



Staff Handbook

Version:	1.1
Date:	

Issued to:	
Date:	
Issued by:	

Please read the contents and then sign below to indicate your agreement to abide by all company Policies and Procedures:

Signed:	
Print Name:	
Date:	

Please remove this front page and return to your manager when you are comfortable that you have read and understand all Policies and Procedures.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents			
Page No.	Title	Page No.	Title
3	Welcome	24	Staff Training Policy
	Philosophy & Ethos		Wages and Working Time
	Long Term Curriculum		Leave & Public Holidays
4	Company Policy and Rules	25	Annual Leave
	Compliance	26	Maternity Leave
5	Equal Opportunities	27	Sick Leave
	Health & Safety and Supervision	28	Force Majeure Leave
	Code of Behaviour		Parental Leave
7	Supporting Behaviour Policy	29	Personal Belongings
9	Appearance & Punctuality		Absenteeism
	Company Property	30	Staff Meetings & Records
	Social Media & Mobile Devices		Garda Vetting
11	Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs	31	Data protection
	Disciplinary Procedure	32	IT and Computers
18	Grievance Policy	33	Confidentiality
21	Public Statement		Student Policy
	Probation Period	34	Important Notes
22	Minimum Notice		Signatures
23	Support and Supervision		

WELCOME TO PUGWASH BAY LTD.

Pugwash Bay Ltd. is the Northeast's largest and leading childcare provider. We provide purpose designed facilities where all the children's needs are specifically catered for.

The owner, Sharon Bell has been involved in childcare for many years now. Our first service was opened in Annagassan, Co Louth, and due to the support of our customers and our staff we opened another in Bay Estate, Dundalk. With the continued support and our efforts to constantly achieve the highest possible standards, we have grown to a point where we have now opened another three purpose built childcare centers. The first one, in the Loughantarve development in Knockbridge, opened in September 2008, the second in the Lis Na Dara development on the Carrick road, Dundalk opened on January 12th 2009 and the third opened in Mornington Manor, Mornington, Co. Meath in August 2011.

These new centers will complement our existing centers, and will offer the parents in the North-East area the type of childcare, that up to now has only been available in the greater Dublin area.

All our childcare centers are registered with the appropriate government departments, children, health and education and comply fully with all statutory regulations and requirements. We operate an open door policy of inspection from the relevant health, fire, safety, educational and professional bodies that regulate the industry. We comply with all legislation and regulation that applies to our sector.

PHILOSOPHY / ETHOS

At Pugwash Bay Ltd., our goal is to provide the highest standard and quality of care. We apply this ethos to everything we do, from our buildings to our staff. The children in our care are encouraged to learn through play in a safe and comfortable environment.

We constantly evaluate our services to ensure that we offer parents and children a standard of childcare that is second to none.

At Pugwash Bay Ltd. we believe that learning should be fun. Well-designed play activities are an effective way for children to learn and we combine this with our renowned caring approach. We ensure a warm loving "home from home" environment, **WHERE EACH CHILD IS TREATED WITH RESPECT AND IS VALUED AS AN INDIVIDUAL.**

LONG TERM CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Early childhood is a significant and distinct time in life that needs to be valued, respected and nurtured. Recognition of the child's individuality, strengths, rights and needs as citizens are central to a quality early childhood experience.

At Pugwash Bay our Aistear and Síolta guided curriculum is play based and developed from the children's interests and led by their curiosity and willingness to learn. It is called the 'Bright Beginnings Curriculum'. The name reflects our wish that the curriculum will be a solid beginning to your child's lifelong journey of learning and development. We believe our curriculum to be "all of the experiences, both formal and informal, planned and unplanned in the indoor and outdoor environment, which contribute to children's learning and development" (Aistear 2009).

Our team believes that our curriculum should be filled with opportunities to provide love and support and that the only way to really know a child is through solid relationships. Children learn through loving, nurturing, respectful relationships with adults and other children. We use the key worker system to support this. The team believes that

the child's personality should be respected and incorporated and that the curriculum should help foster confident and happy children. Each child will be viewed as a capable and competent individual and their dispositions will be recognised and encouraged daily. An emphasis will be placed on developing social skills that will allow the child to exert their independence and feel confident and capable.

