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# Daycare and Creche Policy booklet





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## **INTRODUCTION**

Dear Parents/ Carers

I am delighted to welcome you to our childcare unit. I hope that both you and your child will have a very happy experience with us. Our staff are fully qualified and vetted through Social Services are fully committed to providing your child with a loving and caring environment. I would like to draw your attention to the policies overleaf. If you have any queries regarding any aspect of the childcare unit please do not hesitate to contact me. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing our childcare unit.

Yours faithfully

**Mrs Isobel Loughran**  
**Director**

## **Welcome Note**

The vision of Footprints Day-care and Crèche Facility is to provide an environment where children are happy, stimulated and kept safe and healthy. We aim to ensure your child has plenty of opportunities to grow and develop to allow them to reach their full potential.

The principle aims are to offer a range of inclusive services for children where they are able to participate in a variety of play and learning experiences to aid their social, physical, intellectual, creative, cultural and emotional development of the children in a fun, safe environment.

We believe that an ongoing commitment to improvement is paramount to the happiness and well-being of the children in our care. We define a quality service as one that understands the individual requirements of children in our care, as well as their parents/ carers, and provides the necessary staff, equipment and resources to meet and exceed those needs.

We work on building partnership with the parents through the sharing of information between home and setting. This will help the staff at Footprints support the child's individual needs. We will also encourage parents to participate in activities at the Day-care and Crèche Facility and to also join us on day trips.

Footprints Women's Centre is an equal opportunities childcare provider and welcomes all children regardless of race, religion, ability, age, culture, language, social group or sexuality. All children will be respected as individuals and cared for equally.

Footprints Women's Centre is an equal opportunities employer employing those who fit the requirements as dictated by the job description regardless of race, religion, ability, age, culture, language, social group or sexuality.

All employees will be respected as individuals and valued as an important part of the Organization, bringing various life skills, qualities and backgrounds to enhance the capabilities of the Club.

We believe that a motivated and dedicated team is essential to the success of Footprints Women's Centre and as such aim to provide training, guidance and opportunities for our individual team members.



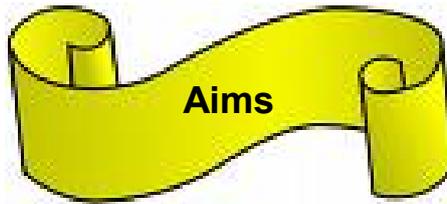
## **Mission Statement**

***'To enable women and children to grow to ensure their voices are heard and that they take their rightful place in a just and equal society.'***

## **Footprints Women's Centre Values**

- 1) To demonstrate **Respect** through listening actively to others and being non-judgemental.
- 2) To create a **Welcoming** Friendly Atmosphere.
- 3) To recognise diversity through treating people as individuals.
- 4) To demonstrate **Equality** through showing no difference among those we work for and with.
- 5) To maintain **Confidentiality** through being clear about boundaries and meeting the requirements of the confidentiality code.
- 6) To provide **Support** through matching need.
- 7) To demonstrate **Commitment** through generating positive energy individually and collectively.
- 8) To underpin work with a Feminist ethos that raises **Awareness** of the inequalities experienced by women in society and provides interventions to redress the balance.





- 1) Provide a holistic service that addresses the individual needs of women
- 2) Provide a quality service so that children and young girls have access to a wide range of positive experiences to enable them to reach their full potential now and later in life.
- 3) Maximise the income generating activities of Footprints Women's Centre in order to sustain our social and business objectives.
- 4) Raise awareness and develop skills that enable women to influence policies and legislation and services affecting their lives and the lives of their children.
- 5) Ensure Footprints Women's Centre is accountable and value based in all its activities.

### **Objectives**

- 1) Tailor a range of learning and development opportunities to enable women and children to reach their potential.
- 2) Facilitate referrals internally and externally to services developed to meet needs.
- 3) Develop a structured and progressive volunteer programme.
- 4) Promote social inclusion for women through outreach and drop in.
- 5) Explore other opportunities for social business and income generation.
- 6) Ensure financial management systems are in place to find and
  - a. manage the funds for our services
- 7) Ensure quality business and community development principals

- a. Are applied in practice to all activities.
- 8) Organise a planned programme of activities for all children.
  - a. Appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- 9) Provide inclusive and well-resourced services that are child led.
  - a. And responsive to children's individual needs.
- 10) Maintain and develop strong working partnerships with parents, social partners and service users to widen access to resources and services and influence policy.
- 11) Ensure sufficient and skilled people are in place to meet
  - a. Requirements of our best practice frameworks
- 12) Consolidate existing social business provision
- 13) Design and produce a marketing and promotional strategy
- 14) To support and encourage active participation by local women and children on relevant bodies and campaigns.
- 15) To promote our services to women, children, social partners and funders.
- 16) To carry out and publish research which will inform future local strategic development.
- 17) To facilitate discussion with women and children on equality and rights issues.
- 18) To monitor our practice to ensure it is value based.
- 19) To share information that is accessible and relevant.

## **Accommodation**

- Preschool Room
- Toddler Room
- Waddler Room
- Waddler Cot Room
- Tiny Tots Room
- Tiny tots Cot Room
- Crèche building
- Enclosed Outside Play Area
- Sensory Garden

## **Partnership with Parents/ Carers Policy**

Footprints recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents/ carers to promote the best interests of children, and, also that parents/ carers play a key role in the care and education of their children. The childcare team will work with and support parents in providing quality care for their children.

### **To achieve this we will:**

- Inform all parents/carers about the setting, how it operates, opening times and policies and procedures through written information, parent notice boards, and informal communication.
- Ensure parents/carers are given regular information about their child's progress.
- Involve parents/carers in the shared development record keeping about their child, either formally or informally and ensure they are aware they can have access to their child's written developmental records and ensuring they can discuss their child's progress at any time. Staff will inform the childcare coordinator if a parent has requested to see their child's file and a time and date will be arranged with Practice Leader and parent.
- Keep parents/carers informed of activities and upcoming play programmes by displaying the planning and monthly themes.
- Welcome the contribution of parents/ carers and consult with them on a regular basis.
- Ensure all parents have access to our complaints procedure and we will ensure that any complaints are dealt with effectively in accordance with the complaints procedures.
- Ensure that all parents/carers are informed about meetings and any other activities being organised.
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in Footprints Women's Centres Board of Directors.
- Encourage all parents/carers to help with outings and fundraising events.
- Inform parents/carers through newsletters and letters of all news and developments within the setting and ensure that parents are aware that they are welcome to contribute in any way they feel able.
- Listen to all suggestions and acknowledge that all children, parents and staff have the right to be consulted and be heard.

## **Admissions policy**

Footprints will ensure that the setting is genuinely accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community.

### **We will achieve this by ensuring that:**

- Notices about our childcare facilities will be placed in the local community, health and shopping centres, bulletins and local newspapers.
- We provide priority of place for Footprints Women's Centre employees.
- All applications are considered following the policies and guide lines of Footprints Women's Centre. When applications are received they will be offered in the following order.
  - Priority will be given to those who require a full time place.
  - Those who have been on the waiting list longer.
  - Those applications for more than one child
- We provide a number of places for working parents.
- We keep a number of places available for Social Services referrals.
- We provide opportunities for children with special needs.
- We provide places for children whose mothers are enrolled on education and training programmes within the centre.
- We provide places for children whose mothers are in need of respite.
- We continue to meet the changing needs of the local community.

### **Notice of Requirement**

A period of one months' notice is required in the event of no longer requiring a childcare place.

## **Admission Appeals Policy**

Parents should be aware that the decision of the appeal is final and that the intake of children is limited by Social Services Registration requirements, we will however consider an appeal in regard to admissions.

Parents can contact the club directly for information about how to pursue an appeal.

Appeals for admission into Footprints Women's Centre must be made in writing to the Board of Director.

An appeals form is available that can be obtained by writing to the Board of Directors.

Only one appeal per child can be considered in the same year

Appeals will be considered by the Board of Directors at the monthly Board meeting. Parents/carers will be informed within 10 working days of the decision of the Board of Directors. Written information will be sent to parents/carers regarding the appeal decision.

**The decision of the Board will be final.**

## **Settling In Policy**

At Footprints we aim to ensure your child's introduction to our setting is as stress free as possible. Once a place has been offered, we aim to achieve this by inviting you and your child to visit the nursery prior to your child's official start date. This helps to familiarise your child with the nursery, the staff and the other children, and your child's key worker who will help build up a relationship with you and your child.

We will therefore endeavour to make the settling in process a positive experience for children and will work closely with parents/ carers to ensure this is achieved. We recognise that in some cases there may be particular difficulties experienced by children. All children are individuals and we plan to meet their individual needs and resolve any difficulties quickly and smoothly. The childcare staff will work in partnership with parent/ carers to settle their child into the childcare facility.

### **To achieve this we will ensure that:**

- All staff are aware of the procedures for settling children into the facility.
- Parents/ carers are welcome in the setting for as long as is required to settle their child. Please stay with your child until you feel happy your child is content and feels secure enough to be left.
- Staff will provide support to parents/ carers during the settling in period. They will guide you on what you should do.
- Should the child become very distressed Parents/ Carers will be contacted.
- Parents/ carers are encouraged to get to know the childcare staff.
- During the settling in period parents/ carers should remain on premises at all times.

## **REST AND SLEEP IN NURSERY POLICY**

This policy links to:

Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five

### **1. IMPORTANT**

- Pre-school children can very tired during the day and NEED the opportunity to rest/sleep within the nursery day
- Every child's needs are different so we provide flexibility and opportunities for children to take rests and naps as they need and desire.
- It is VERY important that young children get ALL the sleep they need and so we prioritise and facilitate this in all departments of the nursery
- We respect parental wishes with regard to children's sleep, but the welfare of the child is always paramount.

### **2. COMFORTERS AND COMFORT BLANKETS**

- Comfort blankets and soft toys are most welcome for they bring enormous comfort and reassurance to small children, especially when they are new to the nursery and during rest and sleep times. PLEASE NAME THEM.
- Parents may wish to provide dummies for their little ones, for they too can provide comfort during rest and sleep times, however the nursery does not provide, supply or ever introduce them to children themselves.
- If parents do provide dummies for their children to use it is essential that they also provide a hygienic Dummy Pot that can be sealed to store the dummy in when not in use.
- Dummies are usually restricted to sleep and rest times. They are not encouraged in the play rooms for they can hamper a child's speech, interaction with others and are a major cause of speech delay.

### **3. REST AREA**

- Within each play room there are quiet carpeted rest areas with soft seating and cushions where children can go if they wish to rest and relax.

### **4. STAFF**

- Staff are fully aware of the fact that children need to rest and sleep

- Staff appreciate that children have individual needs and routines which vary as they grow and develop
- Children are encouraged to indicate and say when they are tired and need to rest and are also encouraged to take a rest or nap during certain times of the day.

#### **5. PARENTS' WISHES**

- The preferences and wishes of parents are always valued and respected and staff work closely with them, especially in the Baby, Tiny Tot and Toddler Nurseries, to ensure each child's individual needs are carefully met.
- Younger babies usually need both morning and afternoon sleeps but these depend upon parents' wishes
- Some parents prefer their children to only have a short sleep – fearing that it infringes on their night time sleep and this will be taken into account PROVIDED it is also clearly in the child's best interests.

#### **6 SLEEP RECORDS**

- Sleep records are maintained so confirmation is always available regarding the times each child has slept on any given day
- Times can be recorded each day in a Child's Daily Sheet should their parents so wish.

#### **7. THE IMPORTANCE OF REST AND SLEEP**

- The nursery ensures that ALL children receive the rest and sleep that they need during the nursery day and regard it to be a highly important part of their personal and developmental needs.

## **Footprints Biting Policy**

Children sometime bite other children. Although not all toddlers bite, biting is considered a normal state in a child's development. Children may bite for a variety of reasons, rarely with the intent to hurt another child. Karen Miller, author of "Things to Do with Toddlers and Twos," suggests toddlers may bite any of the following reasons:

**Teething:** Toddlers are often cutting teeth and it hurts. Chewing on something relieves the itch and stops the pain momentarily.

**Sensory Exploration:** Toddlers are very good at using all of their senses to learn about the world. The "Oral mode", an important style of learning for infants, continues into toddler hood. Bite everything, not just their playmates.

**Cause and Effect:** Toddlers are eager explorers. They are constantly studying cause and effect. Biting produces a predictable response. Often, the response is dramatic; there is a lot of noise and attention from adults.

**Self-Assertion:** This is probably the most common reason toddlers bite. It's a way to express frustration when they don't yet have the language skills to do so.

Footprints staff take action to reduce the number of biting incidents, including providing access to teething toys, providing numerous sensory exploration activities providing opportunity to explore cause and effect and offering toddler's options and alternatives to reduce frustrations. Also 1:1 shadowing may be offered to address the biting.

When a child is bitten, that child is immediately comforted and bite is washed with anti-bacterial soap and an ice-pack applied to reduce bruising. The biter is told very firmly that it is not okay to bite and it is conveyed that this is an unacceptable behaviour through tone of voice and body language. Depending on the age of the child, they will be redirected to another area of the classroom and no positive or negative attention is given. The time scale can vary depending on the child's age. It is recommended that it is 1 minute for each year (2years = 2 minutes). The older children will have a period of time out. The incident will be written up on an accident/incident form. Measures will be taken in order to prevent further incidents such as close observation and one to one care.

Parents are not told the name of the child who bit their child. Parents of the biter are informed and will work together with the nursery assistants in hopes of preventing further incidents of biting but we understand that there is no point in bringing it up with the child when they get home as a young child will have no concept of what they have done hours before.

We recognize how upset parents may be when they learn their child has bitten; however, we also recognise that biting a normal component of child development and we cannot promise that their child will not be bitten again. Despite our many concerted efforts to prevent biting incidents, they are bound to occur. No child is ever excluded from Footprints because of biting.

## **Footprints Behaviour Management Policy**

Footprints believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where expectations of their behaviour are developmentally appropriate and consistently communicated.

Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on others, while feeling supported in expressing their own emotions appropriately. This is a developmental task that requires sensitive role modelling, teaching, encouragement and support.

**Statement:** We recognise the importance of promoting acceptable behaviour and methods of discipline within the childcare setting. We believe that all children have the right to expect positive approaches to discipline, which foster self-esteem, respect, tolerance and self-control. Behaviours which injure people either emotionally or physically or damage property are real problems for adults/staff and the other children must be dealt with in an appropriate manner. By promoting these beliefs Footprints will endeavour to ensure the group is safe, fair and considerate to all.

