they will be required to undertake some basic training relevant to Bell House Nursery. This will include understanding and following the 8 statutory policies and procedures such as Safeguarding along with 5 recommended non statutory policies. An initial induction will be completed on the first day of employment by the manager/ deputy manager and following this the new staff also follow a mentor programme for the first month of their employment.

Training

The Nursery Managers have responsibility for ensuring that all staff are suitably qualified to carry out their role effectively. For all staff, training will be supported and encouraged and strong links will be established with local Colleges, Surrey County Council and training agencies. Responsibility for training is part of the manager's role but should also be the responsibility of each individual staff member.

Personal Arrangement

If staff members opt to make personal arrangements with families registered at Bell House Nursery i.e. baby-sitting, this is purely a personal arrangement and the Nursery accepts no liability in this respect.

Staff Structure

Our staffing structure consists of both full & part time staff, which allows for flexibility when organising each day and when making arrangements to cover staff holidays & sickness.

There is always a minimum of two staff (one must be a senior staff member) present on the premises at all times who are both aged 18 years old or above.

We also have additional staff (bank staff) who will work within all areas, depending on the need, in order to maintain adequate staff: child ratios. We occasionally use agency staff and although they are DBS checked, they are never left unattended.

Trainees

We take on trainees who are 17 years plus, they are supported by the managers so they will receive experience within all ages of the nursery, Trainees are under no circumstances to be left unattended. Following on from their probation period and once they have completed their mentor programme, if management and the room leader feel they are ready and competent then they may be given the role of key person.

Staff Development and Training

Staff are our Nursery's most valuable resource, as it is only through their commitment and effort that good quality provision can be both established and maintained. We are therefore committed to providing good training and development opportunities for staff so that they are able to perform their roles both efficiently and effectively.

The Nursery recognises that regular training and monitoring of professional development are important for all staff. Staff development and training are vital because it allows staff to keep up to date with current thinking and practice about both play and child development issues. Additionally, with well-trained and motivated staff, a Nursery is better able to meet the diverse and complex needs of children within its local community.

The Nursery is committed to providing for staff:

- A full induction process (included within this is our mentor programme)
- A regular system of supervisions and appraisals.
- Information about qualifications and training.

This will help to ensure that staff development needs are being met and that staff training and qualifications are meeting the requirements of the Nursery and the welfare requirements within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Staff Inductions

New members of staff will be issued with a job description and have access to the Nursery's policies. Staff will also undergo an induction process during the first month of their employment and be assigned a mentor to help them settle in.

As part of the induction, the manager will discuss and talk through everyday practices of the Nursery. These will include:

- Showing new staff around the premises, pointing out all fire exits, toilets and areas such as the staff room, kitchen and Nursery office.

- Explaining staff rotas, breaks and all aspects of the day-to-day management and running of the Nursery.
- Introducing the new member of staff to their colleagues, children and parents/carers where appropriate.
- Pointing out the practical implications of the Nursery's policies and practices, including how they relate to the Nursery's obligations under the welfare requirements
- Staff will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the Nursery's policies, particularly those relating to health and safety and safeguarding children.

Staff Appraisal and Supervision

Supervision

All staff employed by Bell House Nursery have regular supervisions with the management. This time will be used as an opportunity for review of their own work and development. Both the member of staff and the management team will provide input relating to achievements and areas which require further training and development. These sessions should also be seen as an opportunity to discuss any issues with the working environment or nursery. Notes and records will be made of each supervision session and will remain confidential.

Annual Appraisals

An annual Appraisal will be conducted for all staff. The appraisal will assess the year's targets, training and performance, pay reviews and any other issues each party may have that they want to discuss, the time table for this is displayed in the staff room for the staff to see

Staff Meetings

There will be regular staff/ room meetings, Room leader meeting and management meetings, for problem solving, information sharing and acknowledging work issues. These are also opportunities for staff to reflect on their work performance and review any difficulties they may be facing. These meetings will be a forum for objectives for the Nursery.