Aistear is guided by four main themes which each have aims and learning goals (96 in total) that we use in the planning and development of the curriculum and of the learning experiences which are provided for the children. The themes are:

Well-being

Identity and Belonging

Communicating

Exploring and Thinking

The outcomes we aspire to achieve with the children in our care are as follows:

1. Our children will be confident, happy and healthy
2. Our children will have a positive sense of who they are, develop a sense of their culture and heritage and feel valued and respected as part of a family and community
3. Our children will be encouraged to share their experiences, thoughts, ideas and feelings with growing confidence and competence in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes
4. Our children will be supported to make sense of things, places and people in their world

The 96 learning goals guide our team so that they plan and provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum to the children in our care. Using these helps us to achieve the above outcomes and to ensure children are growing, developing and learning at a natural pace for their age and stage of development and ability. They outline the dispositions, skills, values and attitudes, ad knowledge and understanding in order to plan for and assess children's learning and development.

PERSONNEL POLICIES:

These are some of the more relevant policies referring to your entitlements and responsibilities. All policies and procedures are contained in the Health and Safety Statement and it is vital that you read and understand these within the first month of your employment. Please do not hesitate to ask your manager for clarification on any matter relating to the policies and procedures.

COMPANY RULES

In any organisation it is necessary to have certain rules and regulations to protect the health and safety of all employees and customers and to ensure high standards of conduct, performance and service. As an employee of Pugwash Bay, it is important that you are aware of the rules and regulations which apply to you.

Failure to adhere to Company rules, procedures and policies will result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, in accordance with the Company's Discipline Procedure.

COMPLIANCE

Every employee must at all times act within the law of the land and any regulations which are applicable to the Company's activities. Any employee who becomes aware of another employee acting illegally or breaching company policy, whilst acting on behalf of the Company, must report the activity to a Manager.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Company's Equal Opportunities Policy aims to promote equality, harmony and respect amongst individuals and to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of all kinds. Every employee must ensure that his/her conduct conforms to the standards set out in this policy statement. No employee should be discriminated against for any reason. All positions will be advertised internally as well as externally and we encourage employees who meet the criteria to apply. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly at any time please report it to your manager immediately.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Company has adopted a Health and Safety Statement to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees. Every employee must ensure that his/her conduct conforms to the standards set out in this Statement. This is located with all policies and procedures in a folder in the reception area. You are responsible for making yourself fully aware of these within the first 4 weeks of your employment with us.

SUPERVISION

The supervision of children is priority. All staff should ensure that at all times they are in a position where they can clearly see the children and provide the necessary supervision. When in the garden staff must remain mobile and place themselves at significant hazard points such as the swings, slide etc. Any incident which occurs outside of supervision will require a full written explanation. This is necessary to keep on file as part of our accident and injury procedures. A lack of supervision is extremely serious and will be dealt with in line with our disciplinary policy.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- Explains to new staff how we work with children and what is acceptable
- Explains to parents what they and their child can expect from employees in the service
- Creates a shared understanding of best practice
- Challenge an employee when practice is not at an acceptable standard
- Challenge parents when behaviour in the service is not acceptable
- As a Training tool
- ✚ Relates both to interactions with children and to what is acceptable between adults while children are present; it applies to all adults in the service including parents.
- ✚ We recognise the importance of a Code of Behaviour between staff and children as recommended in Our Duty to Care. Our Code of Behaviour is kept under regular review. The Code of Behaviour supports all staff and volunteers to have a clear understanding of what is acceptable with respect to their behaviour with children.
- ✚ We recognise that children have an equal right to our service provision in line with the Equal Status Act and the National Disability Strategy.
- ✚ We are committed to -
 - Valuing and respecting all children as individuals
 - Listening to children
 - Involving children in decision making as appropriate
 - Encouraging children to express themselves
 - Working in partnership with parents
 - Promoting positive behaviour

- Valuing difference

- Implementing and adhering to all relevant policies to keep children safe

- ✚ It is expected that all staff and students are familiar with the code and that they will raise any questions with their line manager.
- ✚ All employees have a duty to adhere to the Code of Behaviour and to bring breaches of the code to the attention of their line manager. Breaches of the Code of Behaviour are dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Positive Physical Contact

Touch and physical interaction are essential to the healthy development and well-being of young children. Misunderstanding of Child Protection and Welfare Policy has, at times, left practitioners unsure as to how to provide the care that children require.