### **Our aims:**

- To promote self-discipline.
- To develop within each child an appreciation of others and their feelings.
- To increase children's understanding of the consequences of their behaviour on others and themselves.
- To encourage the child's ability to socialise and get along with others.
- To reinforce the positive and discourage the negative behaviour

### **Procedure:**

- All staff, volunteers and students are made aware of the Behaviour management policy (see below) they will receive support and coaching on behaviour management and child development as required.
- During supervision and annual appraisals opportunity will be given to allow reflection and refine practice as well as reinforce knowledge and share strategies.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive role model of behaviour by being warm, friendly and

responsive and by treating all children, parents and each other with respect at all times. We expect all parents and carers to follow these guidelines also.

- We discuss this policy with parents and carers during show rounds, settling in and registration.

### **Endorsed strategies for promoting positive behaviour**

- **Positive** – we notice when children are 'good' and reinforce this with praise and attention- and acknowledge considerate and appropriate behaviour
- **Communication** – in supporting children with their understanding of emotions and feelings, naming these and helping children to identify what they are expressing
- **Praise** - staff should use specific praise for good behaviour and acknowledge considerate and appropriate behaviour
- **Planning** – each room should plan stimulating and challenging activities around the interests of each child.
- **Routines** - each room should have a consistent yet flexible routine to provide children with a sense of security. This should be displayed and communicated via a visual display.
- **Interaction and supervision** – positive adult attention should result in positive behaviour
- **Prevention** – adults should anticipate and act proactively to remove or avoid potential situations before they occur
- **Promotion** – each room should promote age-appropriate 'rules' in a clear visual and positive way 'kind hands'

### **In the case of unwanted behaviours staff should:**

- Stop aggressive or bullying behaviour immediately and make clear that this type of behaviour is unacceptable. This is to be done by explanation rather than personal blame.
- Any behaviour problems are dealt with in a developmentally appropriate way. Staff are to help the children understand and they are loved/valued even when their behaviour/actions are not.

- When necessary, staff should outline the problems for children and encourage them to think out solutions.
- Staff should help children to take responsibility for the actions. For example, wiping up spills and helping repair equipment.
- Adult use observations as a way of finding out any possible reasons for unwanted behaviour.

**Step 1:** Approach quickly and calmly stopping any hurtful behaviour

**Step 2:** Acknowledge feelings

**Step 3:** Gather information

**Step 4:** Restate the problem

**Step 5:** Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together

**Step 6:** Give follow support

### **In the case of persistent inappropriate behaviour:**

The child's parents/carers should be involved. The practice leader will discuss the situation with the parents/carers in an attempt to find the possible cause of the behaviour. The practice leader and the parents/carers will, together, develop strategies for dealing with the unwanted behaviour. Should it be necessary and with the consent of the parent/carer, advice and assistance will be sought from relevant external specialists to address the matter. In extreme cases, to protect other children and staff, Footprints reserves the right to exclude the child from the group, this may be a temporary or permanent measure.

## **Customer Care & Complaints Procedure**

### **Purpose**

Footprints Women's Centre is committed to the continuous improvement of the standard of service it gives to all its member organisations, partners and other users or clients.

### **Customer Care**

Footprints Women's Centre is committed to

- putting our members and service users first;
- providing the members and service users with a quality service;
- continuous improvement of our services;
- reviewing and evaluating our Customer Care Policy in response to our service users;

To ensure that this happens, we will

- treat our service users with courtesy, respect and consideration at all times;
- conduct our communications with efficiency, integrity, fairness and professionalism;
- give our users a range of choices in accessing our services, including post, telephone, email and website
- provide clients with relevant, accurate and up-to-date information;
- actively seek user comments on a regular basis in order that we continue to develop and improve our services.

### **If a problem arises we will:**

- Deal with the problems promptly - all complaints will be responded to within ten days
- Advise the complainant if there will be a delay in providing a solution to the problem;
- Advise the complainant of progress in long-term problems;
- Advise where and who to contact in the event of any dissatisfaction.

## **Complaints Procedure**

If you are unhappy about any of our services, we undertake to deal quickly and effectively with the matter. As a first step, we suggest that you **contact the member of staff concerned** to see if the problem can be resolved to your satisfaction. Footprints Women's Centre staff will do everything they can to put things right, including reviewing procedures to stop problems happening again.

If you are not happy with the response, or if you do not know which member of staff to contact, please follow the steps outlined:

- All complaints should be made to the Centre Director **in writing** by letter or email. This will be acknowledged within three working days.
- The Centre Director or designated person will investigate the issues raised and let you have Footprints Women's Centre's response to the complaint normally within **ten working days**. Should the investigation require further time, an acknowledgment letter will be sent to you in the first instance, followed by a full response.
- If you do not feel that the Centre Director's or designated person's response is acceptable, you have the right to ask for your complaint to be **referred to a complaints panel**. The panel consists of the chair or vice-chair of Footprints Women's Centre and two members of Footprints Women's Centre's Board of Directors. A meeting of the panel will be arranged and you will be advised of the date. You may attend the meeting to make representation. You may also bring someone with you, if you wish, for personal support.
- You will be notified of the panel's decision within **five working days** of its meeting.
- In the case of a complaint from an individual or organisation that is not a member of Footprints Women's Centre; the panel's decision is final.
- Footprints Women's Centre members are entitled to raise any issue in relation to the management and administration of the organisation at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Footprints Women's Centre's AGMs are usually held in late in the year. Please contact the Centre Director at least **eight weeks before** the advertised date of the meeting who will advise you on the steps to take.

## **COMPLAINTS/ COMMENTS POLICY**

Footprints Women's Centre aims to provide the highest quality of care and education for all children attending our facilities. We welcome comments on how to improve our setting. We endeavour to quickly and informally resolve concerns through discussions with the appropriate member of staff.

All complaints/ comments are taken seriously. If a parent/ carer are unhappy about any aspect of the childcare unit they should bring it to the attention of the Childcare Co-ordinator or Children Services Manager. If this does not have a satisfactory outcome they should put their complaint in writing to the Centre Director or Chairperson of the Board requesting a meeting. Most complaints should be resolved at this stage but if there is a failure to reach agreement and the parent/ carer feels that the matter should be taken further they should contact the Social Workers responsible for the childcare facilities.

## **GOOD RELATIONS POLICY**

Good relations are about all of us living, working and playing together with respect, understanding and tolerance and without fear or mistrust.

This policy reflects the goal of "A SHARED FUTURE" which aspires to a society that "is at ease with wide individual diversity, from which dynamism and vitality flows."

It is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Policy Is Based On Two Fundamental Principles.

These are:

- The belief that children have a right to choice and that racism, sectarianism and discrimination damages children;
- This damage is not only to the child who is on the receiving end of this but also the child who manifests this type of behaviour.

### **Statement:**

Acknowledging that all children are different and promoting acceptance through inclusion.

### **Actions**

- We will treat all people equally with respect and dignity. We will operate with openness and acceptance in an inclusive manner challenging all forms of discrimination and accepting and celebrating difference.
- We will monitor all of our activities to ensure inclusion. We will actively promote inclusion in our projects and with our partners.
- We will listen with an open mind to the needs of individuals and respond in a way, which is appropriate.
- We will develop partnerships, which will support the inclusion of all children regardless of disability, background or personal circumstances. We will consult with partners who have the expertise to support us.
- We will ensure that all children's activities reflect the fact that all children are unique and are developed, promoted, and run in a way which ensures that everyone can participate equally.
- We will create a learning environment that encourages everyone to develop their knowledge and understanding. We will develop learning opportunities, materials and resources that support all to learn from our shared experiences.
- We will use materials and ways of working that allows all children to achieve their full potential. Materials used will reflect the uniqueness of children. Our settings play space and activities will support the full involvement of all children at all times.

- We will create ways of working that will highlight difference and support inclusion. For example a sight project could include blind or partially sighted children but may also incorporate global sight themes.

All of our actions will reflect our commitment to

- Children
- Parents
- Members
- The wider community and
- Marginalized hidden people.

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

Footprints are committed to equality of opportunity by providing activities which are open to all children. We aim to ensure that all individuals who wish to work in our childcare unit as staff, students or volunteers have an equal opportunity to do so. Everyone in the community regardless of religious affiliation, political background, race, culture, linguistic needs, disability, sexual orientation or age has access to the childcare facility.

- All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured.
- Activities and the use of play equipment will offer children opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Through the use of planning and curriculum development, opportunities will be given to children to explore and value similarities and difference between themselves and others.
- All materials will positively reflect cultural and racial diversity. These will help the children to develop self-respect and respect for others.
- Any discrimination (language, behaviour or remarks) by children, parents/carers or staff/volunteers is unacceptable and will be challenged.
- Supporting the victim and helping those responsible to understand and overcome their prejudices will positively challenge discrimination.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

Footprints Women's Centre respects the right for all information, records and observations to be treated with respect and with due attention to confidentiality and privacy. However, the legal principle that 'the welfare of the child is paramount' (Children Order NI) means that confidentiality comes second to the right of the child to be protected from harm.

### **To achieve this we ensure that:**

- All registration forms and records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- Parents may have access to the records of their own child only.
- Any confidential information given by parents/ carers to the supervisor will not be passed on without permission.
- Any anxieties/ evidence relating to the Childs personal safety will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- Information may be shared with Social Services. Parental consent will be obtained beforehand, if appropriate. (See Child Protection Policy).
- All issues pertaining to the employment of staff will remain confidential to those persons who are directly involved with personnel decisions.(Data Protection policy)
- Any breach of confidentiality by a member of staff will lead to disciplinary action.
- Records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after the children have left the provision.

## **Child Protection Policy Statement**

**“We in Footprints Women’s Centre are committed to practices that protect children from harm. Staff, students and volunteers in this organisation recognises and accepts our responsibilities to develop the awareness of the issues that may cause children harm.”**

### **Definition**

**For the purposes of these policies and procedure children are any person under the age of 18 years, or those whom are considered vulnerable.**

The Children Order NI 1995 provides a framework for the care and protection of children. It is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children. This policy and procedure is based on the 5 key principles of the legislation:

1. **Paramouncy** of the welfare of the child,
  2. **Partnership** with child,
  3. **Parents** and agencies,
  4. **Protection** of children,
  5. **Prevention** of abuse and the recognition of parental responsibility.
- The child/ren’s welfare is paramount and must over-ride all other considerations.
  - Intervention should be child centred and should involve a measured approach minimizing the potential for abuse, trauma or disruption to the child/ren and maximizing the child’s involvement in the process
  - Parents have the right to respect, consultation and involvement in matters which concern their family.
  - A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents
  - Multi-disciplinary/multi-agency information sharing, collaboration and understanding are essential to the safeguarding of children and to the promotion of their well-being.
  - While families have the right to confidentiality any information about child welfare issues should be shared on a need to know basis. Information shared for the health or protection of the child or protection of others is not a breach of confidentiality or

professional ethics. Staff must be mindful of the criminal aspects of all cases under consideration.

**We will endeavour to safeguard children by: -**

- Adopting child protection policies and guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children/young people, parents, staff and volunteers
- Working in partnership, sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff, students and volunteers and ensuring that the access NI, in accordance with their guidelines, checks all staff, students and volunteers with responsibility for children.
- Making all new staff and volunteers aware of our child protection procedures and policies.
- Managing staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Appointing four designated people to enable any concerns to be reported in accordance with our procedures and ensure details of Child protection officers are clearly displayed with flow chart to show procedure to be followed.
- We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

**Preventing abuse by means of good practice:**

*In order to achieve this:-*

- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers attend relevant child protection training, which is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Footprints Women's Centre operates a designated officer system to ensure the protection of children and staff. Information relating to named designated officers is clearly displayed in order that procedures can be followed.
- Making all new staff and volunteers aware of our child protection procedures and policies.
- In house training will be delivered to ensure that all childcare workers are aware of the guidelines within Footprints Women's Centre for reporting suspected abuse.
- This will begin at induction and be followed up through staff supervision.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children/young people, parents, staff and volunteers

- Ensuring that all necessary vetting requirements are completed including access NI and social services checks for all staff, students and volunteers with responsibility for children.

This policy is subject to regular reviews under our childcare facility registration by social services.

## **Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse Against a Staff**

### **Member**

1. Allegations or concerns of bad practice relating to a staff member such as aggressive or threatening behaviour towards a child may be dealt with under disciplinary procedures.
2. All complaints of child abuse against staff must be handled swiftly and sensitively according to ACPC procedures for investigating any concerns of abuse. The basic principles of child protection must apply and underpin the whole process.
3. If at any point it appears that a serious physical assault or sexual abuse may have been committed, the person in charge who is present must inform the Duty Social Worker in the Duty and Assessment team.
4. The member of staff will be informed that the Child Protection procedures are being invoked, which may involve Social Services and the Police. This must be done without questioning the member of staff about the complaint and making it clear that they have the right to be accompanied by a representative or friend at all stages.
5. Ensure that careful consideration is given to the kind of support that the member of staff concerned will require and his or her colleagues, both during any investigations and after it has reported any findings.
6. The designated officer will discuss procedures with senior management and designated board member and take appropriate action i.e. suspension or relocation.
7. Parent(s) will be kept informed throughout the process as will appropriate staff members and the nominated social worker.

### **Reporting Procedures:**

All staff are familiar with Footprints Women's Centre reporting procedures and the need for clear, factual and accurate reporting, which distinguishes between fact, opinion and hearsay

1. Staff/volunteer/trainees reports accurate factual information to designated officer using the appropriate paperwork
2. Designated Officer reports accurate factual information to the appropriate body:
  - Social services , NSPCC, PSNI

## PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ABUSE

### STAFF/VOLUNTEER



#### Designated persons

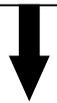
**Name: Angela Garland**  
**Telephone Number:**  
**028 90 923444**

**Name: Lisa Mooney**  
**Telephone Number:**  
**028 90 923444**

**Name: Deirdre Anne O'Halloran**  
**Telephone Number:**  
**02890 923444**

**Name: Caroline McKeever**  
**Telephone Number:**  
**02890 923444**

**Chantel O'Brien**  
**Telephone Number:**  
**02890 923444**



**Early Years Team**  
**02844513807**

**Gateway Team**  
**03001000300**

**Social Services Out of Hours**  
**02895 049999**

**Police**  
**028 90650222**

## **Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse**

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in your organisation has concerns, a record should be made. It is good practice to draw up a checklist of details to note, and questions you should ask yourself in making such a record.

