

**Call: 07546584314**

**or email**

[**rascalsplaygroup@gmail.com**](mailto:rascalsplaygroup@gmail.com)

**Rascals staff**

Tracey Hubbard – Manager

Hayley Allen – Supervisor

Claire Denyer - Supervisor

Claire Bennett – Senior Assistant

Sam Boswell – Senior Assistant

Alana Alderton - Assistant

**Welcome to Rascals Playgroup**

We hope your child will enjoy many happy sessions with us. We have put together some information about the group which you may find helpful.

**Playgroup and the Methodist Church**

Rascals Pre-school Playgroup was set up in 1989 by members of the Methodist Church. The Church retains overall responsibility for the playgroup, offering support but at the same time leaving the staff free to organise and run the group according to guidelines issued by West Sussex County Council and Ofsted. We welcome families of all religious and ethnic groups but as part of a Christian community, we only celebrate Christian festivals. Prior to Covid 19, once every half term the children enjoyed our Pre-school Praise service which is held within the shopper’s service on a Friday morning. We hope to reinstate this once the lockdowns are over. This usually involves the children joining in with some action prayers and singing some simple songs. A leaflet is available giving full details of Church activities and should you wish to speak to the Minister please contact the Church Office on 776900.

**Playgroup and Ofsted**

Ofsted inspect our playgroup to ensure that we are conforming to their regulations and those of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

All staff must have completed a DBS check (disclosure & barring service) before being able to become fully involved in playgroup duties

Ofsted also offer advice, training and support when it is needed. The Early Childhood Services of West Sussex also acts as our advisory body.

**Aims of the Playgroup**

To provide a caring and secure atmosphere which promotes and embraces the principles of Christianity and fosters the belief that every child is a unique individual worthy of respect and love.

To provide quality care for pre-school children within a well structured, educational environment which safeguards play as essential for the growth and development of the children.

**Children Act 1989**

All parents/carers are advised that under the current law, all playgroups are required to report any unexplained or unusual injuries or symptoms to their Local Safeguarding Board.

**Early Years Alliance**

Rascals is a member of the Early Years Alliance (formerly known as the Pre-School Playgroups Association and Pre-school Learning Alliance). If you would like any information about this national organisation please access their website

**Policies and Procedures**

Our policies and procedures are available upon request.

The following policies are sent to new parents with their welcome pack:

Achieving Positive behaviour, Information sharing, Promoting equality, Key worker/settling in and Collection of fees

**Admissions Policy**

We operate a waiting list based on date of birth however there are other factors that will be considered prior to offering families a place at Rascals such as: ​

\* Children requiring the most sessions

\* Two year olds who are funded by WSCC

\* Looked after children identified to us by West Sussex County council

\* Siblings of those children currently attending the setting & siblings of previous Rascals members

\* Date of enquiry

\* Members of the Rustington Methodist Church

**Siblings – Younger siblings are not automatically put on our waiting list, so to avoid disappointment please let us have their details as soon as possible.**

**Fees**

Each term you will receive a letter detailing the fees due.

Fees are calculated termly and we are happy to accept payment termly, half termly monthly or weekly. We appreciate prompt payment but if you do have any concerns regarding payment of your fees please talk to your key person.

Please note that as your child’s place is now kept until they start school, it does have to be paid for, even if they are absent due to illness or holiday. We try to keep the fees as low as we can but as we are a non-profit making group we cannot keep a place open if fees are not paid. If you find that your child must leave us before they start school please give us one months notice so that we have the opportunity to offer their place to another family. If we do not receive one months notice and we are unable to fill the place you will be asked to pay the fees due as we are unable to recover these shortfalls in our income.

Once your child reaches the term after their 3rd birthday their place will be funded by West Sussex County Council. There is limited funding available for some 2 year olds who fit a set criteria. Funding is available for 15 hours of care per week. More information about funding can be found on the West Sussex Website following the links for Free Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

In 2017 the government announced two new initiatives to help families with the cost of childcare. These included Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours Childcare. To check your eligibility for support from either of these initiatives please check the Governments Child Care Choices website: https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/

**Staffing, Qualifications and Training**

We employ six members of staff and have a number of volunteers from the local community who enjoy coming to play with the children. We always have at least one member of staff to every 8 children over the age of 3 years and one member of staff to every 4 children under the age of 3 present during each session.