Points to Consider:

- ✚ Young children and babies require touch and physical contact to develop.
- ✚ Touch and physical contact are important in offering comfort and reassurance to young children
- ✚ Touch and physical contact should be governed by the age and developmental stage of the child for example physical interaction with a 6-month old baby is very different to that with a 4 year old child.
- ✚ All children are different and may need assistance in different ways. Children should be assisted with toileting and dressing based on individual need.
- ✚ Touch should be in response to the needs of a child not the adult. However, young children should be given the opportunity for physical contact if they require it.
- ✚ Touch and physical contact should be with the child's permission – resistance from the child should be respected.
- ✚ Touch and physical contact should be open and not secretive.
- ✚ Touch should be appropriate and should never be rough, sexual in any way, harmful or used as punishment.

Managing/Supervising Activities

- ✚ Ensure activities are child centred
- ✚ Supervision of the children must always be your first priority. Staff must have their focus and concentration on the children at all times (**Appendix 1 Supervision Policy**)
- ✚ In line with our enquiry based curriculum ensure children are included in decision making and planning
- ✚ Ensure staff and resources are available for the activity
- ✚ Review and record key learning to be used in future planning
- ✚ Don't do activities that do not come from the children's interests
- ✚ Never leave children unattended
- ✚ Don't allow rough play where there is an increased risk of injury

One-to-One work

- ✚ Be clear about the purpose of the work and the need for a one to one scenario
- ✚ Ensure there is agreement with the child's parents
- ✚ Ensure line management is aware of the one to one work
- ✚ Carry out regular reviews keeping all parties update on the progress / outcomes
- ✚ Never take a child in a car alone
- ✚ Ensure you never use a room with a locked door
- ✚ Where possible use an adjoining space and leave doors open

Communication with Children

- ✚ Listen to children, hear them and respect what they say
- ✚ Speak kindly and warmly to all children
- ✚ Encourage and praise children

- ✚ Treat them with dignity and respect
- ✚ Use age appropriate language
- ✚ Get down to the child's eye level and make eye contact
- ✚ Act as an appropriate role model in your interactions with others
- ✚ Don't shout, raise your voice or scare the children
- ✚ Never ignore a child
- ✚ Do not use sarcasm or make jokes about a child or their family
- ✚ Never use inappropriate language around the children

SUPPORTING BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Pugwash Bay aims to support and guide all children to manage their own behaviour and learn to resolve conflicts that arise. Children attending the service are here for new learning experiences which may test their own coping strategies. All staff will support the children to regulate their behaviour and will have a number of strategies to deal with both positive and challenging behaviour. This policy is underpinned by the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2016.

Supporting Positive Behaviour:

- ✚ The learning curriculum is designed with the age and developmental stage of the child in mind.
- ✚ Each child will be assigned a key worker who will be responsible for building up a special relationship with them and their family. This helps with getting to know what the child enjoys and some of the situations they find difficult.
- ✚ Staff will be the role model of positive behaviour and how they play, speak and interact with the children is a key part of their role.
- ✚ Role modelling includes: Explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, getting down to the child's eye level.
- ✚ Any rules will be kept clear, simple and age appropriate.
- ✚ Staff will always comfort an upset child.
- ✚ Play activities will be used to play out challenging situation so children get the opportunity to practice positive behaviour strategies.
- ✚ Books and storytelling is used to talk about feelings and what we can all do when we are angry, upset or frustrated.
- ✚ A range of activities will be available to the group of children which offer a lot of choice to all in order to keep the children active in play.
- ✚ Children will have ample time to explore outdoors giving them lots of opportunity to run and feel free.
- ✚ Children will not have to sit for long periods of time allowing them have a choice and to move from an activity which does not interest them.
- ✚ The children will come up with a list of rules they think are important helping them take ownership of their behaviour.
- ✚ The play environments will be laid out into specific play spaces which supports children's natural curiosity encouraging them to become engrossed in their play and develop their own interests.

Anticipating Inappropriate Behaviour:

Each child is assigned a "key worker" who is responsible for getting to know each child and their families. This is important for gathering information and knowledge about the whole child. The key workers carry out observations and play alongside the children getting to know their likes and dislikes. Through their role they are in a position to begin anticipating a child's reaction and behaviour knowing what is likely to upset a child's mood or behaviour.