This could include, for example-

- Name of Child
- Age
- Any special factors
- Parent's name(s)
- Home address and phone number if available
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else?  
If so, record details.
- What has prompted the concerns?
- Include dates and times of any specific incidents.
- Any physical signs?
- Behavioural signs?
- Indirect signs?
- Has the child been spoken to?  
If so, what was said?
- Have the parents been alleged to be abuser?  
If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser?  
If so, record details.
- Has anyone else been consulted?  
If so record details.

## **Reporting Adverse and Untoward Incidents**

Footprints have a duty of care for all children and families who attend the setting. It is the staff's responsibility to record and report any untoward incidents involving children to their line manager and Childcare Coordinator. Staff will record the children's details and record a description of the Incident. Parents will then sign, date and comment on the untoward record sheet which will be stored in the child's individual folder.

## **Footprints Women's Centre Visual Image Guidelines**

Footprints in recognising the need to ensure the welfare and safety of children and young people, will not permit photographs, video or other images of children and young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children.

The following are the guidelines all staff/volunteers in Footprints should follow:

- Ask for parental consent to use an image of a child/young person
- Only images of children/young people in suitable dress should be taken to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. For activities such as swimming the content of the photograph should focus on the activity, not on a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots.
- If anyone becomes aware of inappropriate images of children/young people being used this should be reported immediately to the designated officer.
- If image used for external use of photographs/film avoid the child's name being attached to photograph/footage unless parent consent is given for that specific purpose.

### **External Photographers**

- Must be provided with a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Should be issued with identification which must be worn at all times
- Children/young people and parents should be informed that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children/young people or one to one photo sessions
- Do not allow photo sessions outside the events or at a child/young person's home
- Adults should be asked to register at an event if they wish to use photographic equipment
- Children/young people and parents should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to the manager and/or designated person.
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or leader and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern

- If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event they should be made aware of Footprints Women's Centre expectations as above.

### **Code of Behaviour - for All Staff and Volunteers**

Staff students and volunteers must inform the children Services /Childcare Co-ordinator immediately of any criminal offence that occurs while they are employed by or volunteer for Footprints Women's Centre.

**1.** Staff and volunteers **should not** spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others. Meetings with individual children should be avoided or take place within sight of others. If privacy is needed, the door should remain open and other staff or volunteers should be aware of the meeting.

**2.** Staff and volunteers are **advised not to** make unnecessary physical contact with children. However, there may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as providing comfort at times of distress, or physical support in contact sports or similar. In all such cases contact should only take place with the consent of the child.

**3.** It is **not good practice** to take children alone in a car, however short the journey. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents (or guardians) and the person in charge of the Footprints Women's Centre event.

**4.** Staff and volunteers **should not** meet children outside of organised activities, unless it is with the knowledge and consent of the parents and the person in charge of the Footprints Women's Centre event.

**5.** Staff and volunteers **should not** start an investigation or question anyone after an allegation or concern has been raised. This is the job of the authorities. You should just record the facts and report these to a designated person.

**6.** Staff and volunteers should **never** (even in fun) –

- a) Initiate or engage in sexually provocative conversations or activity.
- b) Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged.
- c) Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- d) Allow any allegations made by a child go without being reported and addressed, or either trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues.
- e) Make promises to keep any disclosure confidential from relevant authorities.

**7.** Staff or volunteers **should not** show favouritism to any one child, nor should they issue or threaten any form of physical punishment.

#### **You must:-**

**8.** Staff and volunteers **must respect** children's rights to privacy and encourage children and adults to feel comfortable enough to report attitudes or behaviour they do not like.

**9.** Staff and volunteers at Footprints Women's Centre events **will be expected** to act with discretion with regards to their personal relationships. They should ensure their personal relationships do not affect their leadership role within the organisation. All pre-existing relationships between staff/volunteers and/or participants of any Footprints Women's Centre event **must** be declared.

**10.** Staff and volunteers **must refrain** from consuming alcohol for a period of at least 12 hours prior to assuming responsibility for any child or children; or if they have been identified as a duty officer for any period of time.

**11.** All staff and volunteers **should be aware** of the procedures for reporting concerns or incidents, and should familiarise themselves with the contact details of the designated persons.

**12.** If a member of staff or volunteer finds himself or herself the subject of inappropriate affection or attention from a child, **they should** make others aware of this.

**13.** If a member of staff or volunteer has any concerns relating to the welfare of a child in their care, be it concerns about actions/behaviours of another staff member or volunteer or concerns based on any conversation with the child; particularly where the child makes an allegation, they should report this to a designated person.

## **The Use of Social Network Sites**

The use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. All staff, students and volunteers should be aware that information they share through social networking applications are still subject to copyright, data protection and The **Children (NI) Order** 1995.

- Social networking applications must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright and data protection
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner.
- Must not breach the organisations code of conduct including but not limited to misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies.
- Staff should not contact young people through chatrooms and social Networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo, MSN

### **Social media policy**

#### **About this policy**

This policy applies to the Board of Directors, all staff, volunteers and students of Footprints Women's Centre.

This policy is in place to minimise the risks to our business through use of social media.

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Wikipedia and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs.

It applies to use of social media for business purposes as well as personal use that may affect our business in any way.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

#### **Personnel responsible for implementing the policy**

Our board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for its operation to the Centre Director.

- Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks lies with the Centre Director who will review this policy to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.
- Managers and staff have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff

understands the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

- All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Centre Director.
- Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Centre Director.

### **Compliance with related policies and agreements**

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies. If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, you are prohibited from using social media to:

- breach our Information and Communications Systems Policy;
- breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;
- breach any obligations contained in those policies relating to confidentiality;
- breach our Disciplinary Policy or procedures;
- breach our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy;
- breach our Equal Opportunities Policy;
- breach our Data Protection Policy (never disclose personal information about a colleague online)
- breach any other laws or regulatory requirements.

Staff should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the organisation and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the organisation.

Staff who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **Personal use of social media**

Personal use of social media is never permitted during working hours or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems, unless authorised and overseen by senior management.

### **Prohibited use**

- You must avoid making any social media communications that could damage our business interests or reputation, even indirectly.
- You must not use social media to defame or disparage us, our staff or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties; to make false or

misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.

- You must not express opinions on our behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by your manager. You may be required to undergo training in order to obtain such authorisation.
- You must not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance, or do anything to jeopardise our trade secrets, confidential information and intellectual property. You must not include our logos or other trademarks in any social media posting or in your profile on any social media.
- The contact details of business contacts made during the course of your employment are our confidential information. On termination of employment you must provide us with a copy of all such information, delete all such information from your personal social networking accounts and destroy any further copies of such information that you may have.
- Any misuse of social media should be reported to Centre Director.

### **Business use of social media**

- If your duties require you to speak on behalf of the organisation in a social media environment, you must still seek approval for such communication from the Centre Director, who may require you to undergo training before you do so and impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to your activities.
- Likewise, if you are contacted for comments about the organisation for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, direct the enquiry to the Centre Director and do not respond without written approval.
- The use of social media for business purposes is subject to the remainder of this policy.

### **Guidelines for responsible use of social media**

- You should make it clear in social media postings, or in your personal profile, that you are speaking on your own behalf. Write in the first person and use a personal e-mail address.
- Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.
- If you disclose your affiliation with us on your profile or in any social media postings, you must state that your views do not

represent those of your employer (unless you are authorised to speak on our behalf as set out in paragraph above).

- You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to clients and colleagues.
- If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from posting it until you have discussed it with your manager.
- If you see social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on us, you should contact the Centre Director.

### **Monitoring**

- We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems.

### **Recruitment**

We may use internet searches to perform due diligence on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where we do this, we will act in accordance with our data protection and equal opportunities obligations.

- Breach of this policy
- Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.
- You may be required to remove any social media content that we consider to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

## **Use of Mobiles in the Work place**

To ensure the safety and welfare of children in our care we operate a personal mobile phone usage policy which stipulates that personal mobile phones cannot be used when in the presence of children, on the premises or when on outings.

To ensure this we will ensure that:

- All mobile phones will be kept in a secure place throughout contact time with children and be returned to the owner at the end of the session by the manager.
- Mobile phone calls may only be taken at staff breaks or in staff members' own time.
- If you have a personal emergency you are free to use the setting's phone or make a personal call from your mobile in the designated staff area of the setting.
- Staff must ensure that managers have up to date contact information and that staff make their families aware of emergency work telephone numbers. This is the responsibility of the individual staff member.
- During group outings nominated staff will have access to a mobile phone, which is to be used for emergency purposes only.

## **Absence of Children Services Manager/Childcare Co-ordinator Procedure**

In the absence of the Manager/Co-ordinator where this is planned absence, there will be a Practice Leader stepping into the acting co-ordinator position in the setting who will be responsible for the smooth running of the setting.

A full handover will be carried out to ensure that all required duties are carried out including but not limited to: staff: child ratio's maintained, opening and closing of building and any confidential information passed appropriately.

If the absence is unplanned the Practice Leader on the early morning shift pattern will step into the position and an immediate assessment of the day ahead will be completed. Coaching and Mentoring has been completed for all 4 Practice Leaders to ensure the operational duties are completed and any risk planned for and managed in advance. This includes:

- including dealing with emergencies,
- the use of flexible staff to maintain staff: child ratio.

At all times the manager/co-ordinator will be additional to the staff: child ratio required.

## **Recruitment and Selection Policy**

Footprints is an equal opportunities employer, who is committed to recruiting appointing and employing staff in accordance with all current legislation providing opportunities for ongoing training and protecting the rights of its employees. Also we actively seek to offer job opportunities to women, with and without disabilities from all religious, social, ethnic and cultural groups.

### **To achieve this we will:**

- Advertise all jobs internally and externally ensuring their availability to the whole community.
- Provide up to date job descriptions/ specifications regarding vacant posts.
- Set up short-listing panels, interviews and seek 2 written references from the applicant.
- Appoint the best person for the job.
- Ensure all pre-employment checks are satisfactory.
- Provide a contract to employment.
- Provide an induction for all new staff.
- Ensure that all staff are qualified for the post.
- We acknowledge that no matter how stringent recruitment and selection procedures may be, they are not 'fool proof', therefore good practice in management and supervision of staff after appointment is crucial.

When a candidate is selected and in the childcare position they will be expected to complete and participate in the following

### **Staff Inductions**

Each new member of staff will complete a staff induction process. This will ensure that all employees receive a Statement of Main Terms and Conditions, job description, additional policies, and Health + Safety training. Additionally, the process will improve their understanding of Footprints Women's Centre and their role within it. Each member of staff will have a designated Line Manager.

## **Staff Dress Code/ Uniforms**

As you will come into contact with children, parents, other professionals, visitors and members of the public, it is important that you present a professional image with regard to appearance, standards of dress and personal presentation.

Footprints staff will be provided with 2 polo shirts and an outdoor fleece upon commencement of employment. All staff will sign to say they have received the required uniform and will be required to return if employment ceases. Additional polo shirts and fleeces can be purchased by staff at cost price. All staff will be required to wear the polo shirt and fleece with black trousers and black sensible footwear. These must have regard to health and safety considerations e.g. trousers that are of a length that they touch the ground when walking, stiletto heels and plastic flip-flops are not acceptable.

False nails and false eyelashes are not permitted. Nails should be sufficiently short to ensure safe contact and good hand hygiene.

The uniforms issued must not be altered or added to by the individual.

Uniforms must be worn at all times whilst at work, kept clean and tidy at all times and laundered on a regular basis.

## **Probationary Period**

Staff join us on an initial period of 9 months or as per letter of offer. During this period your work performance and general suitability will be assessed and, if it is satisfactory, your employment will continue. However, if your work performance is not up to the required standard, or you are considered to be generally unsuitable, we may either take remedial action (which may include the extension of your probationary period) or terminate your employment at any time.

## **Supervision and Support**

Supervision is a formalised, regular meeting dedicated to support staff to ensure their self-development and providing accountability to management. Formal supervision will be provided by the designated line manager. Staff will meet with their line managers monthly to review performance using operational plans and action plans.

You will also have an annual staff appraisal with your manager to agree your top 4-6 objectives for your role for the coming year in line with organisational objectives.

## **Staff Meetings**

Attendance at full staff meetings is expected. These are held every month, and will cover changes in P&P, registration requirements, information sessions and training information as well as news and events in the wider organisation.

There will also be weekly staff meetings in each room for reflecting on practice, reviewing planned activities and observations. Staff meetings will be a forum for setting objectives for the room. Practice Leaders will meet fortnightly with the Childcare Co-ordinator to look at planning, rota's ratios and any issues that may arise.

## **Staff Shift Patterns**

Footprints are conscious of the importance of maintaining adequate staff: child ratios, ensuring that children are cared for safely and given adequate attention and support.

It is the policy at Footprints to ensure that the staff: child ratios required by regulations are maintained at all times. These will be as follows:

Child age under 2 years:	Ratios 1 staff: 3 children
Child age 2 years to 3 years:	Ratios 1 staff: 4 children
Child age 3 years to 8 years:	Ratios 1 staff: 8 children

In order to achieve this we will:

Have a flexible shift pattern agreed with staff to provide consistency of care and maintain children's routines. This can change to meet the needs of the organisation.

Have a number of bank/flexible staff or volunteers.

Ensure that shifts of different workers overlap during peak/busy times of the day.

## **Staff Development and Training Policy**

Footprints recognise the importance of lifelong training and believe that all staff working with children should be committed to continuing learning and professional development.

### **To ensure this we will:**

- Encourage staff to be trained to the highest level.
- Ensure that staff undertakes relevant and up to date training where appropriate.
- Encourage staff to identify their own training needs.
- Seek funding for all approved training where appropriate.
- Provide support and supervision of staff on a monthly basis.
- Support staff by means of annual appraisals. Will ensure equality of opportunity is applied.

## **Student Placement Policy**

Footprints Women's Centre childcare facility can provide students with a wide variety of learning opportunities within the field of childcare.

- All students must be Access NI and vetted through social services.
- All students must adhere to our policies and procedures.
- Students will work alongside a qualified member of staff. They will never be left on their own with the children.
- Students are only allowed to change nappies and take children to the toilets under the supervision of qualified staff.
- Students must obtain written consent from parents/ carers to carry out observations.

## **Fundraising Policy**

Within Footprints fundraising is an integral part of our financial planning. Fundraising allows us to keep our fees to a minimum and enables us to make our setting accessible to all children.