Volunteers and Students

Bell House Nursery welcomes volunteers and students from a number of schools and colleges within the Surrey area to complete their work experience at the nursery. At Bell House Nursery we recognise 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 undertaking early years' qualifications and training, including those studying for Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications to work with children.

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

We also recognise the important role volunteers make to our setting. They provide a vital link between the community and the Nursery. Volunteers contribute positively to the lives of children and families using the Nursery, by providing them with opportunities to build relationships with people they otherwise may not meet, learn about cultures, beliefs and skills and to widen their horizons.

The following procedures apply to both:

- A senior member of staff will ask to see the candidates DBS certificate. If this is unavailable there must be confirmation from a recognised college that one exists as this is essential before allowing volunteers and students to work with the children.
- Informal interview by the Managers will be carried out to establish frequency and level of availability.
- The relevant Room Leader will provide appropriate supervision and support to the candidate
- Volunteers and long-term students can be included in the staff/child ratios as long as they are over the age of 17 years. The candidates must have an up to date DBS certificate, and deemed as competent to complete the work experience. A DBS undertaken by the college will be acceptable provided it is not more than one-year-old.
- Bell House Nursery will employ apprentices and work with the relevant training providers in order to support them to achieve a relevant childcare qualification.
- All volunteers and students will gain the relevant experience and support in accordance with their qualification level.
- We require students to meet the 'suitable person' requirements of the Statutory Framework
- We supervise students at all times and do not allow them to have unsupervised access to children.
- Students who are placed in our nursery on a short term basis are not counted in our staffing ratios. Students who are placed for longer periods – for example, a year – may be counted in our staffing ratios provided we consider them to be competent.
- We require students and volunteers to abide by our confidentiality policy
- We co-operate with students' tutors in order to help students to fulfil the requirements of their course of study but ask colleges to give adequate notice if visits are organised, reports or other assessments are needed by the staff.
- If we have any concerns about a student we will contact the student's tutor/college and discuss these concerns. The wellbeing of our children is paramount and in certain circumstances it may be necessary to immediately terminate a student's placement, we reserve the right to do this. We will inform the student's tutor/college of the reasons for this action.

No Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Bell House Nursery is a smoking, alcohol and drugs free establishment.

Smoking is not permitted by anyone within Bell House Nursery grounds, or be seen in uniform within visual distance of the nursery.

If a member of staff, student or volunteer arrives at the setting clearly under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they will be asked to leave immediately.

If we have good reason to believe that a parent/carer is under the influence of alcohol when they drop off or collect their child, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL in their absence, will be informed and they will decide an appropriate course of action, in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

During any trips or outings, with the children, staff must not smoke and parents must also abide by this.

Blue Supervision Forms

Staff supervisions are completed on a regular basis, and blue supervision forms have been introduced to address any employee issues on a day to day basis. They act as a record keeping procedure and supporting documentation in the event of a formal disciplinary being needed.

Annie and/or Sophie is responsible for speaking and recording accounts from all parties involved stating facts and fact only information. Annie and/or Sophie then presents this information to Clare who will then make a decision on how to proceed. This means Clare therefore remains impartial and able to make an informed decision without being directly involved. This process precedes the disciplinary procedure.

Verbal or Written Warnings

If a member of staff does not comply with the rules of the nursery, for example, a safeguarding concern or having a high number of sickness absences, the management team will need to take disciplinary action towards that member of staff. The following procedure will take place:

Stage 1- Verbal warning

Stage 2- Written warning

Stage 3- Written warning

Stage 4- Dismissal

The warning/s will be recorded on the member of staff's file. The member of staff will receive a discussion with every warning to allow the staff member time to ask questions and discuss the warning in full detail.

Grievance Procedures

Many grievances can be resolved on an informal basis to the mutual satisfaction of the employee and the Employer. The Employer does recognise, however, that certain grievances will not be resolved by informal means and, to this end, a standard grievance procedure exists to which all employees are entitled to avail themselves. Each staff member is emailed a copy of the staff hand book which our grievance procedure is explained in great detail for them.