Strategies for Supporting Children:

- ✚ It is recognised that all children's behaviour has some meaning to the child however at times this behaviour may be difficult or pose a danger to the child or other children.
- ✚ For minor behaviour issues e.g. children fighting over a toy a six steps to conflict resolution approach will be used:
 - **Approach calmly** – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
 - **Acknowledge feelings** – describe how the child/ children are feeling, children often don't have the language to explain how they feel leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them "you both look very sad and upset"

- **Gather information** – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
- **Restate the problem** – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/ all can understand both sides of the story.
- **Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together** (or for younger children give a solution) - give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time but its giving the children lots of practice compromising with one another which are vital skills they will need.
- **Be prepared to give follow up support** – it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

Managing Moderate Behaviour Issues:

This type of behaviour can be recognised when the inappropriate behaviour is becoming a more regular occurrence.

- The staff team will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place
- Staff will observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour
- When the behaviour happens the steps above will be used with the child
- The matter will be discussed in detail with the child’s family and both parties should work together to address the issues

Managing Challenging Behaviour Issues:

- ✚ If a child’s behaviour is considered dangerous to themselves or others a staff member will carefully remove either the child or the other children from the situation. This is in order to protect all using the service. The child will be given time to become calm and a staff member will help guide them with their behaviour.
- ✚ The key worker will record the incident and discuss with the family.
- ✚ If a child’s behaviour is ongoing or becomes severely challenging the service will implement the following strategies:
 - The staff team will carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and plan out going forward to help the child overcome the issues.
 - The child’s key worker will carry out a number of observations to try establish a trigger of the behaviour.
 - All observations will be discussed with the family.
 - A plan will be drawn up in collaboration with the staff team and family of the child.
 - If necessary the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
 - If the behaviour is a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
 - All information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
 - All meetings, plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child’s record in a locked cabinet.
 - The staff will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situation which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.

Practices Prohibited:

- Corporal or physical punishment
- Any practices that are disrespectful, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful
- The use of bolted chairs or time outs
- Shouting, screaming or any behaviour which may scare the child
- Communicating behavioural issues with a parent through a daily diary, a note sent home, an email etc. Direct contact should always be made with a parent to discuss any issues which arise.

Managing Challenging Behaviour Issues / Additional Needs:

- ✚ If a child’s behaviour or their needs require more support than can be provided by this policy, then an Individual Learning Plan will be created. This will have input from all caregivers and will outline steps for dealing with difficult behaviours. This plan will be kept on the child’s file and fully communicated to all staff involved in their care.

APPEARANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Pugwash Bay Ltd. require a high standard of professionalism from their employees. This includes maintaining a high standard of hygiene and ensuring you are at all times in uniform and well presented. It also means being on time for your shift and **ready to start work** at the rostered time.

Procedure:

A uniform must be worn at all times. The uniform consists of a red tunic, black trousers and enclosed flat black shoes. Only a red or black cardigan or fleece may be worn over the tunic. A black top may be worn underneath. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- ❖ Your uniform must be kept clean and neat at all times. At all times you should be clean and well presented for your shift.
- ❖ Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn where provided for hygiene reasons. Failure to wear this may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- ❖ The only jewellery to be worn is a wedding band, watch and studded earrings.
- ❖ Hair should always be fully tied back.
- ❖ Nails must be kept short and neat. If you are responsible for food preparation false / gel / acrylic nails are not allowed.
- ❖ Staff should arrive on the premises at least five minutes prior to the start of their shift. This allows enough time for staff to store their belongings, sign in and wash their hands before starting work.
- ❖ Arriving at the exact time your shift begins is unprofessional and is unfair on colleagues who may be waiting to conduct a handover before their shift ends.
- ❖ If a member of staff is running late we ask that they call their manager out of courtesy to let them know how long they will be. Management understands that this happens from time to time, however, repeated lateness will result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including dismissal.

COMPANY PROPERTY

Company property must be treated with care and respect at all times. Any damage to company property must be reported to a Manager. Unauthorised use of or wilful damage to company property will be treated as a disciplinary matter. All company property must be returned at the end of your employment.

SOCIAL MEDIA & MOBILE DEVICES POLICY

Pugwash Bay uses social media (namely Facebook and our website) as an additional tool for communication with parents and families. The purpose is to keep parents informed of the happenings within the service and in doing so pictures of the children engaging in activities may be used. Permission to publish pictures of the children is sought when the child enrolls at our service and is completely optional. Pugwash Bay has a main Facebook page that is used to market the service but no pictures of the children are used here.