### **To achieve this we will ensure that:**

- We will organise fundraising events throughout the year.
- We will encourage all our parents/ carers and the local community to support us in our fundraising efforts.

## **Health and Safety Policy**

Footprints will provide the children with a healthy and safe environment in which to play. We will promote healthy eating habits, socialisation skills and healthy meals and snacks. Children with special dietary needs will be catered for.

We will endeavour to maintain high standards of health and safety at all times ensuring that:

### **Outdoors**

- Parents/ Carers will be advised on the childcare facility's car parking arrangements.
- All outdoor play areas and equipment will be checked and cleaned before use.

### **Indoors**

- The layout of the rooms will be safe for the children to move freely from area to area.
- The rooms will be bright and well ventilated.
- Equipment and materials will be accessible and within reach of all children, including children with special needs.
- Dressing up clothes, blankets and sheets will be washed regularly.
- Staff and children will wear appropriate clothing for indoors and outdoors.
- The art, sand and water areas will be kept clean with spillages being wiped up immediately to prevent accidents.
- The water in the children's toilets will be thermo statistically controlled at a safe temperate.
- All staff will be aware of the procedure for lifting heavy equipment.
- Written consent forms will be obtained when children are going on outings Fire exits will be kept clear at all times.
- Fire equipment will be checked regularly.
- All electrical sockets will be covered.
- Equipment will be checked monthly and broken items will be removed.
- All dangerous materials including medicines will be kept out of reach of children.
- All tables and chairs will be wiped down after use.
- Any food and bottles for children will be kept in separate fridge at the required temperature.

## **First Aid**

- All accidents/ incidents will be recorded in the incident/ accident book.
- Parents/ carers will be informed of all accidents/ incidents and asked to sign them.
- First Aid box will be checked regularly and replenished when required.
- Staff will be trained in First Aid.
- All staff will be aware of the location of the First Aid box.

## **Major Accident Procedure**

If there is a serious accident and the child requires further medical attention the following action will be taken:

- Parents/ carers will be phoned.
- If it is necessary for the child to go to hospital he/ she will be accompanied in the ambulance by a familiar adult who will stay until the parents/ carers arrive.
- An ambulance will be phoned.
- The child's registration form will be taken to the hospital to assist the doctor.

## **Risk assessments:**

Risk assessment should be thought of as an ongoing process, not as a one-time project. The process is described as a set of steps that are continually repeated.

- Identification of risk: Where is it and what is it?
- Who is at risk: Childcare staff, children, parents, etc?
- Assessment as to the level of risk as high, medium, low. This is both the risk of the likelihood of it happening, as well as the possible impact if it did.
- Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk: What we need to do, or ensure others will do, in order to reduce that risk?
- Monitoring and review:

### **Storage of Hazards Substances:**

The childcare team has responsibility for undertaking the following measures.

- Identifying all the products within the setting, so as to decide whether they pose a significant risk of harm.
- Ensuring the hazardous substances are correctly labelled in compliance with the current legislative standard and are stored in the appropriate containers this will include any microbiological hazards.
- Assessing the risks involved and the control measures that need to be put into place completed risk assessments can be found in the Health and Safety file.
- Ensuring that safe working practices are produced and implemented.
- Ensuring that the hazardous substances are disposed of in the recognised safe manner, this includes any residual hazardous substances that may be left in used containers.

## **Health and Hygiene**

- All staff and children will wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals.
- Disposable towels will be supplied.
- Nappy bins will be emptied daily.
- Disposable gloves must be worn when changing nappies or dealing with an accident.
- Policy/Procedures for administration of medicine
- Procedures for dealing with illness

## **Infection Prevention and Control**

Footprints believe that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. As such, it will sometimes be necessary to require a sick child to be collected early from a session or be kept at home while they get better to minimise the risk of infection spreading.

If any infectious or communicable disease is detected on the premises, the Childcare Co-ordinator will inform parents/carers personally in writing as soon as possible. We are committed to sharing as much information as possible about the source of the disease and the steps being taken to remove it. The Early Years social worker will also be informed of any infectious or communicable diseases discovered on the premises.

### **Procedures for children who are sick or infectious**

- If children appear unwell during the day – have a temperature, sickness, diarrhoea or pains, particularly in the head or stomach – the Co-ordinator or Practice Leader will contact the parents and asks them to collect the child, or send a known carer to collect on their behalf.
- If a child has a temperature, they are kept cool, by removing top clothing, sponging their heads with cool water, but kept away from draughts.
- Temperature is taken using a 'fever scan' kept near to the first aid box.
- In extreme cases of emergency a member of staff will phone for an ambulance and the parent informed.
- Footprints can refuse admittance to child who has a temperature, sickness and diarrhoea or a contagious infection or disease.

- Where children have been prescribed antibiotics, parents are asked to keep them at home for 48 hours before returning to the setting if their child is extremely unwell.
- If a child is prescribed antibiotics for a contagious infection such as conjunctivitis, impetigo, throat infection etc, we request that parents keep the child at home until the antibiotic course has finished or to seek guidance from their G.P
- After sickness or diarrhoea, parents are asked to keep children home for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or until a formed stool is passed.
- The setting has a list of excludable diseases and current exclusion times; it includes common childhood illnesses such as measles and chicken pox.
- Parents are asked to inform the setting if their child has any illness such as measles or chicken pox, as the other pre-school parents will need to be informed.
- Women who are pregnant are made aware of the following infections: chicken pox/shingles, rubella, slapped cheek syndrome and measles.

#### **Head Infection:**

- Nits and head lice are not an excludable condition.
- On identifying cases of head lice, all parents are informed and asked to treat their child and all the family if they are found to have head lice.

### **Exclusion of staff:**

Staff with infections can place children and others at risk, therefore staff suffering from particular conditions must be excluded from their work in accordance with Health Protection Agency guidelines.

- Any member of staff who handles food and becomes sick with diarrhoea, vomiting or infected skin problems such as wounds or boils must report this to their supervisor.
- Those with diarrhoea or vomiting should be excluded from work until at least 48 hours after symptoms have stopped. They should seek medical advice.
- Staff with infected wounds or skin infections on exposed parts of their bodies should be similarly excluded until the lesions are healed or they have been advised that it is safe to return to work by the GP.
- Staff with other conditions which could spread infections, such as the common cold, should take sensible precautions. Staff should inform their supervisor.

### **Reporting of 'notifiable diseases'**

- If a child or adult is diagnosed suffering from a notifiable disease under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988, the GP will report this to the Public Health Agency, Health Protection Service.
- When the setting becomes aware, or is formally informed of the notifiable disease, the Childcare Co-ordinator will inform The Early Years Team and ensure that the setting acts on any advice given by the Health Protection Agency.

## **Administration of Medicines Policy**

Footprints Daycare aims to promote the good health of the children in our care, taking necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and appropriate action when children are ill. While it is not our policy to care for sick children, who should be at home until they are well enough to return to the setting, we will agree to administer medication as part of maintaining their health and well-being or when they are recovering from an illness.

In many cases, it is possible for children's GP's to prescribe medicine that can be taken at home in the morning and evening. As far as possible, administering medicines will only be done where it would be detrimental to the child's health if not given in the setting. If a child has not had a medication before, especially a baby/child under two, it is advised that the parent keeps the child at home for the first 48 hours to ensure no adverse effect as well as to give time for the medication to take effect.

The Practice Leader/person in charge is responsible for the correct administration of medication to children with a witness present at all times. This includes ensuring that parent consent forms have been completed, that medicines are stored correctly and that records are kept according to procedures.

### **Procedures**

- Children taking prescribed medication must be well enough to attend the setting.
- Only prescribed medication is administered. It must be in-date and prescribed for the current condition.
- Children's prescribed medicines are stored in their original containers, are clearly labelled and are inaccessible to the children.
- Parents give prior written permission for the administration of medication.
- Non-prescription medication such as pain and fever relief will only be administered with parents' previous written consent and only when there is a health reason to do so.
- Medicines containing aspirin will not be administered to a child under the age of 16 unless they have been prescribed by a doctor.
- Items of medication in unlabelled containers will not be accepted.

The administration is recorded accurately each time it is given and is signed by staff and a witness. Parents sign the medication form to acknowledge the administration of a medicine. The medication form records:

- name of child;
- name of medication;
- the date and time of dose;
- Signed by Practice Leader/key person; and is verified by parent signature at the end of the day.
- It is important that an up-to-date record of the parent's home and work telephone numbers be kept so that they can be contacted at any time.
- Parents/carers must ensure that any medication their child may require whilst at Footprints Day-care and Crèche Facility such as inhaler, epipen or steroid cream is given to a member of staff. Otherwise children will not be accepted into the daycare setting.

#### **Storage of Medicines:**

- All children's medication is stored safely in a First Aid cupboard not accessible to the children.
- The child's key person is responsible for ensuring medicine is handed back at the end of the day to the parent.
- For some conditions, medication may be kept in the setting. Key persons check that any medication held to administer on an 'as and when required basis', or on a regular basis, is in date and returns any out-of-date medication back to the parent.
- If the administration of prescribed medication requires medical knowledge, individual training is provided for the relevant member of staff by a health professional.
- No child may self-administer. Where children are capable of understanding when they need medication, for example with asthma, they should be encouraged to tell their key person what they need. However, this does not replace staff vigilance in knowing and responding when a child requires medication.
- Medicines no longer required will be handed back to the parent. If parents do not collect medicines after a reasonable period of time they will be given to a pharmacist for disposal.

## **Children Who Have Long Term Medical Conditions and Who May Require Ongoing Medication**

- A care plan is carried out for each child with long term medical conditions that require ongoing medication. This is the responsibility of the parent and reported to the Childcare Co-ordinator/Children Services Manager alongside the key worker. Other medical or social care personnel may need to be involved in the care plan.
- Parents will contribute to a care plan. They should be shown around the setting, understand the routines and activities and point out anything which they think may be a risk factor for their child.
- For some medical conditions key staff will need to have training in a basic understanding of the condition as well as how the medication is to be administered correctly. The training needs for staff is part of the care plan.
- The care plan discussed any concerns about a child's involvement in vigorous activities and any other daycare activity that may give cause for concern regarding an individual child's health needs.
- The care plan includes arrangements for taking medicines on outings and the child's GP's advice is sought if necessary where there are concerns.
- The care plan for the child is drawn up with the parent by the GP/medical practice; outlining the key person's role and what information must be shared with other staff who care for the child.
- The health care plan should include the measures to be taken in an emergency.
- The health care plan is reviewed every six months or more if necessary. This includes reviewing the medication, e.g. changes to the medication or the dosage, any side effects noted etc.
- Parents receive a copy of the health care plan and each contributor, including the parent, signs it.

### **Managing Medicines on Trips and Outings**

- If children are going on outings, staff accompanying the children must include the key person for the child with a care plan and this will be recorded in the risk assessment, or another member of staff who is fully informed about the child's needs and/or medication.
- Medication for a child is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name, name of the medication, Inside the box is a copy of the consent form and a form to record when it has been given, with the details as given above.
- On returning to the setting the form is stapled to the parent's feedback sheet and the parent signs it.
- If a child on medication has to be taken to hospital, the child's medication is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child's name, name of the medication. Inside the box is a copy of the consent form signed by the parent.
- As a precaution, children should not eat when travelling in vehicles.

## **Procedure for dealing with known or suspected allergic reactions - Children**

- Parents must inform the Children's Services Manager of a known or suspected allergic before their child commences a placement at Footprints Women's Centre of when an allergy is first detected with clear guidance of how to manage with allergy. This is recorded on the application form.
  - If a child has an allergy, a care plan is completed to detail the following:
    - The allergen (i.e. the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, cats etc).
    - The nature of the allergic reactions e.g. anaphylactic shock reaction, including rash, reddening of skin, swelling, breathing problems etc.
    - What to do in case of allergic reactions, any medication used and how it is to be used (e.g. Epipen).
    - Control measures – such as how the child can be prevented from contact with the allergen.
    - Review.
    - This form is kept in the child's personal file and a copy is displayed where staff can see it.
    - Parents train staff in how to administer special medication in the event of an allergic reaction.
    - If necessary the manager will seek further medical training from the Local Health and Social Care Trust.
    - Generally, no nuts or nut products are used within the setting.
    - Parents are made aware so that no nut or nut products are accidentally brought in, for example to a party.
    - Named first aiders must be trained to recognise allergic reaction symptoms and use of epipen.
    - Medication required for treatment of an allergic reaction is to be stored in a first aid cabinet located in the childcare office and clearly labelled.
    - If relevant a Medic Alert and GB number will be kept in the first aid cabinet in an envelope with person's name on front, for information for operator in event of emergency.
    - In the event of a suspected allergic reaction an ambulance must be called at all times. The telephone operator must be informed of the possibility of anaphylactic shock

If there are children with allergies and food intolerances these will be clearly labelled in all rooms and kitchen area. The Children's Services Manager, Health and Safety officer and kitchen staff will be informed

### **Procedure for dealing with known or suspected allergic reactions -Staff**

- Staff are to inform their line manager and the Health & Safety Officer if they have a known or suspected allergic reaction to any substance e.g. particular foods or insect stings.
- The Health & Safety Officer will inform named first aiders of an individual's allergies and appropriate emergency treatments.
- Named first aiders must be trained to recognise allergic reaction symptoms and use of epipen.
- Medication required for treatment of an allergic reaction is to be stored in a first aid cabinet located in main office and clearly labelled.
- If relevant a Medic Alert and GB number will be kept in an envelope with person's name on front in this first aid cabinet, for information for operator.
- In the event of a suspected allergic reaction an ambulance must be called at all times. The telephone operator must be informed of the possibility of anaphylactic shock

### **Staff Medication**

- Staff medication will be kept in the main reception in medicine cabinet provided.
- This will be checked monthly as part of the health and safety checks for the department.
- All medicines that are no longer required or out of date will be returned to the local pharmacy to be disposed of.
- The same procedure will be followed for homeopathic medicines/treatments.

## **Nutrition Policy** **For Children 6 months to 5 years**

Children in full Day-care and Crèche Facility receive a main meal and two snacks daily.

Footprints Women's Centre in partnership with Footprints Catering Services recognises the need to encourage healthy eating habits from an early age, as this will help children to reach their full potential in terms of growth and development.

Well-balanced meals and snacks are prepared to ensure children cared for are provided with the energy and nutrients they require.