All staff members hold a level 3 qualification in Childcare, or above. Our Manager holds Early Years Teacher status and one of our Supervisors holds Qualified Teacher status.

Regular training courses are provided for all staff for their own Continued Professional Development.

**Dates and Times**

You will receive a schedule of term dates for each academic year. The dates usually run from April to April and you will therefore receive an update prior to April each year.

We are open Monday and Tuesday 9.30am -3.30pm and Thursday and Friday mornings from 9.30am – 12.30pm.

We are closed on a Wednesday but you are welcome to join the Mod Mums group which is held on the premises.

**Settling in**

New children will take varying amounts of time to settle when they first arrive at Rascals.

In our experience, children who cry rarely do so for more than a few minutes and we will always tell you if your child remains unhappy.

Some children may need their adult to stay with them for a little while and we will always work with you to come to an arrangement that you feel comfortable with.

If you do stay with your child or if you offer to help at Rascals, you will be asked to store your mobile phone away from the children and the use of any camera other than those used by staff is prohibited. This is in accordance with our safeguarding policy.

We prefer that dummies are not brought into the setting. Research has shown that prolonged use of dummies can have a detrimental effect on speech development and we are happy to offer further information.

**Health**

At Rascals we aim to promote a healthy lifestyle and encourage a high standard of general hygiene on a daily basis. Please do not send your child to playgroup if they are unwell in any way. Since the appearance of Covid 19 we ask that all children remain at home if they display any of the main symptoms but also if they are generally unwell with colds also. This is to protect our staff and the other children. They will not enjoy playing if they are ill and it is not fair to the other children or to the staff. If they have had a tummy bug please keep them at home for at least 48 hours following their last bout of sickness/diarrhoea.

Occasionally head lice become a problem. Please check their hair regularly and treat them immediately if you find them (your pharmacist will offer advice).

Our notice board contains a list of infectious diseases and the length of absence required from playgroup. If you are unsure whether you should bring your child to playgroup please call us for advice prior to bringing them in.

We encourage each child to bring a drink of water with them in a named flask in order that they can have access to this throughout the session.

We provide the children with a drink and a snack of toast, crumpets, pitta bread or something similar along with fruit during the morning sessions and a small snack of fruit will be offered during the afternoon sessions. At the beginning of each term we do ask for a contribution towards the cost of these snacks.

The children are encouraged to wash their hands themselves after using the toilet and prior to eating their snack and after eating, and it would be really helpful if you could also encourage this practise at home.

**Behaviour Management**

All children will be positively encouraged to co-operate in the social life of the playgroup and be made aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

A child will never be punished physically, nor subjected to humiliating or abusive statements about themselves, their lifestyles, ethnic background, status, appearance etc.

As a playgroup the following points are important to us:

•Boundaries are important for the well-being of all the children in our group – consistency is essential.

•Some children may have to learn that playgroup boundaries are different from home – we understand that this may take time.

•To treat all children in our group with equal concern

•We try to understand why a child is behaving in an unacceptable way – there are usually reasons. Please let us know if there is a reason that you are aware of.

•Unacceptable behaviour may result in withdrawing a child from an activity for a short time or asking them to wait for their turn.

•An explanation will always be given to the child in words they should understand as to why the behaviour was unacceptable.

•Parents/carers should be informed about any significant action taken by the group with regard to their child’s behaviour.

•Under section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 a person over 16 who is looking after a child and who ill treats him/her is guilty of an offence.

•Our policy 'Achieving Positive Behaviour' provides full information relating to our practice. Please refer to the policy for more information.

**Accidents and Safeguarding**

We record all accidents that occur indoors and outdoors. The records are available at every session and will be completed by the member of staff who dealt with the accident. If your child has bumped their head you will be given a letter advising you of what symptoms to look out for where necessary. All accidents will be reported to the child’s parent/carer at the end of the session.

Each child has their own page within these books which enables us to record any patterns of accidents occurring. If we have any concerns regarding the number or nature of accidents we will discuss this with you.