Social Media Use:

- ✚ The crèche managers are solely responsible for updating the individual crèche Facebook pages
- ✚ They are aware that they must ensure there is permission for all children seen in the images
- ✚ They are responsible for ensuring privacy settings are at the highest level and that only parents are accepted to the page and this should be kept current and updated
- ✚ Children in the service will not be engaged with on social media. In relation to Facebook, children in the service will not be 'friended'

Consent & Images

- ✚ Consent is required from parents before an image of a child can be used on social media.
- ✚ Images of children are taken using the crèche camera
- ✚ Staff are not permitted to take images of the children on their own devices
- ✚ Images of children are covered by Data Protection Legislation.

- ✚ We give careful consideration to whether it is necessary to post the image of a child on-line. We understand that we are creating digital footprints for children which they are unable to consent to.
- ✚ We will never post an image of a child with identifying information
- ✚ We will be mindful not to create a perception of division in groups of children or leave some children feeling left out (for example if not all the children have consent for their image to appear on Facebook then is a group shot appropriate?)
- ✚ Ensure children are appropriately dressed before posting any image
- ✚ Videos will not be used in social media

Service Events

- ✚ We request that parents do not share images of other people's children on line and ask parents to be respectful of this.

Personal Social Media

- ✚ It is against company policy to use the Pugwash name or logo without written permission from management.
- ✚ The disclosure or posting of confidential or business sensitive information or images is forbidden.
- ✚ It is not acceptable to post images or information regarding children, employees or parents as they engage in setting related activities.
- ✚ Staff, students and parents must not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the setting or anybody connected to the setting.
- ✚ Friendship with parents on social networks is prohibited in order to safeguard the staff. If friendships have been made previously they must be removed once the child is registered.

Any breaches of this policy will be taken very seriously and fully investigated. Breaches will be dealt with in line with the disciplinary policy and will be treated as gross misconduct. Management enforce these measures to protect the settings reputation and that of those involved in the setting.

Mobile Devices

Our goal is to provide an environment where children, parents and staff are protected from images, videos or other content being recorded and inappropriately used. We also limit use to avoid staff being distracted from their important work with children.

- ✚ Mobile devices, including phones, must be turned off or left on silent in your bag in the designated personal belonging storage area. They can be used while on break only.
- ✚ In order to be reached in emergency staff are asked to give the crèche number and calls will be put through to them.
- ✚ If staff need to make a call they can use the office after seeking permission from the crèche manager.
- ✚ During school collections and outings (e.g. turtle bus) staff are asked to bring their phone in case of emergency. It should only be used for this purpose and should be returned to the staff belongings area upon return to the crèche.
- ✚ Staff are asked to report concerns to the crèche manager and the issue will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.
- ✚ Management reserves the right to check the image content of your phone should a concern arise.
- ✚ If inappropriate / unauthorised media content is found this will be treated as a case of gross misconduct and dealt with in line with the disciplinary policy.

Camera

Photos provide an effective form of recording a child's progression, enjoyment, activity and development. Cameras should be used for this purpose only. It is essential that media is recorded and stored appropriately to safeguard the children in our care.

- ✚ Only the designated camera or device will be used.

- ✚ If, for some reason, photos are to be taken in the bathroom or of the children undressed (i.e. sleep time) permission must be sought from management and they will supervise. The camera must be placed where it can be seen at all times.
- ✚ It is a case of gross misconduct for a staff member to record any form of media using their own device and it is never acceptable for staff to upload images or media to social media. A breach will result in disciplinary action as gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal.

Children's Personal Devices

Children are not permitted to bring mobile devices of any kind to the crèche. If they need to for any reason the device must be switched off for the duration of the child's time at the service. Parents must inform staff that the child has the device on their person. Pugwash Bay Ltd. does not accept any responsibility for loss, damage or theft of a device on or from our premises.

SMOKING

In the interests of the health, safety and comfort of employees and customers and to comply with legislation, the Company operates a strict no smoking policy. Smoking is prohibited in all Company work places and Company owned vehicles. Staff should be aware that children see them as role models and for this reason should make considerable effort not to be seen smoking by any of the children in their care. Breach of this policy will be treated as gross misconduct and is likely to lead to dismissal.

CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

The Company forbids the consumption of alcohol on its premises nor will it permit any employee to work whilst under the influence of alcohol. This will be treated as gross misconduct and is likely to lead to dismissal.