The following guidelines as recommended by the Health Promotion Agency are adhered to in planning of menus.

- A variety of foods are selected from each of the four food groups every day.
  - Bread, cereals, rice, pasta and potatoes
  - Fruit and vegetables
  - Milk and dairy food
  - Meat, fish and alternations.
  - At least one portion of bread, potato, rice, pasta is included in each meal
  - Whole milk is used routinely.
  - A total of 2 servings of fruit and vegetables are provided each day per child
  - Drinks are sugar free- Only water or milk given
  - Low fat spreads are not used
  - The minimum possible salt is used in cooking
  - No salt is added at the table
  - Fresh potatoes are served in preference to instant
  - Chips are served a maximum of once a week

Cultures and religious preferences are catered for where appropriate

### **Healthy Eating Policy & Procedure**

Eating habits are developed when the children are young and therefore Footprints Women's Centre have an important role to play in providing the children with a healthy snack each day and promoting healthy eating habits within the club.

We do this by:-

- Providing the children with healthy food, snacks and drinks and help them to understand and enjoy the value of a healthy diet.
- Involving the children in healthy food related activities, e.g. tasting foods from different parts of the world.
- Supporting parents who are trying to ensure that their children follow a healthy diet.

- Encourage parents to support our healthy eating policy, e.g. by requesting that parents do not send sweets, crisps or sugary drinks with their children and suggesting healthier alternatives.
- Displaying meal menus in advance for the parent's information.

We also ask that parents help us in our role by providing their children with healthy snacks and to remember that we may not have the facilities to refrigerate food.

## **Bottle Making Policy**

Footprints Women's Centre recognise that some young babies will still require formula mixed in bottles throughout the day. This is a normal part of their routine and key workers will Babies who still require formula throughout the day will have the bottles freshly made.

Parents are required to provide bottles and formula for their child. These will be stored in the children's bags in the tiny tot's room. The catering staff will boil water and transfer to flasks at 30 minutes intervals. The water is now ready to make up bottles as required throughout the day.

### **Procedure for making up bottle feeds**

Childcare staff will make bottles in the area provided.

- Hands must be washed prior to making bottles all equipment needed must be sterile.
- Clean down the area that you are going to work from.
- Place the empty bottle on the clean flat surface and pour in the cooled boiled water up to the required amount.
- Always pour in the water first and check that the level is correct.
- Fill the scoop with the powder and using a **sterilized** knife to level it off before putting it into the bottles. Always add one scoop of powder to 1 fl oz of water.
- Cover the bottle with the lid and shake until the powder is dissolved
- Before feeding the baby always check the temperature on your wrist. It should be warm to the touch not **hot!**
- If you need to cool the bottle place it under cool running water with the cap on covering the teat.

**Never heat bottles in the microwave oven.** If the baby doesn't finish the bottle within the hour, throw away any formula that is left over.

When finished feeding rinse bottle and place in sterilizer before putting in child's bag.

### **Breastfeeding Policy**

Footprints Women's Centre aim to make our mothers feel comfortable in our nursery should they wish to breastfeed their babies whilst here.

#### **Partnership with parents:**

- We display the breastfeeding welcome sign within the nursery and throughout the centre.
- Staff will provide the mother with a comfortable seat this could be anywhere within the nursery or somewhere private if necessary.
- We will provide hand washing facilities.

- Expressed milk can be stored either in our fridge or may be brought in frozen, where we follow guidance.
- The babies feeding routine will be discussed with mother and key worker to make arrangements for the mother to come in to breastfeed/express. This maybe verbal or written in daily diary.
- The baby will be given cooled boiled water between feeds (with parents' consent).

### **Key worker:**

- Share important information.
- Record information to include time of feeds, amount of milk, and who it has been given by, this can be verbally or written.
- The key worker will have clear communication with parents regarding labelling i.e. date and time when milk was expressed.

### **Preparation:**

- Good hygiene is paramount before and after preparation of feed.
- If frozen to be defrosted by swirling in a bowl of warm water (not microwave or hot water).
- Milk to be given following parents' wishes i.e. from fridge, room temperature or heated.
- Any unused milk will be discarded, bottles to be rinsed and returned to parent.

### **Storage:**

- Breast milk can be stored in the main body of the fridge or if frozen in the freezer.
- This will have to be transported in an insulated cool bag.
- If milk shows any sign of thawing do not re-freeze.
- Fridge/freezers are monitored every day for temperature control measures and recorded

## **Policy and Procedures for Use of Cot Room and Sleep Routines.**

Footprints Women's Centre is committed to ensuring a safe sleeping and resting environment for children in our care. We aim to promote the well-being of young children and contribute to their physical needs. Ensuring that all children are treated as individuals and their needs are being met.

- We value parents / carers as the first and most important educators for their children and will gather information about individual children from them to ensure we meet the child's needs such as: routines, sleeping times, Sleeping positions, comforters.

We provide a separate sleep room for babies between ages of 0-2 years. This is monitored by CCTV with visual and sound feed into the childcare room.

To ensure the safety and well being of children all staff should adhere to the following procedures when placing children in the cot room to sleep.

- Staff should ensure the room is at the right temperature. We will also ensure babies are not sleeping in direct sun light and next to a radiator.
- Clean linen is put on the Cots regularly. All children will be supplied with 2 sets of individual bedding. This will be made up of sheets and blankets. If preferred, Parents/ carers can supply these items. These items will be washed at least twice a week and more often if needed.
- Cots are washed down with disinfectant twice a week. If a cot is shared linen will be changed for each individual child and cots washed between uses.
- A written record should be maintained by staff at 15 minute intervals of children in the cot room.
- A new record sheet should be used for each day and countersigned at the end of the day by the childcare co-ordinator.
- If a child has a high temperature they should not be put into the cot room but should stay in the play room under constant supervision.
- If a child is particularly unsettled staff should assess if it is appropriate whether to put the child down for a sleep or to keep him/her in the main childcare room.

- If staff have any concerns they should be discussed with Childcare Co-ordinator or Children's Services Manager immediately.
- Guidelines recommend that babies' feet should be just touching the foot of the cot so babies will not slip down under bedding.
- Lighting will be adjusted in the sleeping area accordingly.

## **SMOKE FREE POLICY**

### **Purpose**

This aim of this policy is to protect all children, employees, customers and visitors from exposure to second-hand smoke and to comply with the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 which will be enforced by District Councils from 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

### **Policy**

It is the policies of Footprints Women's Centre that all of our workplaces and vehicles are smoke-free and all employees have a right to work in a smoke-free environment. This policy applies to all employees, parents, carers, contractors and visitors to the nurseries and is effective at all times, even when the Childcare is not open for business.

### **Premises**

Smoking is prohibited throughout the entire workplace with no exceptions. However an area has been provided externally for those who wish to smoke. Receptacles will be provided for disposal of cigarette ends and other waste smoking materials.

### **Employees Duties**

- To ensure that they or others do not interfere with no smoking signs.
- To comply with the Smoke-Free Policy.
- To ensure customers and visitors do not smoke in smoke-free places.
- To report incidents of smoking in smoke-free areas and vehicles.

### **Customer/ Visitor Duties**

Customers are not permitted to smoke in smoke-free areas.

### **Help for Those who Smoke**

This policy is not intended to stop people smoking but to regulate where they smoke and how it affects others. To help smokers adjust to the changes occurring they should contact the smokers helpline on 0800 858585 who can advise of local support services.

### **Enforcement of this Policy**

Failure to comply with this policy will be dealt with through the company's disciplinary procedures. Visitors or members of the public who breach the policy will be asked to stop smoking and will be asked to leave the premises if they fail to comply with this request. All breaches of this policy will be recorded in writing.

## **Child Observation and Assessment Policy**

Footprints Women's Centre recognises that observation is a useful tool, which enables the assessment of a number of aspects of setting, that are directly relevant to the planning of the curriculum. By observing how the children respond to activities, staff will be able to evaluate the activities and resources provided meet the needs of all the children and help us to plan curriculum for individual children. All observations/ assessments are treated confidentially.

### **In order to achieve this we will.**

- Provide parents/ carers with information regarding observations.
- Carry out observations on a daily basis and share them with parents/ carers.
- Bring observations to the staff meetings to assist in planning the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the children.
- Ensure that all records are kept in a locked filing cabinet.

### **Observations Requested by Other Professionals**

Occasionally staff may be asked to carry out a specific observation on a child by another professional in order to help them provide for a child's needs e.g. Speech and Language Therapist. This would only be done with the consent of parent/ carer of the child.

## **Planning, Assessment and Educational Observations**

The daily routine and play programmes ensure that the children can enjoy a purposeful, planned but informal range of activities from the very young baby to the preschool child, taking into account their different needs. Our planning is based on the Foundation Stage and Birth to Three Matters Framework.

Assessments are carried out on all children in conjunction with parents. These will show your child's development and progress – i.e. Personal, Social and Emotional, Communication, Language and Literacy, Physical Development, etc. These are completed every three months.

Key workers regularly observe the children to keep track of their developmental skills and educational needs. We forward plan yearly with monthly and daily planned activities also in place, these are on view for parents to view.

Parents will also receive a daily record of their child's day.

## **Additional/Special Needs Policy**

Our setting believes in the principles of Equal Opportunities and therefore welcomes children regardless of ability. Each child is an individual with different needs. Our awareness of this allows us to organise a varied curriculum, which will enable all the children in our care to reach their full potential.

In Footprints close liaison between setting and home is valued and viewed as an important step in meeting the needs of children with additional needs.

The policies, procedures and practices of Footprints in relation to children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities are consistent with current legislation and guidance. These include the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (NI) 2005 and the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006

Children with additional needs, like all other children, will be admitted into the group after consultation between parents/carer's and the Childcare Manager. If other childcare professionals are already involved with the family, any relevant information will be used, to ensure consistency of care, ensuring that we have appropriate expectations of each individual child. We are committed to the inclusion of children and parents within our setting and will seek resources and advice to make the relationships successful. We will therefore:

- Endeavour to accommodate all children wherever possible, by adjusting the Early Years Curriculum to suit all ability levels, in all areas of development.
- Endeavour to obtain suitable equipment to enable those with physical disabilities to be correctly supported, therefore enabling them to make full use of activities.
- Ensure that all children have full access to the play opportunities offered within the setting.
- Encourage and facilitate discussions about ability/disability, to try to ensure that children and parents within our group develop a positive attitude, which will help combat discrimination against people with disabilities in the wider community.
- Select resources, for example books, posters, and puzzles etc, which portray positive images of people with disabilities.
- Welcome the opportunity to work and liaise with other professionals, such as Portage workers, paediatricians,

therapists and health visitors, in order to meet children's specific needs.

- Monitor and record children's progress on an individual basis in line with EYFS guidelines.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of all legislation, regulations and other guidance on working with children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities
- Ensure that all staff who work with children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities and have appropriate skills and training.
- If it is felt that the child's needs cannot be met at Footprints without additional staff and/or equipment funding will be sought to provide provision appropriate to the child's needs.

## **Intimate Care Policy**

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene.

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff/volunteers with guidelines for the personal care of children in Footprints Women's Centre. We aim to ensure that all children have their dignity preserved and receive a high level of privacy and in line with the Child Protection Policy.

Information of a sensitive nature should only be shared with those who need to know, such as parents/carers and key workers.

### **Procedures for Intimate Care and Toilet Training**

- Allow the child to care for themselves as far as possible
- Explain to the child that you need to get them washed/cleaned
- Make other staff members aware you are changing the child
- Ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and situation
- Staff and child's hand will be washed using anti-bacterial soap and changing mat/area also cleaned with anti-bacterial spray to avoid cross contamination
- Staff to bring all necessary items i.e nappy, wipes and change of clothes if appropriate.
- Strap child on changing mat
- No child to be left unattended at any time.
- Plastic gloves should be worn and soiled clothing will be wrapped securely and either disposed of or returned to parents
- Staff should promote appropriate use of toilets and associated skills. Staff will work with parents to facilitate toilet training providing a consistent approach.
- Staff will encourage the following toilet practices
- Find an empty cubicle
- Follow an established sequence
- Be aware of hygiene issues
- Be aware of personal dignity

## **Protection of Children**

If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation e.g. marks bruises soreness etc he/she will immediately report concerns to the designated officer. An incident report will be completed and parents will be asked to give an explanation and to sign and date report. If required designated officer will inform social services and/or police if they believe the child is at risk from significant harm. Parents will be kept informed at all times of this process.

## **Play Policy**

At Footprints Women's Centre our aim is to provide play opportunities to all children irrespective of their culture, ability and background. We believe play is a fundamental right of any child which is a process freely chosen.

Through play we aim to empower children with choice, these being:

- Solitary play
- Competitive
- Physical
- Emotional
- Quiet
- Messy
- Structured and creative
- Spontaneous and Adventurous

Play opportunities are any activity that enables children to develop skills through play. Through providing choices we believe children can be nurtured and through play develop problem-solving skills allowing them to progress into well-rounded adults.

We aim to provide training and support to enable play staff providers to use risk assessment as a positive tool for the development of quality play environments.

### **Outdoor play:**

- Outdoor play will be part of the daily schedule unless the weather is unsuitable (extreme conditions) to allow the children the opportunity to run and shout in the fresh air.
- Unsuitable weather is heavy rain, snow, severe cold or heat.
- If the children's comfort can be upheld by them wearing a coat (cold weather) or a hat and their own sunscreen (hot weather) then the weather will not be considered too hot or too cold.

- Children must therefore bring the appropriate clothing and protection to the childcare setting.
- Should appropriate clothing not be brought, the child should wear FOOTPRINTS WOMENS CENTRE spares.
- At the start of the Summer Term parents will be asked to bring in sunscreen, labeled with their child's name, to be kept in the setting and put on by their child when necessary.
- Should sunscreen not be brought the child will be given footprints sunscreen where permission has been given.
- Should the child have difficulty applying sunscreen the staff will assist in the application to face, ears, neck, arms, legs and feet as necessary.

### **Collection Policy**

Our childcare unit looks after children from a wide age range. To ensure the safety of all the children in our care the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- No one under 18 years of age can collect a child.
- It is important that you arrive on time for your child, as it can be distressing for a child if they think they are not going to be collected.
- If you are going to be late please notify staff as soon as possible.
- If a parent/ carer contacts the Childcare Co-ordinator by phone to change the arrangements for collection of children she must name the person who is going to collect the child. This person must have identification with them.
- If identification cannot be given parent/carers must inform staff of description of person and a password that will be used when collecting the child.
- Anyone who is under the influence of drink or drugs will be refused access to the childcare unit; an appropriate adult will be contacted to collect the child and Social Services/ will be informed if appropriate.