If your child comes to playgroup with an existing injury such as a bruise, a member of staff will log this in our existing injury book and advise you that we have done so. Similarly if your child has been given any medicines before arriving at playgroup, you will be required to sign a form confirming the medicine given and the dose.

All our staff are required to attend safeguarding training and our Manager is the nominated child protection officer who will deal with any incidents that may arise.

We take safeguarding very seriously and as well as reporting any concerns we may have regarding the children, all staff have access to procedures which must be followed if they have concerns regarding their colleagues.

All our staff hold a current Paediatric First Aid certificate which we renew every three years and in addition to this training we attend any other relevant training including the use of Epi-pens.

**Toilet Procedures**

We welcome all children wearing nappies, pull ups or pants and we are happy to work alongside parents during toilet training. The children are asked at regular intervals if they need the toilet particularly when they are new to Rascals. The children are ALWAYS accompanied when they first attend playgroup, however during their last two terms at Rascals we do try to encourage the older children to access the toilet themselves in preparation for school. A member of staff will always be available to help with accidents and hand washing.

During the first few weeks it is always a good idea to bring more than one set of spare clothes in case of accidents. This should include pants, socks, trousers/skirt and top. These should be in a bag clearly labelled with your child’s name and placed on your child’s peg when you arrive at the beginning of each session. It is very helpful to dress your child in clothes and footwear that they can manage themselves with little or no fastenings and without belts.

If your child uses a potty or special toilet seat at home you are very welcome to bring this to playgroup which can be hung on your child’s peg in a named bag. Please ensure you tell a member of staff that your child will wish to use this.

All soiled clothes/nappies must be taken home with you at the end of the session as we do not have any means of disposing of nappies on our premises. Any nappies or wet clothes will be put into a nappy sack and placed back in your child’s bag, so please check their bag after every session!

**Inclusion**

At Rascals we aim to have regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practise on the Identification and Assessment of additional needs and provide a welcome for all children combined with appropriate learning opportunities suited to the age, stage and ability of each child.

Children with additional needs, like other children, are admitted to Rascals after consultation with parents, the playgroup Managers and, where appropriate, other professionals working with the child.

Our system of observation and record-keeping, operating in conjunction with parents, enables us to monitor children’s needs and progress so that if necessary, early and appropriate action to meet additional needs can be taken. If we have any concerns whatsoever about a child in our care, the first stage will be for the Manager or INCO (Inclusion Coordinator) to chat to the parents. The areas we may discuss could include the child’s general health and development, behaviour at home and in playgroup and any possible causes for difficulties or worries. In many cases early discussion resolves problems without any further help.

If the problem persists, the next stage is for the playgroup and the parents together to consider the area or areas in which the child is having difficulty and draw up a plan together. Targets for the child to achieve will be set and a date to review progress will be agreed. At this stage, parents may also find it helpful to talk to their health visitor or doctor.

The next step, if we are still concerned, will be to discuss with the parents the possibility of outside help or advice. With parental consent, we are able to make some referrals ourselves.

Alternatively we can offer advice on how parents can proceed if they wish to deal with the matter themselves. Details of discussions with parents regarding additional needs will be kept with the child’s records.

We are happy to work in liaison with professional staff from outside the playgroup, including therapists, health visitors, family outreach workers, psychologists, social care workers, paediatricians and Portage workers, to meet the children’s specific needs.

Our staff are willing to attend training on special needs arranged by the Pre-School Learning Alliance and other professional bodies.

Our current Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-Coordinators are Claire Denyer and Hayley Allen.

**Structure of the Sessions**

All children have the opportunity to play both inside and outside during both our morning and afternoon sessions. Our large physical equipment includes items such as climbing frames, bikes, cars, balance beams, scooters, rockers, trampolines and stepping stones. We will always have an area for role play, craft and quiet reading. Group activities are an enjoyable part of the daily sessions and often include using the parachute, listening to a story or singing and dancing. All children will be encouraged to join in with these activities towards the end of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Each member of staff will take a role in planning activities for the children based around the children’s interests and regular planning meetings take place to ensure all staff have the opportunity to discuss any relevant planning issues or ideas.

**Recording children’s progress**

Throughout your child’s time at Rascals their progress and achievements will be observed and recorded on a regular basis by your key person in a Learning Journal. You can ask to see your child’s Journal at any time and are welcome to take it home to show your family but would ask that you inform your key person before doing so to prevent any records becoming lost.