When will the Employer's grievance procedures have to be followed?

The procedures should be followed by the Employer when dealing with the following work-related issues:

- Breach of the contract of employment
- Age discrimination
- Disability discrimination
- Equal pay
- Less favourable treatment in relation to European Works Council
- Race discrimination
- Sex discrimination
- Sexual orientation discrimination
- Religious or belief discrimination
- Breaches of the Working Time Regulations
- National minimum wage
- Redundancy payments
- Unfair dismissal
- Unlawful deductions from wages and unauthorised payments by the Employer

The above list is by no means an exhaustive list of issues which could form the basis of an employee grievance.

The Standard Grievance Procedures

The Employer's grievance procedure consists of the following three steps:

- Step 1:** The investigation of the alleged grievance
- Step 2:** The grievance meeting
- Step 3:** The appeal hearing

The employee's right to be accompanied to Grievance Meetings and Appeal Meetings

The employee has the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or an accredited trade union official to all grievance and/or appeal meeting which form part of the procedure. Where disabled employees or employees whose first language is not English are concerned, the Employer may allow such individuals to be represented by some other appropriate person e.g. a disability rights worker, social worker or community worker. The Employer will have complete discretion in this regard.

If the employee wishes to exercise his/her or right to be accompanied at one of the hearings, the name of his/her companion/representative should be forwarded to the Employer. In situations where the companion/representative is an official of a trade union which the Employer does not recognise, it is useful if the companion/representative makes contact with the Employer prior to any hearing which forms part of the grievance procedure.

The role of the companion/representative

According to ACAS, the companion or the representative should be permitted to address the grievance and appeal hearings for the following purposes:

- To explain the employee's case
- To sum up the employee's case
- To respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed or evidence advanced at the hearings.

The companion/representative is entitled to confer with the employee at any time during the hearings. However, the companion/representative will not be permitted to participate in the hearings if this is the wish of the employee. The companion/representative is not permitted to interrupt representatives of the Employer when they are presenting their case.

Handling of Employee Grievances

It is anticipated that many grievances can be dealt with on an informal basis by the Employer. Where more serious grievances are concerned i.e. those which cannot be resolved by informal action on the part of the Employer, the standard grievance procedure will have to be used.

Such a procedure is designed to provide employees with the opportunity to raise any formal grievances that they have in relation to their employment. Wherever possible, an employee's grievance will be dealt with by the Employer before that individual leaves employment. Any grievance raised by an employee will be treated in a confidential manner by the Employer.

As far as is reasonably practicable, a supervisor/manager who is the subject of the employee's grievance will not normally be permitted to sit as part of the grievance hearing or appeal meeting. This is necessary to ensure fairness at all times to the employee who is raising the grievance.

A manager/supervisor who is the subject of an employee grievance may, of course, be questioned as part of the investigatory stage and may be called to give evidence at a later stage of the proceedings.

According to ACAS, issues that may cause grievances include:

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Health and safety
- Work relations
- Bullying and harassment
- New working practices
- Working environment
- Organisational change; and
- Equal opportunities
- Sexual Discrimination

It should be appreciated that the above list is by no means an exhaustive one and there may be other issues which may cause the grievance procedure to become operational.

Step 1 - The investigation of the employee's grievance

Employees must firstly set out the basis of any grievance **in writing** and a copy of the grievance statement must be sent to the Directors / Management of Bell House Nursery Ltd. The Employer must take steps to investigate fully the employee's grievance by interviewing potential witnesses and identifying relevant evidence (documentary or otherwise) in order to progress the grievance as speedily as possible.

Copies of witness statements and any other relevant evidence (whether documentary or otherwise) intended for use at the grievance hearing will be provided to the employee or the companion prior to such a hearing. The Employer will endeavour to provide such material to the employee or a companion as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Step 2 - The grievance meeting

A grievance meeting will not take place unless:

- The employee has informed the Employer what the basis for the grievance was when they made the statement under Step 1; and
- The Employer has had a reasonable opportunity to consider its response to that information contained in the grievance statement and has had a reasonable opportunity to carry out a proper investigation.