The safety of your child is paramount so if the Childcare Co-ordinator / Children Services Manager is in any doubt about releasing your child to someone then they will contact the parent/ carer immediately.

## **Anti -Bully Policy**

The staff at Footprints Childcare facility will endeavour to protect all children in their care and will work towards creating an environment where all children feel safe and protected.

### **The staff's role:**

Staff will ensure that children attending the group will be well supervised and if bullying occurs it is dealt with promptly. Children engaging in bullying will be reminded of the following rules.

- All members of the group should treat each other with respect.
- If problems arise children should ask an adult for help.
- If the person involved in bullying does not obey the rules their parents will be informed of their behaviour.
- If bullying continues the person involved will be asked to leave the group.

### **The children's role:**

Children are supported to draw up their own contract. Children are given opportunities through circle time to discuss issues and concerns that arise at the end of each session and make group decisions to deal with these issues in an appropriate manner.

At Footprints children are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. We encourage children to support and protect each other and challenge unwanted behaviour within their group.

## **Whistle Blowing Policy at Work**

The term 'whistle blowing' refers to the disclosure by employees, or ex-employees of malpractice, including illegal acts or negligence at work.

This policy has been developed in recognition of the fact that individual members of staff in Footprints Women's Centre have a right and a duty to raise with Footprints Women's Centre any matter of concern that they might have.

The policy seeks to encourage staff to initially use internal mechanisms to report such concerns.

The policy takes account of the Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998 and Circular HSS (GENI) 1/2000 issued by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. This policy does not replace or alter existing complaints procedures and it complements professional and ethical rules, guidelines and codes of conduct relating to complaints and freedom of speech.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of the policy is to promote a culture of openness, transparency and dialogue within Footprints Women's Centre which at the same time:

- upholds members and users confidentiality
- meets the obligations of staff to their employer
- does not unreasonably undermine confidence in the service
- reassures staff that they will not be penalised for raising a concern and gives them a process to follow
- contributes towards improving services provided by Footprints Women's Centre

Footprints Women's Centre recognises that employees may wish to immediately contact outside bodies /agencies, however, Footprints Women's Centre would encourage staff to initially use the internal procedure as set out in this policy.

This policy should not be used by employees who are aggrieved about a personal issue that should properly be pursued through the existing Footprints Women's Centre Grievance Procedure.

This policy applies to all staff including temporary and agency staff.

Footprints Women's Centre recognises that existing Policies and Procedures which deal with conduct and behaviour at work e.g. Disciplinary, Grievance, Harassment and Complaints procedure may not always be appropriate to deal with extremely sensitive issues which need to be handled in a different manner. This may also be because of fear of retribution or misguided loyalties etc.

Examples of the above may be:

- malpractice or ill treatment of a member or user by a member of staff
- repeated ill treatment of a member or user despite a complaint being made
- when a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- suspected fraud
- disregard for legislation, including Health and Safety at work and Equality issues
- the environment has been, or is likely to be damaged
- a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur
- a breach of standing financial instructions
- showing undue favour over a contractual matter or job applicant
- information on any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be concealed

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive or restrictive.

### **Responsibilities**

Footprints Women's Centre has a responsibility to:

- ensure that this policy enables issues that are raised to be dealt with effectively
- promote a culture of openness and ensure that issues are dealt with responsibly and taken seriously
- ensure that employees who raise any issues are not penalised for doing so, unless other circumstances come to light which require this, e.g. where a member of staff deliberately raises an issue regarding another member of staff which they know to be untrue.

### **Managers have a responsibility to:**

- take any concerns reported to them seriously and consider them fully, fairly and sympathetically
- recognise that raising a concern can be a difficult experience for some staff and offer appropriate support

- seek advice, where appropriate, from other senior staff within Footprints Women's Centre and/or Member/s of Footprints Women's Centre Board of Directors.
- if it appropriate to do so, invoke the formal procedures and ensure the Chair/Designated Person is informed

**All members of staff have a responsibility to:**

- recognise that it is their duty to draw to the Footprints Women's Centre attention any matter of concern
- adhere to the procedures set out in this policy
- maintain their duty of confidentiality to parents, users and the Footprints Women's Centre consequently, for any disclosure of confidential information to be justified, the employee should first, where appropriate, seek specialist advice from their Manager/Footprints Women's Centre Director, a trade union/professional body representative or a representative of a regulating organisation such as Social Services.

**Procedure**

If an employee is concerned about what they believe might be malpractice and have an honest and reasonable suspicion that the malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur, then the matter should be raised in the first instance with their Manager or Footprints Women's Centre, Centre Director, or if there are specific reasons for not doing so, the matter should be reported to the Chair/Designated Person of Footprints Women's Centre.

Employees are entitled to involve a trade union/professional body representative or work colleague in assisting them raise such a matter of concern. If informal action does not allay concerns, then the employee should invoke the formal procedure outlined below.

Where appropriate the Manager/Footprints Women's Centre, Centre Director may decide to refer the issue to the Designated Person (the Chair) to be dealt with under the formal procedure

**PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING**

**STAFF/VOLUNTEER**  
**/EX-EMPLOYEES**



**Designated Managers**

**Name:**

**Childcare Manager**

**Telephone Number: 028 90 923444**

**Name: Angela Garland**

**Assistant Childcare Manager**

**Telephone Number: 028 90 923444 /**

**Name: Isobel Loughran**

**Director**

**Telephone Number: 028 90 923444 / 07979154087**

**Name: Jacqui Russell**

**Support Services Manager**

**Telephone Number: 02890 923444 / 07809330376**



**Early Years Team**

**02844513807**

**Gateway Team**

**03001000300**

**Social Services Out of Hours**

**02895 049999**

**NSPCC**

**08088005000**

**Police**

**028 90650222**

## **Missing Child Policy**

The welfare of the children in our care is paramount. Children may go missing and every staff member has responsibility in ensuring the safety of the children while they are attending and knowing where they are. Systems are in place to minimise the risk of a child going missing. Parents will be advised of our security procedures and be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns. Prominent notices will be displayed to ensure doors are kept closed and where appropriate secure.

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the building is at all times secure. Security and CCTV footage is in operation.

### **Procedures set to maintain safety:**

Parents must ensure that their daily telephone number where they can be reached is written on the registration form.

Staff must keep the register up to date by signing children in and out of the Day-care and Crèche Facility Unit.

Staff *must* ensure that the gate to outside play area is bolted whilst children are playing outside.

Staff mark registers – mornings and afternoons.

### **In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing:**

1. Count and check the children present and make sure with other members of staff that the child has not been collected by parent/carer. Immediately close all exits and send a member of staff to stay at exits.
2. Carry out a thorough search of the Day-care and Crèche Facility unit and check the doors and the outside and surrounding areas. CCTV footage should be immediately reviewed.
3. A designated member of staff will carry out the search calling out the child's name and should carry the childcare mobile phone with them at all times. All areas of the building both indoor and outdoor should be completed.
4. Whilst carrying out the search staff must ensure that the adequate supervision of other children is maintained. Staff should remain calm and reassure the other children in the setting.
5. Where appropriate staff may address careful questioning to other children present to see if the whereabouts of the child is known.

6. If a complete search has been carried out and all adults on the premises have been consulted and the child has still not been located the Manager/co-coordinator will inform the parents and contact the police and report the child missing.
7. The incident will be recorded in incident book along with the outcome.
8. Manager/Deputy will also inform the Centre Director and the Early Years Team.

**Follow Up Review:**

Once the incident has been resolved, the staff team must review all relevant policies and procedures and implement any changes where necessary. This should also include a review of the security of the premises and effectiveness of risk assessments, to ensure that adequate measures are being taken to minimise risk and safeguard the children. Where changes are required these should be made as soon as possible.

## **Policy for Outings and Of Site Activities Including**

### **Operational Guidelines for Trips and Outings**

Appropriate ratios are always in operation on trips in line with the age and development of the children. However following a risk assessment – if the Childcare Co-ordinator feel that the ratio should be increased then provision is made or additional staffing

- Risk assessments and a pre-visit are carried out by the trip coordinator prior to the trip taking place
- Staff always have the 'trips resource pack' with them. This should include; sun cream, wet wipes, water, spare clothing and a 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit, as well as the children register, emergency contact details and staff's contact details.
- A mobile phone in full working order always be taken on trips, and also change for a pay phone.
- Emergency money always be taken on trips, for unforeseen circumstances
- When taking children on trips or outings, 2 lists of children going is be produced. One should be at the centre with staff and the other should be taken on the trip.
- Clear ground rules are in place to ensure children's safety through the trip or outing.
- Prior to taking any children out of the building, staff also ensures that Footprints have written parental consent to take children out.
- Staff give special consideration to meeting children's individual needs whilst on outings, such as cultural requirements.
- The trip co-ordinator should ensure staff are briefed and have an itinerary for the day with all key information.
- The trip co-ordinator should contact the centre at least once during the trip to update on progress.
- An evaluation should be discussed between staff upon return as to how the outing went
- To ensure the safety of children in our care we place a strong emphasis on prevention in order to minimise the risk of a child

becoming lost. We do this by carrying out a risk assessment for offsite activities and preparing children accordingly.

- Before leaving the centre each group leader will ensure the children in their group are given contact tags containing the following information.
- The name and address and phone number of the centre
- A mobile phone number for each leader accompanying the group.

On arrival each group will be allocated a meeting point where staff and children meet at allocated times. Where possible staff from the venue should be made known to the children as another point of contact.

We will endeavour to ensure the children's safety throughout the outing by undertaking regular head counts and providing a high child /adult ratio.

- Outings to the local area on foot can be undertaken by staff with the correct ratio of children, when the total number of children in the group can allow this to be done safely.
- *Under 2's*  
1 staff : 2 children in a double buggy  
*2 to 3 yrs*  
1 staff : 2 children walking or 2 children in a double buggy and 1 child walking  
*3 to 5 yrs*  
1 staff : 4 children
- Where possible, 2 staff with the appropriate numbers of children should go together. Tissues, wipes, a mobile phone, first aid kit and small change should be carried by staff.
- Make sure the children are suitably dressed for the weather and their comfort and that their ability to walk there and back is not over estimated.
- If appropriate sunscreen should be applied before the outing and some taken by the staff. For smaller children in buggies sunshades may be needed. Care should be taken to plan the outing in advance making sure that the venue has suitable rain cover or shade.
- Where used, children should be securely harnessed into buggies and the brakes checked before you leave the building. The under 3's, who are not in a buggy should hold an adult's hand.

- Older children (from 3 to 5 years), walking with the buggy, should be taught to hold onto the side of the buggy.
- Small groups of 3 to 5 year olds can walk in pairs, holding hands, with an adult front and rear.
- The children should be reminded about road safety before the outing and good practice should be emphasised throughout the trip.
- Whenever possible, advice parents prior to going out. Agree with the Childcare Co-ordinator where you are going and how long you expect to be out.
- Write in the `signing-in' book which children and staff have gone out. Do not forget to sign in again on your return.
- If a parent is accompanying on an outing, he/she must be in a group with a member of staff.
- New staff taking children out for the first time should arrange to go with another member of staff who knows the area and the safest routes.

### **Offsite Outings Requiring Transport**

Staff must see Children Services Manager/Childcare Co-ordinator for a separate consent form at least 2 weeks before the event.

- Insurance details must be acquired from organisation
- Permission slips signed and collected by staff
- Insurance/Vetting acquired for driver of Transport Company

There are occasions when transport will be provided by external agencies for children we have in care under Service Level Agreement, in instances like this it is up to the external agency to verify transport requirements such as insurance and vetting paperwork.

## **Lost Child Procedure**

In the event of child/children being lost the action plan agreed with the host centre should be implemented. This will involve the host staff and allocated Footprints staff undertaking a joint search. Those staff not involved in the search will take responsibility for the remaining children.

Information as to the last sighting of the child/children should form the starting point of the search. A description of the child and relevant information should be shared with the search party.

The search must be time limited; if child/children is not found within 10 to 15 minutes of undertaking the search the appropriate services should be contacted.

The parents/carers must be informed and reassurance given. A contact number will be given to the parents/carer and an agreed time scale for regular updates set. A nominated person will ensure the consistency of contact throughout.

Contact the line manager and brief of the situation. A written report should be completed on return.

## **Care in the Sun Policy**

Footprints Women's Centre has a duty of care to ensure that all children in their care have a high level of sun protection while outdoors. Parents will be asked to provide sunscreen (factor 30 and upwards) and a hat for their child to protect them from the sun. Parents will give written consent for staff to apply sunscreen to their child. All sunscreen/hats will be clearly labelled with child's name and be stored in child's individual box/bag. Spare hats and sunscreen will be available to allow all children to benefit from outdoor activities.

### **Staff will ensure that:**

- Sunscreen is applied before children go outside the building.
- It is acceptable to apply sunscreen on the hands and face to protect exposed skin areas.
- Shaded areas outdoors will be used in planning of outdoor activities.
- Outdoor times will be limited when the sun is at its strongest between 12pm and 3pm.

## **USE OF CCTV (POLICY BOOKLET)**

### **Policy for Childcare Buzzer Door**

Within Footprints Women's Centre the childcare facility is a secured area. Access is available through a buzzer system operated from the main office and the childcare office. Staff who works in the childcare facility has a key to access the area.

- All persons coming into the childcare facility must gain access through the secured door.

If you are unsure whether a person should have access you must not allow admittance until you speak to someone in the childcare facility.

Volunteers etc should not open the door if they do not know the person

### **Procedure for Using New Security System.**

The system is used between the hours of 7.45am – 9.00am and 5.00pm – 6pm when the outer door will be locked and the inner (buzzer door) will be unlocked.

To operate the system the handset in the main office needs to be in the **ON** position.

- Parents ring the bell and staff in the rooms can see who is at the door via the video link in each room and unlock outer door by pressing key button.
- If staff does not recognise a person they can lift the hand set and ask for i.d. etc before allowing access.
- To exit the main door push the large green button on left side of wall as indicated. The emergency door release should only be used in emergency and when pushed will unlock main door. There is a key in childcare and a key with caretaker to reset the emergency door release.

When reception leaves the main office at 5pm they inform childcare staff and turn the handset to the **ON** position. This locks the main front door.

When childcare leave the building at 6pm they will turn the handset in the main office to the **OFF** position. The building can then be secured as normal with no additional duties necessary.