We welcome contributions from home towards the Learning Journal such as pictures and photos and will be asking you during each term to work with us and provide us with an update as to how you think your child is progressing and to update any information we hold regarding your child’s interests. This ensures that we offer your child stimulating and interesting activities based around their interests whilst they are at Rascals.

We will also carry out a review of all children's development between the ages of 2 and 3 years that you can share with your health visitor.

**Reading Sessions**

During your child’s last year with us at rascals they will be invited to take part in a short reading session with their key person each week. Your child will then be given a book to take home and share with you. Please find the time to share the book with your child and talk about the pictures. We don’t expect the children to be reading the words but it is really helpful if they can learn how to hold a book carefully, look at the pictures and describe what is happening and most importantly enjoy sharing their book with you.

**General reminders**

•Please tell a member of staff if someone else is collecting your child. We will need to take a contact number if they are not already held on our records and will be unable to let your child leave with them unless we have your prior permission.

•Please ensure you bring your child a change of clothes in a named bag which can be hung on their peg during the session.

•Please provide your child with a drink of water in a named bottle.

•Keep your child at home if they are unwell and please inform us if this is the case, advising us of the symptoms.

•Check their hair regularly for head lice

•Don’t send your child to playgroup in their best clothes as they will inevitably get messy!

•Please don’t send your child to playgroup in converse trainers as they are very difficult for the children (and adults) to put on. This can hamper your child’s independence in learning how to dress themselves.

•Please don’t send your child in wearing vests with poppers once they have started the toilet training process as they will be unable to manage this themselves.

•Please remember that your child will not always make you something or draw you a picture whilst at playgroup as lots of our activities are providing children with experiences rather than producing an end product. The children will learn a great deal from mixing paint with their hands or smearing glue all over their paper without actually sticking anything to it. Please talk to your child about what they did at playgroup but again please don’t expect them to remember it all!

**Complaints Procedure**

If parents/carers have any concerns or worries the first thing to do is to talk to the Manager who will probably be able to resolve them easily and informally. If this does not produce a satisfactory outcome, and agreement cannot be reached the parent/carer should put the concern or complaint in writing. Ofsted will be informed of the complaint which will be sent to them immediately.

Parents may contact Ofsted directly on 0300 123 4666. The complaint will also be noted in the Playgroup’s complaints book. A meeting will be arranged which will include an external mediator, acceptable to both parties, to listen to both sides and offer advice. A member of the Methodist church will be available to act as a mediator if both parties wish. The mediator will keep all discussion confidential, will help define the problem and suggest further solution. An agreed written record of meetings will be kept.

The following pages contain the policies mentioned above.

1. **Safeguarding children**

**1.4 Information sharing**

**Policy statement**

We recognise that parents have a right to know that information they share will be regarded as confidential as well as be informed about the circumstances, and reasons, when we are obliged to share information.

We are obliged to share confidential information without authorisation from the person who provided it or to whom it relates if it is in the public interest. That is when:

* it is to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult; or
* not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

The decision should never be made as an individual, but with the back-up of managers. The three critical criteria are:

* Where there is *evidence* that the child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm.
* Where there *is reasonable cause to believe* that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.
* To *prevent* significant harm arising to children and young people or serious harm to adults, including the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

**Procedures**

Our procedure is based on the 7 golden rules for information sharing as set out in *Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (July 2018)*

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

* Our policy and procedures on information sharing provide guidance to appropriate sharing of information with external agencies.

1. Be open and honest. Explain to families how, when and why information will be shared about them and with whom. Seek consent to share information, unless it puts the child at risk or undermines a criminal investigation.
2. In our setting we ensure parents:

* receive information about our information sharing policy when starting their child in the setting and they sign a form to say that they *understand* circumstances when information may be shared without their consent. This will only be when it is a matter of safeguarding a child or vulnerable adult. This is on our registration form.
* have information about our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy; and
* have information about the circumstances when information will be shared with external agencies, for example, with regard to any special needs and or disabilities the child may have or transition to school.

1. Seek advice when there are doubts about possible significant harm to a child or others.

Managers contact the **Integrated Front Door** during office hours on the numbers below.