DRUG ABUSE

The Company forbids the possession, use or distribution of drugs for non-medical purposes on its premises nor will it permit any employee to work whilst under the influence of non-prescription drugs. This will be treated as gross misconduct and is likely to lead to dismissal.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Step 1 – Informal Counselling

Every effort will be made by the employee's immediate supervisor/manager to address shortcomings in work standards, conduct or attendance through informal counselling without invoking the disciplinary procedure. The purpose of counselling is to ensure that employees understand what is expected from them and to provide an opportunity to discuss any aspects of the job which may be causing them difficulties in achieving the required standards. The formal disciplinary procedure is normally only invoked where this fails to bring about the required improvements. The counselling interview should be conducted as follows:

- The employee shall be given precise details of the specific aspects of his or her attendance, work or conduct that require improvement.
- The employee shall be given an opportunity to respond to complaints and careful consideration shall be given to any explanations given.
- Having made the employee aware of deficiencies in his/her attendance, work or conduct, the supervisor/manager in consultation with the employee shall identify appropriate measures that can be taken to assist the employee and formulate an action plan for achieving the required improvements.
- Details of the counselling interview and any follow-up action agreed shall be documented and signed by both parties.

Step 2 - Formal Procedure

Where an employee's conduct, attendance or work does not meet the required standards despite informal counselling, the matter will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. While the disciplinary procedure will normally be operated on a progressive basis, in cases of serious misconduct the manager may bypass stages 1, 2 and 3 of the procedure.

The stages of the disciplinary procedure are as follows:

Stage 1 Oral Warning

An employee whose work/conduct/attendance falls below the required standards will normally be issued with a formal oral warning for a period of six months. The warning will give details of the precise nature of the complaint, the improvements required and the timescale for improvement. S/he will be advised that the warning constitutes the first stage of the disciplinary procedure and failure to improve within the agreed timescale may result in further disciplinary action under stage 2 of the disciplinary procedure. A record of the warning will be kept on the employee's personnel file and will be removed after six months, subject to satisfactory improvement during this period. The employee will have a right to appeal the oral warning to a level of management higher than the original decision-maker. Appeals must be made in writing to a senior manager setting out the grounds for appeal within 7 days of the employee being notified of the decision.

Stage 2 Written Warning

If the employee fails to make the necessary improvements or if the nature of the unsatisfactory performance/conduct is more serious, s/he will normally be issued with a formal written warning for a period of 9 months. The written warning will give details of the complaint, the improvements required and the timescale for improvement. The employee will also be advised that failure to improve within the agreed timescale may result in the issuing of a final written warning under stage 3 of the disciplinary procedure. The warning will be removed after 9 months, subject to satisfactory improvement during this period. The employee will have a right to appeal the written warning to a level of management higher than the original decision-maker. Appeals must be made in writing setting out the grounds for appeal within 7 days of the employee being notified of the decision.

Stage 3 Final Written Warning

If the employee fails to make the necessary improvements, s/he will normally be issued with a final written warning for a period of up to 12 months (this period may be extended in exceptional circumstances). The warning will give details of the complaint, the improvements required and the timescale for improvement. The employee will be advised that failure to improve within the agreed timescale may lead to dismissal or some other sanction short of dismissal under stage 4 of the disciplinary procedure. The warning will be removed after the specified period, subject to satisfactory improvement during this period. The employee will have a right to appeal the final written warning to a level of management higher than the original decision-maker. Appeals must be made in writing setting out the grounds for appeal within 7 days of the employee being notified of the decision.

Stage 4 Dismissal or Action Short of Dismissal

Failure to meet the required standards of work, conduct or attendance following the issuing of a final written warning will lead to a disciplinary hearing under Stage 4. The decision-maker will be the owner; however, the owner may delegate authority to a senior manager. The outcome of the disciplinary hearing may be dismissal or action short of dismissal. The employee may appeal against dismissal decisions or disciplinary sanctions short of dismissal.