Upon arrival at 7.45am childcare will turn the handset in the main office to the **ON** position and unlock inner door (buzzer door) to operate the video link system.

**To operate the handset.**

- Key button will open the door (you do not need to lift the receiver)
- The second button will bring up picture of outside the door???
- The remaining buttons have no function
- At bottom of handset you can adjust brightness, contrast and volume.

**To connect to other rooms via handsets.**

- Lift receiver and push once to connect to Preschool (room A)
- Lift receiver and push twice to connect to toddlers (room B)
- Lift receiver and push twice to connect to tiny tots (room C)
- Lift receiver and push twice to connect to crèche/after schools (room D)
- The main office can also be connected to other handsets

## **Footprints Women's Centre** **Data Protection Policy**

### **Introduction**

Footprints Women's Centre (FWC) is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998. FWC will therefore follow procedures that aim to ensure that all employees, members and users who have access to any personal data held by or on behalf of FWC, are fully aware of and abide by their duties and responsibilities under the DPA.

### **Policy Statement**

FWC regards the fair and lawful treatment of personal information as a critical factor in the success of our operations and a key to the maintenance of the confidence that exists between those with whom we deal and ourselves. These may include current, past and prospective employees, members, users and suppliers. In addition it may be required by law to collect and use information in order to comply with statutory requirements. This personal information must be handled and dealt with properly, however it is collected, recorded and used whether it is on paper, computer records or recorded by any other means, and there are safeguards within the DPA to ensure this.

FWC acknowledges its legal obligations under the Data Protection Act 1988 and endorses its provisions.

### **Definitions**

The Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 gives individuals the right to have access to personal information relating to themselves where this information is being held or processed by FWC. Written requests for information must be responded to within 40 calendar days from the date of receipt.

Personal data means data (manual or computer) which relate to a living individual who can be identified from those data (or data and other information that is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of, the data controller) (see appendix 2)

Sensitive personal data is defined as personal data consisting of information as to racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or other beliefs, trade union membership, physical or mental health conditions, sex life, criminal proceedings or convictions. (See appendix 2)

Data means information that is being processed automatically or is recorded with the intention that it should be processed automatically. Any manual data that forms part of an "accessible record" is also included in this definition.

Data controller means a person who determines the way in which any personal data are to be processed.

### **The principles of Data Protection**

The act stipulates that anyone processing personal data must comply with **Eight Principles** of good practice. These principles are legally enforceable.

The principles require that personal information shall –

1. Be processed fairly and lawfully and in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met.
2. Be obtained only for one or more specified lawful purpose & shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose.
3. Be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is processed.
4. Be accurate and kept up to date.
5. Not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose.
6. Be processed in accordance with data subjects rights under the Act
7. Be kept secure i.e. protected by an appropriate degree of security
8. Not be transferred to countries outside the European Economic area unless that country has adequate protection for the individual.

**The DPA provides conditions for the processing of any personal data. It also makes a distinction between personal data and 'sensitive' personal data.**

### **Handling of personal /sensitive information**

FWC will, through appropriate management and the use of strict criteria and controls :-

- Observe fully conditions regarding the fair collections and use of personal information.
- Meet its legal obligations to specify the purpose for which information is used.
- Collect and process appropriate information and only to the extent that is needed to fulfil operational needs or to comply with any legal requirements.
- Ensure the quality of information used.

- Apply strict checks to determine the length of time information is held.
- Take appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information.
- Ensure that personal information is not transferred abroad without suitable safeguards.
- Ensure that the rights of people whom the information is held can be fully exercised under the DPA.

**These include:**

- The right to be informed that processing is being undertaken
- The right of access to one's personal information within the statutory 40 calendar days
- The right to prevent processing in certain circumstances
- The right to require FWC, in certain circumstances, to rectify, block or erase personal data.

**In addition FWC will ensure that**

- There is someone with specific responsibility for data protection in the organisation; this is currently Gillian Gibson Centre Director (90923444). Everyone managing and handling personal information understands that they are directly and personally responsible for following good data protection practice
- Everyone managing and handling personal information is appropriately trained and supervised to do so.
- Anyone wanting to make enquiries about handling personal information knows what to do.
- Queries about handling personal information are promptly and courteously dealt with.
- Methods of handling personal information are described clearly and evaluated regularly
- Actual performance in the processing of personal information is regularly assessed.

**Data Security**

All committee members and staff within FWC will take steps to ensure that personal data is kept secure at all times against unauthorised or unlawful loss or disclosure and in particular will ensure that :-

- Paper files and other records or documents containing personal/sensitive data are kept in a secure environment
- Personal data held on computers and computer systems is protected by the use of secure passwords which are changed regularly.
- Unattended computers should be password protected.

- Individual passwords should be confidential and should be such that they are not easily compromised.

## **Maintenance of Equipment Policy**

### **Equipment:**

- We are committed to providing children with access to a wide range of equipment that stimulates enjoyment, learning and development, both indoors and outdoors.
- All furniture, toys and equipment are kept clean, well maintained and in good repair and in accordance with BS EN safety standards or the Toys (Safety) Regulations (1995) where applicable.
- Equipment will be properly maintained and inspected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All electrical toys and equipment are subject to PAT (Portable Appliance Testing), and relevant staff are trained on the correct use of computers and other IT equipment.
- All equipment and resources will be selected with care, and risk assessments carried out before new toys and equipment is purchased.
- Through daily risk assessment checks all defective or broken equipment will be taken out of use and stored in a safe place before being disposed of.

## **Nursery Collection Policy**

At Footprints Day Care we strive to provide the highest standard of care in all aspects of our service. We aim to provide an enhanced service to parents whereby their children can be collected from Nursery to Footprints Day Care.

### **Procedure**

- Before any collection commences, children and their parents will have the opportunity to meet the staff member who will be collecting their child from school
- On the first day, we will arrange to meet the parent at the school to allow introductions to the Teacher and Classroom assistants
- Staff collecting children from school are not permitted to smoke
- Staff will be given a nursery mobile which is for work use only
- Staff should ensure that they are warm and friendly when collecting children; asking them how their day has been etc.
- Staff should sign the children they have collected in the sign in sheet located in relevant room
- Staff should inform the practice leader in the child's room of any information passed on from the child's Teacher

### **Note for parents**

- All staff in Footprints Day Care have been vetted through Access NI and Social Services Procedures
- We are committed to ensuring that each child is collected punctually from their designated point
- Parents are asked to supply the Child Care Manager with written details of their child's school holidays etc. This will ensure that our service runs as smoothly as possible
- Please advise us if your child is absent from school and also if they do not require a pickup for any reason
- We are aware that school settling children gradually over the first few weeks. We are happy to accommodate this requirement. Parents are asked to keep management up to date with times.
- Once the child's pickups time is confirmed, parents are reminded that if this time changes the day care must be informed as soon as possible. WE will endeavour to facilitate.

### **Appendix 1:**

## **Care Plan**

### Individual Care Needs

Please state if the parent or guardian has stipulated if the child has any specific care needs:

State what programme of development should be focused on:

## **Appendix 2**

**Processing of personal data** can only be carried out where at least one of the following conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act 1998 has been met. Processing must be:

- with the consent of the data subject
- necessary for the performance of a contract with the data subject
- for the compliance with any legal obligation (other than contractual)
- to protect the vital interests of the data subject
- to carry out public functions
- to pursue legitimate interests of the data controller unless prejudicial to the legitimate interests of the data subject.

**To process sensitive personal data** at least one of the conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act 1998 must be met **and, in addition**, at least one of the following conditions set out in Schedule 3 of the Act must also be met. Processing must be:

- with the explicit consent of the data subject
- necessary to comply with the data controller's legal duty in connection with employment
- to protect the vital interests of the data subject or another person
- carried out by certain non-profit bodies
- where the information has been made public by the data subject
- in legal proceedings, to obtain legal advice, or exercise legal rights
- for medical purposes
- for equality opportunities monitoring

## **Appendix 3**

### ***Footprints Women's Centre***

#### **Disciplinary Rules and Procedures for Misconduct**

##### **Objective**

The objective of this procedure is to give employees the opportunity to improve their conduct or performance. It identifies who has authority to take disciplinary action and aims to ensure that employees are protected against unjustifiable or inconsistent disciplinary action. It also identifies the type of offence which would result in disciplinary action being taken, what that action would be and what further action would result if there is no improvement or a recurrence takes place.

##### **Informal Action**

Cases of minor misconduct or unsatisfactory performance may be dealt with informally. The employer may have a quiet word of caution or advice and encouragement with the employee in order to improve an employee's conduct or performance. This informal approach may be used in dealing with problems quickly and confidentially. There will, however be situations where matters are more serious or where this informal approach has been tried but is not working. In these circumstances, the employer will use the formal procedure.

##### **General Principles for the Formal Disciplinary Procedures**

1. No disciplinary action shall be taken until there has been a full investigation into any alleged incident.
2. The employee has the right to receive, prior to disciplinary hearings,
  - A written statement of the alleged misconduct, and
  - Particulars on the basis for the allegation
3. The employee has the right to reasonable opportunity, prior to disciplinary hearings, to consider their responses to the information provided on the allegation.
4. The employee will be entitled (where reasonably requested) to be accompanied at any disciplinary or appeal hearing by a fellow worker or Trade Union Official (who may be either a full-time official employed by a union or a lay union official who has been reasonably certified in writing by his/her union as having

experience of, or as having received training in, acting as a worker's companion).

5. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the disciplinary and appeal hearings.
6. The employer will ensure that the disciplinary rules and procedures are applied fairly and consistently.
7. The employer will ensure that:-
  - All steps under the procedure are taken without unreasonable delay
  - The timing and location of all hearings are reasonable
  - Hearings are conducted in a manner which enables employees to explain their cases
  - Disciplinary appeal hearings will be conducted, as far as is reasonably practicable, by a more senior manager than the manager who took the disciplinary action being appealed. This does not apply where the most senior manager attended the disciplinary hearing at which the decision was taken to take the disciplinary action being appealed.
8. Once warnings have expired they will be erased from the employee's personal record.
9. The employer will keep written records during the disciplinary process. These will include the complaint against the employee, notes taken during the hearings and appeals, findings and actions taken, details of the appeal and any other information relevant to the process.
10. The employer will take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.
11. All warnings will clearly state the misconduct concerned and clearly indicate what the eventual outcome will be if there is no improvement on the employee's part or a recurrence takes place. Warnings normally relate to the same or similar misconduct and are not generally transferable between different types of misconduct. However, where a number of warnings are called for in respect of different types of misconduct this will entitle management to review the employee's overall suitability for continued employment and if necessary to issue a final general warning irrespective of the offence.

12. **Precautionary Suspension:** In certain cases, for example in cases involving gross misconduct, where relationships have broken down or there are risks to an employer's property or responsibilities to other parties, consideration will be given to a brief period of suspension with **full** pay whilst unhindered investigation is conducted. The employer will also consider alternative actions which would be more acceptable to the employee yet serve the same purpose as a suspension e.g. agreeing to a temporary transfer to other duties or another work station without loss of pay or the taking of annual holidays to which the employee is entitled. Any action taken will be reviewed to ensure it is not unnecessarily protracted. It will be made clear that any action taken is not considered a disciplinary action.

### **Types of misconduct**

The following list shows examples of the type of rules/offences which the employer has categorised for each level of misconduct. This is not an exhaustive list and management reserves the right to decide how any other misconduct shall be categorised:

***(The following examples are provided for guidance purposes only and should be amended to suit your organisation. You should therefore delete any which are not applicable to your organisation).***

#### **A MINOR MISCONDUCT**

- Absenteeism
- Lateness
- Failure to comply with Absence Notification and Certification Procedure
- Careless work and poor effort at work
- Minor breach of safety/hygiene/security rules
- Extended tea and meal breaks
- Failure to maintain a tidy and safe working environment
- Misuse of telephone
- Excessive time away from the job
- Failure to wear any protective clothing/equipment provided
- Failure to complete time/stock or work sheets as instructed

#### **B MAJOR MISCONDUCT**

- Dangerous physical horseplay
- Neglect causing damage to or loss of Employer's, customer's or other employee's property/ equipment/tools
- Serious neglect of safety/hygiene/security rules
- Smoking in the workplace

- Consuming intoxicants during working hours or bringing intoxicants into the premises without permission
- Entry into any unauthorised areas
- Wilful or excessive wastage of material
- Unsatisfactory attitude to customers
- Use of foul language
- Gambling on the premises
- Insubordination

## C GROSS MISCONDUCT

- Theft
- Physically violent behaviour
- Leaving the premises or site without permission
- Refusal to carry out a reasonable work instruction
- Deliberately ignoring safety/hygiene/security rules and thereby endangering one's own or another's physical well-being or safety
- Obscene behaviour
- Intoxication induced by alcohol or drugs
- Fraud
- Disclosing confidential business information to a third party
- Wilful damage to or gross negligence of Employer's, customer's or other employee's property/equipment/tools
- Undertaking work in competition with own employer
- Falsification of records
- Unauthorised use of Employer vehicle
- Clocking offences
- Gross misuse of Company's Internet /e mail system

### **NOTE: -**

**Any allegation of bullying in the workplace or any allegation of discrimination, victimisation or harassment linked to anti-discrimination legislation including gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage, civil partnership, disability, race, age, religious beliefs or political opinions will be thoroughly investigated and where appropriate will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. The disciplinary response will depend upon the nature and seriousness of the incident; and in extreme cases will result in summary dismissal.**

### **Formal Procedure**

When taking formal disciplinary action, the employer will comply with the Statutory Procedures by ensuring that the following steps are taken at all stages of the formal disciplinary process.

### **Step 1 Statement of grounds for action and invitation to meeting**

The employer will provide to the employee a written statement of the alleged misconduct which has led to the consideration of formal disciplinary action or dismissal. The employer will invite the employee to a hearing to discuss the issue.

### **Step 2 Meeting**

Prior to the hearing the employer will supply the basis of the allegation. After the meeting the employer will inform the employee of the decision and offer the right to appeal.

### **Step 3 Appeal**

If the employee wishes to appeal he or she will inform the employer within 5 working days. The employer will invite the employee to a further hearing to discuss the appeal. The final decision will be communicated to the employee.

## **Minor Misconduct**

If the alleged breach falls within the minor misconduct category the employer will follow the formal procedure outlined above and the following action will be taken if the employer is satisfied that an offence has occurred:

Stage 1 You will be given a **verbal warning**. It will be recorded and retained on file for a period of 6 months.