**Telephone: 01403 229900** Or email: WSchildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk

The **out of office** hours (5pm – 8am weekdays) and 24-hour emergency number on weekends and bank holidays is**0330 222 6664** or email WSchildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk.

1. Share with consent where appropriate. Respect the wishes of children and parents not to consent to share confidential information. However, in the interests of the child, know when it is reasonable to override their wish.

* Guidelines for consent are part of this procedure.

1. Managers are conversant with this and are able to advise staff accordingly. Consider the safety and welfare of the child when making a decision about sharing information – if there are concerns regarding ‘significant harm’ the child’s well being and safety is paramount.  
     
   In our setting we:

* record concerns and discuss these with the setting’s *designated persons* for child protection matters. Record decisions made and the reasons why information will be shared and to whom; and
* follow the procedures for reporting concerns and record keeping.

1. Information shared should be accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose it is being shared for, shared only with those who need to know and shared securely.

* Our Child Protection procedure and Record Keeping procedure set out how and where information should be recorded and what information should be shared with another agency when making a referral.

1. Reasons for decisions to share information, or not, are recorded.

* Provision for this is set out in our Record Keeping procedure

*Consent*

Parents have a right to be informed that their consent to share information will be sought in most cases, as well as the kinds of circumstances when their consent may not be sought, or their refusal to give consent may be overridden. We do this as follows:

* Our policies and procedures set out our responsibility regarding gaining consent to share information and when it may not be sought or overridden.
* We may cover this verbally when the child starts or include this in our prospectus.
* Parents sign a form at registration to say they understand this.
* Parents are asked to give written consent to share information about any additional needs their child may have, or to pass on child development summaries, to the next provider/school.

We consider the following questions when we need to share:

* Is there legitimate purpose to sharing the information?
* Does the information enable the person to be identified?
* Is the information confidential?
* If the information is confidential, do you have consent to share?
* Is there a statutory duty or court order to share information?
* If consent is refused, or there are good reasons not to seek consent, is there sufficient public interest to share information?
* If the decision is to share, are you sharing the right information in the right way?
* Have you properly recorded your decision?

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the setting, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please also see our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy.

**Legal framework**

* Data Protection Act 1998
* General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
* Human Rights Act 1998

**Further guidance**

* Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing safeguarding services 2018

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Rascals Pre-school Playgroup | name of setting |
| Held on | April 2021 | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed | April 2022 | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of Rascals | Tracey Hubbard | |
|  |  | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) | Manager | |

**3. Equality of opportunity**

**3.1 Valuing diversity and promoting equality**

**Policy statement**

We will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children, particularly those that arise from their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, gender, ability or disability. Our setting is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children, families and staff. We aim to:

* provide a secure and accessible environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued;
* include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
* provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
* improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity; and
* make inclusion a thread that runs through all the activities of the setting.

**Procedures**

### Admissions

* We advertise our service widely.
* Our setting is open to all members of the community.
* We reflect the diversity of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
* We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
* We provide information in other languages when needed.
* We base our admissions policy on a fair system.
* We ensure that all parents are made aware of our equal opportunities policy.
* We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our setting, based on colour, ethnicity, religion or social background, such as being a member of a Travelling community or an asylum seeker.
* We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our setting for reason relating to disability.
* We develop an action plan to ensure that people with disabilities can participate successfully in the services offered by the setting and in the curriculum offered.
* We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents. Displaying of openly discriminatory and possibly offensive materials, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the premises and will be dealt with in the strongest manner.

## *Employment*

* Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
* Applicants are welcome from all backgrounds and posts are open to all.
* We may use the exemption clauses in relevant legislation to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community.
* The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service. This ensures fairness in the selection process.
* All job descriptions include a commitment to promoting equality and recognising and respecting diversity as part of their specifications.
* We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.

### Training

* We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish.
* We ensure that staff are confident and fully trained in administering relevant medicines and performing invasive care procedures when these are required.
* We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for promoting equality, valuing diversity and inclusion.