Invitation to a Grievance Meeting

The aggrieved employee will be invited by the Employer to a meeting to discuss the grievance. The employee's grievance will normally be dealt with by at least one of the partners at such a meeting. However, if one of the partners of Bell House Nursery Ltd is the subject of this particular grievance, the other partner who is not the subject of the employee's grievance may have to assume responsibility for dealing with the complaint.

As far as is reasonably practicable, any partner or manager/supervisor of the Employer who is the subject of the employee's grievance should not normally be involved in the decision making process of the grievance hearing. Such individuals may be required to give evidence at the said grievance hearing.

The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting.

The Employer will do its utmost to arrange for the meeting to be held at a suitable time and venue so that the employee does not face any obstacles which may hinder his/her attendance or which may prevent attendance of the companion at such a meeting. The meeting will be held in private in a suitable room in order to minimise any potential interruptions.

The Employer will endeavour to arrange the grievance meeting as speedily as possible following on from the receipt of the employee's written grievance statement and the conclusion of any investigation of that grievance.

Conduct of the Grievance Meeting

The grievance meeting should commence by introducing all those present to the employee and explaining why they are there. It may also be necessary to introduce and explain the role of the accompanying person if present. The employee should be provided with an explanation concerning the purpose of the meeting i.e. to consider as fully as possible the nature and the validity of the grievance. Finally, the employee should be provided with an explanation of how the meeting will be conducted.

The employee or the companion will be permitted to state the grievance at the grievance meeting as fully as possible. The employee should state what steps he or she

believes the Employer should take in order to resolve the grievance. The Employer will have the right to ask questions of the employee or his companion in order to progress the grievance.

Both the Employer and the employee have the right to call witnesses to the grievance meeting. Any responses given by witnesses shall be noted in writing.

In preparation for the grievance meeting, the employee will have provided the names of potential witnesses to the Employer so that these individuals may be permitted to provide statements for use at the meeting. The employee must also inform the Employer of any evidence (documentary or otherwise) that s/he feels may clarify the main issues of any grievance. The Employer will, of course, have the right to present any appropriate evidence (documentary or otherwise) at this meeting in order to expedite the grievance process.

It be may appropriate from time to time, for the parties involved in the grievance meeting to request a short adjournment of the meeting. Such a request by either party should not be unreasonably refused.

If the Employer is unsure how to progress the employee's grievance, the meeting may be adjourned in order for further investigations to be carried out and/or in order for the Employer to seek advice. In such circumstances, a continued grievance meeting should be commenced by the Employer as soon as is reasonably practicable.

At the end of the grievance meeting, both the Employer and the employee should be allowed to sum up briefly their respective arguments.

The employee will be notified in writing of the decision of the Employer in respect of the grievance following on from the completion of the grievance meeting as soon as is reasonably practicable.

N.B. It may be advisable to take Minutes of the grievance meeting which can then be made available to both parties at a later stage.

Appeals Against the Outcome of the Grievance Meeting

The employee has the right to appeal against the decision of the Employer regarding the grievance raised if he or she is dissatisfied with the outcome of the procedure. Such an appeal should be submitted in writing to the Directors / Management of Bell House Nursery Ltd within five days of the employee receiving notification of the decision of the grievance hearing.

Step 3

If the employee remains dissatisfied with the Employer's response to the grievance following stage two of the procedure, s/he has the right to submit an appeal.

The Employer will endeavour to arrange the appeal meeting as speedily as possible from the receipt of the employee's appeal.

The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the appeal meeting.

The Employer will do its utmost to arrange for the meeting to be held at a suitable time and venue so that the employee does not face any obstacles which may hinder his/her attendance or which may prevent attendance of the companion at such a meeting. The meeting will be held in private in a suitable room in order to minimise any potential interruptions.