Stage 2 If the same or similar offence is repeated within 6 months you will be given a **first written warning**. It will be recorded and retained on file for a period of 12 months.

Stage 3 If the same or similar offence is repeated within 12 months you will be given a **final written warning**. This will contain a clear notice that a repeat of the offence within 12 months will result in dismissal.

Stage 4 If the same or similar offence is repeated within 12 months you will be **dismissed**.

## **Major Misconduct**

If the alleged breach falls within the major misconduct category the employer will follow the formal procedure as outlined on the previous page. If the employer is satisfied that an offence has occurred you will receive a **final written warning** which will contain clear notice that a repeat of the offence within 12 months will result in dismissal.

## **Gross Misconduct**

If the alleged breach falls within the gross misconduct category the employer will follow the formal procedure as outlined on the previous page. If the employer is satisfied that an offence has occurred the employee will be **dismissed** summarily: i.e. without notice and without wages-in-lieu of notice.

## **Appeals**

Where an employee feels that action taken **at any stage** under this procedure is unjustified or unfair, there shall be the right of appeal. All appeals must be made in writing to **(insert job title)** within 5 working days of being informed of the disciplinary sanction. Appeal hearings will be held within 5 working days of receiving the notification of appeal. The employee has the right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing.

The result of the appeal hearing will be notified to the employee within 5 working days in writing.

## **Disciplinary Authority**

In the event of a breach of employer rules disciplinary hearings and appeals will be conducted by the appropriate disciplinary authority as follows: -

Stage	Disciplinary Hearing	Appeal
Stage 1 ( <b>Recorded Verbal</b> )	<b>One Senior Manager</b>	<b>One Senior Manager</b>
Stage 2 ( <b>First written</b> )	<b>Senior Manager</b>	<b>Board Member</b>
Stage 3 ( <b>Final written</b> )	<b>Senior Manager + Board member</b>	<b>Senior Manager + Board member</b>
Stage 4 ( <b>Dismissal</b> )	<b>Chair of Board + Centre Director</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Personnel Sub Committee</b>

### **MODIFIED DISMISSAL AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

There may be **some limited and very exceptional situations** involving alleged acts of gross misconduct where some of the general principles of the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures for Misconduct will not apply. These situations will be where:

- Dismissal is without notice and occurs at the time when the employer became aware of the misconduct or immediately thereafter
- The employer is entitled, in the circumstances, to dismiss by reason of the misconduct without notice and without pay in lieu of notice, and
- The employer believed that it was reasonable, in the circumstances, to dismiss before enquiring into the circumstances in which the misconduct took place.

In these **very exceptional situations** the following **modified procedure** will apply:-

## **Step 1 Statement of grounds for action**

The employer will provide the dismissed employee with:-

- a written statement of the alleged misconduct which led to the dismissal, and
- written particulars on the employer's basis for thinking at the time of the dismissal that the employee was guilty of the alleged misconduct, and
- a written confirmation of his/her right of appeal against the dismissal.

## **Step 2 Appeal**

- If the employee wishes to appeal he/she must inform the employer within 5 working days.
- All appeal requests must be made to Chairperson of the Board of Directors
- Appeal hearing shall be heard within 5 working days of receipt of the request.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the hearing.
- The employee has the right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing.
- The result of the appeal hearing shall be notified to the employee within 5 working days of the appeal hearing.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Grievance/Disputes Procedure**

#### **Objective**

The objective of this procedure is to provide an employee (or ex-employee) who has a grievance, with the opportunity to have it examined quickly and effectively and where a grievance is deemed to exist, to have it resolved if possible, at the earliest practicable moment and at first level of management. Ideally, employees should initially raise any grievances informally with the Centre Director, with a view to finding solutions. Where an employee chooses to raise matters informally, the formal procedure as outlined hereunder does not apply.

#### **General Principles**

- The Employer will ensure that:-
  - All steps under the procedure are taken without unreasonable delay
  - The timing and location of all hearings are reasonable
  - Hearings are conducted in a manner which enables employees to explain their cases
  - As far as is reasonably practicable, appeal hearings will be conducted by a more senior manager than the manager who took the decision which is being appealed. This does not apply where the most senior manager attended the hearing at which the decision being appealed was taken.
- Employees have the right to be accompanied to any grievance or appeal hearing by a fellow worker or Trade Union Official (who may be either a full-time official employed by a union or a lay union official who has been reasonably certified in writing by his/her union as having experience of, or as having received training in, acting as a worker's companion).
- Any employee who has a grievance must exhaust each stage of the procedure before proceeding to the next stage. Where this has not taken place the matter shall be referred back to the appropriate stage. The matter shall not be progressed unless and until the appropriate procedural stages are complied with.

- Records shall be kept detailing the nature of the grievance raised, the employer's response, any action taken, the reasons for it and other information relevant to the process. These records shall be kept confidential.

## **Formal Procedure**

This procedure has been drawn up to establish the appropriate steps which must be followed when formally pursuing and dealing with a grievance. It is the aim of this procedure to settle matters at the earliest practicable moment, and at the first possible appropriate management level.

### Step 1 - Submission of Grievance

Should you wish to raise a grievance regarding your employment you must submit a written statement to include full particulars of the grievance to the Centre Director.

### Step 2 - Meeting

The Centre Director will then arrange a hearing with you within 5 working days from the time both the written statement and the particulars on the basis for the grievance are provided and attempt to resolve the issue. You will be provided with his/her decision on the grievance as soon as possible and in any case, within 5 working days from the date of the hearing.

### Step 3 - Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Centre Director you may appeal against this to the Board of Directors.

On receipt of such a request the Board of Directors shall make arrangements to hear the appeal within 5 working days.

The decision shall be given to you as soon as possible and not later than 5 working days from the appeal being heard.

This shall be the final stage of the employer's grievance procedure and the decision is final.

## **Appendix 5**

### **FOOTPRINTS WOMEN'S CENTRE Recruitment and Selection Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

Footprints Women's Centre is committed to providing equality of opportunity in all its employment practices and procedures. This document provides guidance and outlines the legislation, which impacts on the Recruitment and Selection process.

1.1 The information contained in this document should be read in conjunction with the centres Equal Opportunities Policy.

1.2 The following procedures are set out in the context of the current legislation relating to recruitment and selection including:

Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998  
Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976  
Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) 1978 and Exceptions Order  
1979

Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
Race Relations (NI) Order 1997  
Data Protection Act 1998  
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI)  
2003

#### **2. Purpose of Recruitment and Selection**

2.1 The purpose of recruitment and selection procedure is to ensure that Footprints Women's Centre recruits staff on the basis of merit in accordance with good practice and in compliance with employment legislation.

2.2 Footprints Women's Centre is committed to appointment based on the merit principle i.e. 'Ensuring the person who, on grounds of ability best matches the personnel specification is selected for the position available'. Ultimately however it is a Board of Directors decision based on a fair assessment.

2.3 Due to business pressures/opportunities there may be some exceptions outside of these guidelines covering short fixed term, temporary, student placements, internal trawls and the use of Recruitment Agencies. Wherever possible the general principles of merit and good practice will prevail. This must be carried out with the authorisation of the Board of Directors.

### **3 Pre-recruitment – Notification of vacancy**

3.1 Prior to the commencement of any recruitment exercise the Finance and Personnel sub-committee will recommend any new position to the Board of Directors for approval, having agreed:

- an appropriate job description
- personnel specification
- Short-listing criteria (this may include both essential and desirable)
- salary

### **4 Advertisement**

4.1 Once the relevant approval has been obtained, the post should be appropriately advertised to meet Fair Employment Requirements.

4.2 The preparation of the advertisement will be the responsibility of the Centre Director/Department Manager. The advertisement should specify the minimum basic requirements for the post, a closing time and date and the place where the application form may be obtained, and an Equal Opportunities statement.

4.3 All requests for application forms should be dealt with promptly ensuring that all applicants receive identical information (Application form, Monitoring form, Job description, Personnel Specification and Information to Applicants).

4.4 Application forms received by email prior to the closing date will be accepted as bona fide applications. Application forms which do not have a completed monitoring details form renders the application null and void. This application should not be passed to the panel for short-listing

4.5 Any application form received after the closing date will not be accepted, unless it is clear from the postmark or any other similar evidence, that it was despatched in good time but arrived late because of delays in transit genuinely outside the control of the applicant. Responsibility for deciding whether or not the application should be accepted on these grounds will rest with the short listing panel. It will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Panel to ensure therefore that any such applications are retained with their envelope and the applicant notified accordingly.

### **5 Panels and the Constitution of Panels**

- 5.1 As a pre-requisite of participating in any recruitment and selection panel, it is essential that every panel member from Footprints Women's Centre has previous recruitment panel experience or, shadows the Centre Director in the first instance in carrying out a full recruitment process.
- 5.3 Recruitment panels should consist of two/three or more persons. Normally these individuals should be identified before the advert is placed. Great care will be taken to ensure that the composition of the selection panels will be balanced and fair. Ideally all staff panel members should be of a grade senior to that of the post being considered. At least one panel member should be from outside the scheme or department for which the vacancy arises. Also at least one panel member should be a member of staff from Footprints Women's Centre. It is recommended that the Chairperson identifies a suitably trained panel member to cover unforeseen eventualities.
- 5.4 If an applicant is known to one of the panel members they must disclose this fact, as it may disqualify them from the process. It will be the responsibility of the Chairperson in consultation with the Board of Directors to make this decision and if necessary to make the arrangements to replace the panel member concerned by another suitable member of staff.
- 5.5 If a panel member is unavailable on the day of the interview the Chairperson has the discretion of seconding an appropriate and suitably trained replacement panel member.

## **6 Short-listing**

- 6.1 Short-listing should take place as soon as possible after the closing date for the receipt of applications. Initially the Chairperson should decide if there has been a sufficient response to provide a suitable field of applicants for the appointment. In the event that the Chairperson determines there to be an insufficient response, all applicants should be notified accordingly and the post should be re-advertised accordingly.
- 6.2 The criteria for short-listing should be drawn up by the Chairperson before the application forms are considered. Under no circumstances should the panel have sight of the application forms prior to the agreement of short-listing criteria.

### **6.3 At short-listing the Chairperson should:**

- Ensure that each panel member has access to each application form and that these are examined in the light of the agreed criteria.
  - Obtain the decision of the panel as to which applicants satisfy the short-listing criteria.
  - Record the panel's decision on the outcome form, which should be signed by all members of the panel.
  - Record the reason for the non-selection of the candidates referencing the appropriate criteria.
  - Provide Board of Directors with dates, location for interviews and start time.
- 6.4 The purpose of short-listing is to decide which applicants meet the essential and if appropriate desirable criteria set out in the personnel specification and advertisement. The Chairperson should adhere to the checklist for short-listing.
- 6.5 Occasionally a second short-listing may be required to bring the list of short-listed applicants to a more manageable number. The second short-listing must not introduce new criteria and must involve only the tightening of the original short-listing criteria for example desirable criteria.
- 6.6 In the event of any queries in relation to the equivalency of qualifications it may be necessary for the Board of Directors to confirm this with the Chairperson after the short-listing. Any further information obtained should be fed back to the Chairperson.
- 6.7 The applicants should be short-listed purely on the information provided in the application form. In the event that the relevant information is not included on the form, then the applicant should not be short-listed.
- 6.8 At this stage the Chairperson may consider other selection aids to assist either as a further short-listing or as an additional aid to the interviewing process.
- 6.9 Once the short-listing decision has been made, short-listed applicants should be notified of the next stage of the selection process including any selection aids which are intended to be used.
- 6.10 The chairperson should ensure that all panel members are prepared for the interview with agreed questions, and allocation of the marks for each question.

## **7 Interview**

- 7.1 Questions for the interview should be prepared in advance in accordance with the recommended format and marks allocated. The questions should relate to the essential requirements of the job and personnel specification.
- 7.2 All applicants should be asked standard questions on the same areas. Panel members should ask follow up questions to probe the answers given.
- 7.3 At the end of the interview for each applicant, panel members should record their comments on how the individual performed and mark appropriately on the assessment form.
- 7.4 When the final applicant has been interviewed the Chairperson should invite each panel member to comment on each applicant in relation to their merits, taking into account any other selection aids that may have been used.
- 7.5 Each panel member should mark each of the candidates appropriately and add up the marks for each candidate. They should rank all their candidates, who are appointable. When all of the panel members have ranked the candidates, they should list them in order of merit. It is vital that each panel members scoring correspond with their overall assessment – if not they should revisit their scoring. It should be a majority decision and when a decision has been reached by the panel, this should be recorded on the interview decision form. If the panel is agreed that all candidates do not come up to the required standard, then an appointment should not be made.
  - 7.6 The report and decision of the interview panel should be signed by all panel members. Panel members must be aware that applicants will be contacted in the order laid out on the form so any candidate deemed successful could take up the post.
- 7.7 The Chairperson should complete the Panel Assessment Form.
- 7.8 If there is a reserve list this should be held for not more than six months.
- 7.9 All applicants should be informed of the panel's decision as soon as possible. Strict confidentiality should be observed at all times as it can be distressing for unsuccessful candidates to be informed through 'the grapevine' rather than the normal channels.

- 7.10 The Chairperson should collect from each panel member all documentation involved in the selection process, including interview assessment forms.

## **8 Offer of Employment**

- 8.1 The offer of employment will be made to the successful candidate subject to satisfactory references, proof of qualifications and AccessNI check where appropriate.
- 8.2 Each referee should be provided with a copy of the job description for the post together with an envelope addressed to the Centre Director and clearly marked "Staff In Confidence". It is important that referee reports are dealt with in the strictest confidence and that care is exercised in their retention.
- 8.3 It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to ensure that the referees are suitably acquainted with the applicants. Referee reports should be considered by the Chairperson of the Panel and the Reference verification form completed.
- 8.4 Once the satisfactory reference form, together with an acceptance letter, proof of qualifications and satisfactory ACCESSNI check has been received the Board of Directors will confirm the offer of appointment. All of the above documentation must be in order before an offer of appointment can be confirmed. A starting date will be arranged with the Director.
- 8.7 A Staff handbook will be issued to all new employees on commencement of employment. This will be forwarded to the Leader who will ensure the induction programme is carried out.
- 8.8 Once the new employee joins the payroll, a Terms and Conditions of Employment will be issued by the Board of Directors.

## **Review of the Policies**

All policies will be reviewed annually and in line with changes in legislation.