### Curriculum

The curriculum offered in the setting encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

Our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. If access to the setting is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults. We do this by:

* making children feel valued and good about themselves;
* ensuring that children have equality of access to learning;
* undertaking an access audit to establish if the setting is accessible to all children;
* making adjustments to the environment and resources to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory impairments;
* making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities, e.g. recognising the different learning styles of girls and boys;
* positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources;
* avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials;
* creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
* differentiating the curriculum to meet children’s special educational needs;
* helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
* ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities;
* ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning; and
* ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages.

### Valuing diversity in families

* We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
* We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life to the setting.
* We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the setting and to contribute fully.
* For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion.
* We offer a flexible payment system for families of differing means and offer information regarding sources of financial support.

### Food

* We work in partnership with parents to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met.
* We help children to learn about a range of food.

*Monitoring and reviewing*

* To ensure our policies and procedures remain effective we will monitor and review them on an ongoing basis to ensure our strategies meets the overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and valuing diversity.
* We provide a complaints procedure and a complaints summary record for parents to see.

**Legal framework**

* The Equality Act 2010
* Equal Opportunity Act 2010
* Children Act 2004
* Children and Families Act: Part 3: Children and Young People in England with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2014
* Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years 2015
* Disability Equality Duty as part of DDA 2005

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**3. Equality of opportunity**

**3.3 Achieving positive behaviour**

**Policy statement**

Our setting believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

## Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

**Procedures**

## All staff have overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.

**The person responsible for ensuring this policy is kept up to date is Tracey Hubbard.**

We require the manager to:

* keep themselves up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
* access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development ; and
* check that all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour. We keep a record of staff attendance at this training.
* We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of and respect those used by members of the setting.

We require all adults including staff, parents/carers, volunteers, visitors and students to:

* Provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
* Keep to these guidelines at all times.
* Behave in a non-aggressive and non-abusive way at all times. Differences of opinion will be discussed in a calm and respectful manner, away from the children at all times.
* Any use of disrespectful, abusive or aggressive behaviour will immediately be reported to a Church Official.

Members of staff have the right to discontinue a conversation with any aggressive/abusive adult if they feel the situation requires this action and they have the right to ask that adult to leave the premises.

We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's behaviour policy and it’s guidelines for behaviour.

We work in partnership with children's parents/carers. Parents/carers are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents/carers to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

## *Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour*

* We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. This will involve the adult explaining to the child how their behaviour was not acceptable. A conflict resolution strategy is used. This means an adult will never assume the circumstance of an incident but will talk to both children and offer them the opportunity to talk about the incident and to offer their own view point. The adult will also encourage them to work together to resolve their conflict offering support where needed so the child can learn a more appropriate response.
* We ensure that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
* We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share. We make extra effort to praise any positive behaviour.
* We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
* We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
* We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
* When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
* We never send children out of the room by themselves, nor do we use a ‘naughty chair’ or a ‘time out’ strategy that excludes children from the group.
* We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
* We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
* We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
* Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our Managers and the situation is discussed with the child’s parent/carer on the same day.
* In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
* We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

## *Children under three years*

* When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
* We recognise that young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them do this.
* Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
* If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we try to find out the underlying cause and work together with the family to offer support where needed. Sometimes a child has not settled in well and the behaviour may be the result of ‘separation anxiety’.
* We focus on ensuring a child’s attachment figure in the setting, usually their key person, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child but equally ensure that the child is comfortable with all adults within the setting.

*Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression*

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes – such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.

* We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive.
* We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
* We encourage children to only engage in this play with others who want to engage in the same theme and to not involve others who look unhappy, frightened or unwilling to join in. Practitioners encourage children to do this by observing other children’s facial expressions and body language.
* We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to ‘goodies and baddies’ and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
* We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of ‘teachable moments’ to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.
* We discourage children from bringing realistic looking toy weapons into playgroup.