The employee should alert the Employer to the existence of any relevant evidence (whether documentary or otherwise) which supports his/her grievance and which s/he wishes to rely upon at the appeal hearing. The Employer will give notification to the employee of any evidence which it intends to rely upon at the appeal hearing.

Copies of witness statements and any other relevant evidence (whether documentary or otherwise) intended for use at the appeal hearing will be provided to the employee or the companion prior to such a hearing. The Employer will endeavour to provide such material to the employee or a companion as soon as is reasonably practicable.

In situations, where any new evidence is introduced at the appeal meeting, the employee shall be permitted to comment, or a companion if the employee so wishes, on this material as fully as possible before any decision is taken.

The employee has the right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing of his or her grievance. At any time during this meeting, the companion can confer with the employee and ask questions on his or her behalf.

In most circumstances, the appeal will be dealt with by a partner of Bell House Nursery Ltd. Wherever possible the appeal will be heard by someone other than the person who took the original decision at the grievance hearing and, if possible, by a person who was not involved in the original meeting or decision.

Conduct of the Appeal Hearing

The appeal meeting should commence by introducing all those present to the employee and explaining why they are there. It may also be necessary to introduce and explain the role of the accompanying person if present. The employee should be provided with an explanation concerning the purpose of the meeting i.e. to consider as fully as possible the nature and the validity of the grievance and to review the decision of the Employer in respect of the grievance which was arrived at during Step 2 of the procedure. Finally, the employee should be provided with an explanation of how the meeting will be conducted.

The employee or the companion will be permitted to articulate the grievance at the appeal meeting as fully as possible. The employee should state what steps he or she believes the Employer should take in order to resolve the grievance. The Employer will have the right to ask questions of the employee or his companion in order to progress the grievance.

The Employer will have the right to ask questions of the employee or his companion in order to progress the grievance procedure. The employee has the right to draw to the Employer's attention any fact which s/he feels is relevant to the grievance.

It may be appropriate from time to time, for the parties involved in the appeal hearing to request a short adjournment of the meeting. Such request by either party should not be unreasonably refused.

The purpose of the appeal hearing is to review the evidence which was presented at the original grievance hearing and to establish that the Employer's action in this regard was fair and equitable. From time to time, the person hearing the appeal - normally a senior manager or, where appropriate, a senior officer of the Employer - may wish to recall any witness(es) who attended the original grievance meeting for questioning in order to aid him/her in his decision. Such a right of recall is a purely discretionary power conferred upon the person hearing the appeal.

At the end of the appeal meeting, both the Employer and the employee should be allowed to sum up briefly their respective arguments.

After the conclusion of the appeal meeting, the Employer must inform the employee of its final decision. Such a decision will be communicated in writing to the employee as soon as is reasonably practicable.

N.B. It may be advisable to take Minutes of the appeal meeting which can then be made available to both parties at a later stage.

Outcome of the Appeal Meeting

The following outcomes may result from the appeal hearing:

- The original decision may be upheld in its entirety
- Aspects of the original decision may be varied by the Employer
- The original decision may be overturned

The appeal meeting is the final stage of the grievance procedure. There is no further right of appeal.

Written Records of the Grievance Procedure

Written records of all steps comprising the grievance procedure will probably be retained by the Employer for future reference, but such records will not be kept any longer than is absolutely necessary in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Records held by the Employer in relation to the grievance procedure may include the following:

- The nature of the grievance raised
- Minutes of the grievance and appeal meetings
- A copy of the written grievance
- The Employer's response to the grievance
- The action taken by the Employer
- The reasons for the action taken
- Whether there was an appeal and what was the outcome to this; and
- Subsequent developments

These records are confidential and should not be disclosed to any unauthorised person(s). The Employer should fully recognise the obligations imposed on it by law as regards the retention and use by it of personal data relating to an employee.

Copies of any minutes of meetings forming part of the Employer's grievance procedure should be given to the employee on request. In certain situations e.g. to protect a potential witness from violence, the Employer might withhold some information.

Reviewed by Clare Hayes and Annie Tolchard

Reviewed in March 2018

Next review date March 2019