*Hurtful behaviour*

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as ‘bullying’. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often children are unaware of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

* We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
* We will help them manage these feelings as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
* We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
* Therefore we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
* We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child’s rage as that will have the opposite effect.
* Our way of responding to children is to calm them through holding, cuddling and where appropriate the use of signing. We will talk to all children offering them an explanation and will discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.
* We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. “Adam took your car, didn’t he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn’t like it when he took it, did you? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit him?” Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
* We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others’ feelings. “When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn’t like that and it made him cry.”
* We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. “I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn’t crying any more. Let’s see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one.”
* We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries. We will talk to parents/carers and ask for their support outside of the setting also.
* We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
* We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt. Sometimes we encourage them to show they are sorry through body language such as a hug or even a smile.
* When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that:
* they do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs – this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting;
* their parent, or carer in the setting, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;
* the child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;
* the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse;
* the child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.
* Where this does not work, we use the SEND Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to other professionals where necessary with parent/carer’s permission.

**Legal Framework**

* Statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage – 2017
* SEND code of Practice - 2015

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Rascals Pre-school Playgroup | name of setting |
| Held on | April 2021 | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed | April 2022 | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of Rascals | Tracey Hubbard | |
|  |  | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) | Manager | |

**6. Administration**

**6.2 Collection of Fees and Unpaid Fees Policy**

**Policy statement**

It is our intention to make our setting accessible to children and families from all sections of our community. We aim to work together with families to ensure that they can access the services we provide within a set framework.

**Procedures**

Opening Hours and funding

* Rascals Pre-School Playgroup is open Monday & Tuesday 9.30am – 3.30pm and Thursday & Friday mornings from 9.30am to 12.30pm, 38 weeks of the year, term time only. All children are entitled to funding from the Government of up to 15 hours per week from the term after their third birthday and some families are entitled to 30 hours of funding per week if they meet set criteria. Rascals can only offer a maximum of 18 hours per week subject to places being available. West Sussex County Council offer free entitlement to some children under 3 who meet certain criteria relating to household income and certain benefits and this is available for children the term after their second birthday.

Calculation of fees

* Fees for children not yet eligible for the funding are calculated at £5 per hour. Rascals is open for 38 weeks of the year and each term may vary in length depending on the number of weeks we are open. Fees are calculated based on the usual number of hours of care provided for your child per week for the number of weeks per individual term. The cost is per term and therefore bank holidays, sickness absence and closure days are still due.

Acceptance of your place at Rascals

* Once we have received your written acceptance of your place at Rascals the first terms fees will become due at the beginning of the first term you are with us. If you decide to withdraw your acceptance within the term leading up to your start date the first terms fees will still be due if we are unable to fill this place at short notice. We are a non-profit making group and vacant places would affect our financial situation greatly.

Snack Contribution

* Although we do not include a charge in our fees for snacks provided to the children, we do ask for a voluntary contribution at the beginning of every term to cover the costs. This amount may vary but you will be informed at the beginning of every term.

Methods of Payment

* Children are registered for a number of hours per week with fees payable on a termly basis at the start of each term. Fees can be settled on a Termly, Half Termly or where requested on a Weekly or Monthly basis. We prefer for fees to be paid by bank transfer wherever possible.

Absence and fees payable

* Fees must still be paid if children are absent for a short period of time for example holidays or illness. This is because the setting will still have a requirement to meet the cost of rent, wages and other overheads. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time please let us know.
* In the case of a pandemic situation please see ‘Closures and fees payable’.

Notice period

* Families are required to give us one months notice prior to moving their child away from the setting, whether they are fee paying or in receipt of free entitlement from West Sussex County Council. Parents sign their agreement to this within our registration form.

Closures and fees payable

* There may be odd occasions throughout the year where Rascals will be closed including Bank Holidays. If we are closed for a Bank Holiday, fees are still due as the fees are calculated on a termly basis and staff, premises and other costs are still payable by us.
* However, there may be occasions where fees will be waived for closures, such as:
* Severe weather conditions which make it unsafe for us to access the premises
* Staff sickness/absence which results in us not being able to meet the necessary adult:child ratio as required by Ofsted and the EYFS
* Use of the hall by the Methodist Church
* Closure as instructed by Government in the case of a Pandemic
* Families asked to self-isolate during a Pandemic

Financial Support

* Details of financial support can be found at [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/fagWtc1.shtml) or from the Family Information Service within the West Sussex County Council website.
* The Government are now offering a Tax Free Childcare scheme and 30 hours free childcare scheme. A website to support parents/carers in calculating what help they are eligible for can be found here: [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/)

Non payment of fees

* Non payment of fees will be dealt with promptly and any arrears must be paid before the next term.

We realise that this may be a temporary problem but it is important that you discuss the matter in private and in confidence with us as soon as possible in order that we can support you in arranging payment of the outstanding fees.

* Where no payment of fees has been made for 3 weeks an informal invitation to discuss the matter will be offered. Following this discussion any agreement reached regarding payment will be put into writing.
* If agreement isn’t reached, we reserve the right to withdraw access to non-funded hours for your child which will result in them losing those hours at Rascals.
* If discussion is declined, an agreement is not reached, or if a payment method is not committed to, after a further 3 Weeks, the Pre-School Manager will inform the parent/carer in writing that no further non-funded hours will be available to their child. This results in your child losing those hours at Rascals.

* If the issue remains unresolved, we will seek legal advice.

* We will at all times respect confidentiality and aim to work with parents/carers to reach a positive and realistic solution. If you ever have any concerns regarding the payment of your fees please speak to us.
* Should a family default on their fee payments and fees remain outstanding when the child leaves without attempts being made to clear the debt, we reserve the right to decline future requests for a place for younger siblings. We also reserve the right to offer places for immediate family members on a payment in advance basis only. If these payments are defaulted at any time, we will inform the family that the place will be withdrawn if no further payments are made within 7 days.

Further guidance

* [www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/childcare-and-early-education/free-childcare-for-2-year-olds/](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/childcare-and-early-education/free-childcare-for-2-year-olds/)
* <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>
* <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Rascals Pre-school Playgroup | name of setting |
| Held on | February 2021 | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed | February 2022 | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of Rascals | Tracey Hubbard | |
|  |  | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) | Manager | |

**8. Partnership**

**8.1 The role of the key person and settling-in**

**Policy Statement**

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

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

We aim to make the setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The key person role is set out in the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer a key person for each child.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

**Procedures**

* We allocate a key person before the child starts.
* The key person is responsible for settling the child into our setting.
* The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
* The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child’s well-being, care and learning.
* The key person acts as the key contact for the parents/carers and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child’s development with those carers.
* A key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child’s parents/carers to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
* The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group.
* We ensure that all staff are kept up to date with issues that may affect certain key children so that if a key person is absent any other member of staff can take over the care of that child and can speak to parents/carers confidently about current issues.
* We promote the role of the key person as the child’s primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

*Settling-in*

* Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents/carers with information. These include written information such as our prospectus and policies and individual meetings with parents.
* During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we aim to provide an opportunity for the child and his/her parents/carers to visit the setting if possible. This visit provides us with the opportunity to discuss the child’s registration information before they start with us.
* We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents/carers at the child's first session and during the settling-in process
* There will be occasions where visits to the setting are not possible and on these occasions we will organise an open morning in order for parents/carers and children to meet each other and all the staff within safety guidelines.
* When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents carers and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
* Although we appreciate that dummies may be used at home, we request that dummies are not brought into the setting. Research has shown that dummies can lead to speech delays and can affect the normal development of children’s teeth. We ask that other comforters are brought into the setting instead such as a cuddly toy which can be safely stored in the child’s bag. If parents/carers need help and support with reducing the use of dummies we will offer this or will refer them to their local family centre.
* We understand that the parent, carer or close relative, may want to stay during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child. We usually aim for this to be limited to 30 minutes, gradually reducing this time over the first few sessions. Visitors to the setting will be asked to comply with any current safety procedures such as face coverings and hand washing.
* Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent/carer to be on hand to re-settle them.
* We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
* When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when. We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left.
* We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker and children who are upset will always be closely looked after either by their key person or another member of staff who the child feels comfortable with alongside their parent/carer in order to build secure relationships.
* We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it too distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
* We do understand that some children may appear upset when they arrive for several months after starting the setting but in cases where practitioners have seen evidence of the child being settled once the parent/carer has left the premises, the key person will welcome the child each morning where possible, help the child to say goodbye to their parent/carer and ensure that they feel settled as quickly as possible. This will always be discussed with the parent/carer to ensure they feel happy with this arrangement.
* We always call or text parents/carers to confirm once their child has settled comfortably to prevent them feeling anxious.
* Within the first term of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents/carers to start to create their child's record of achievement.

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