Serious Misconduct

The following are examples of serious misconduct which will be dealt with from the outset under Stage 4:

- Theft
- Deliberate damage to property
- Fraud or deliberate falsification of documents
- Gross negligence or dereliction of duties
- Gross insubordination
- Incapacity to perform duties due to being under the influence of alcohol, unprescribed drugs or misuse of prescribed medication
- Serious breach of health and safety rules
- Serious breaches of confidentiality
- Serious bullying, sexual harassment or harassment
- Violent behaviour within the scope of the employee's employment
- Sexual assault / assault of any kind on a child or any other person you come in contact with in the course of your work
- Downloading/disseminating pornographic material from the internet
- Circulation of offensive, obscene or indecent e-mails or text messages

Note: *The above list is not exhaustive.*

Allegations of serious misconduct will be dealt with as follows:

(i) Notifying the Employee of the Allegation

Upon receiving an allegation of serious misconduct, management will arrange for the gathering of preliminary facts relating to the allegation in order for the precise allegation to be formulated. The employee against whom the allegation is made will be requested to attend a meeting to hear the precise details of the allegation at the earliest juncture and without undue delay. The employee will be advised of his/her right to be accompanied at this meeting by a union representative or work colleague. When dealing with the allegation, management will ensure, insofar as possible, that confidentiality is maintained and the employee against whom the allegation is made is fully protected throughout the process.

(ii) Protective Measures

Pending the outcome of the investigation, management may take whatever protective measures are necessary to ensure that no client or employee is exposed to unacceptable risk. *These protective measures are neither disciplinary measures nor an indication of guilt and may include:*

- reassigning the employee to other duties
- providing an appropriate level of supervision
- putting the employee off duty with pay

The views of the employee will be taken into consideration when determining the appropriate protective measures to take in the circumstances but the final decision rests with management. Putting the employee off duty pending the outcome of the investigation will be reserved for only the most exceptional of circumstances. The employee concerned will be advised that the decision to put him/her off duty is a precautionary measure and not a disciplinary sanction or an indication of guilt.

(iii) Investigation

An investigation will be conducted by person(s) who are acceptable to both parties. The principles governing the conduct of the investigation and the steps in conducting the investigation are set out in Appendix 4. If the findings of the investigation uphold the allegation of serious misconduct, a disciplinary hearing will be held as follows:

(iv) Disciplinary Hearing

The decision-maker will be the owner. The owner may delegate authority to a senior manager. The employee will be informed of the following in writing in advance of the disciplinary hearing:

- The status of the meeting, i.e. that it is a formal disciplinary hearing under Stage 4 (Dismissal or Action Short of Dismissal) of the disciplinary procedure.

- The purpose of the hearing is to consider representations on the employee's behalf and to decide if disciplinary action is appropriate in all the circumstances and the nature of the sanction if any.
- The possible outcome of the hearing, i.e. it may result in a decision to terminate his/her employment.
- Copy of the investigation team's report and all relevant documentation.
- The right to be accompanied by a union representative or work colleague.

The disciplinary hearing will be conducted as follows:

- The employee will be informed of the purpose of the disciplinary hearing, the nature of the allegation and the findings of the investigation.
 - The employee and his/her representative will have the opportunity to present his/her case in response to the findings of the investigation.
 - The disciplinary hearing is not intended to repeat the investigation but the employee will be able to raise any concerns regarding the investigation process if s/he feels that these concerns were not given due consideration by the investigation team.
 - The hearing will be adjourned to allow the decision-maker to carefully consider the representations made on the employee's behalf.
- The hearing will be reconvened and the employee will be advised of the decision which may include:
 - Decision to dismiss
 - Disciplinary action short of dismissal (e.g. final written warning, suspension without pay, etc.)
 - No further action on the grounds that there were strong mitigating circumstances
 - Non-disciplinary action (e.g. where there were strong mitigating circumstances but the employee's continued employment is conditional on him/her agreeing to seek specialist treatment or other appropriate course of action).
 - The employee will be advised of his/her right to appeal the decision.

Appeals under Stage 4

Appeals against disciplinary sanctions short of dismissal will be heard by a manager at a higher level than the manager who made the original decision or an agreed independent adjudicator. The employee will be required to submit the grounds for the appeal in writing within 7 days of being notified of the original decision.

Appeal Against Dismissal Decisions

If the outcome of the disciplinary hearing is a decision to dismiss, the employee may appeal the decision to a committee. The appeal may be on any of the following grounds:

- Mitigating circumstances
- Procedural deficiencies
- Specific evidence submitted
- Severity of the sanction imposed

The employee will be required to submit the grounds for the appeal in writing within 7 days of being notified of the original dismissal decision. An appeal against dismissal decisions will be heard by the owner, acting as chairperson, and the following:

- A staff side representative
- A management representative

The Committee will hear the case again including all evidence and representations and decide whether to confirm or vary the original dismissal decision. If the original decision is confirmed, the employee will be removed from the payroll.

Ad Misericordium Appeal

In the event of an appeal against the decision to dismiss being unsuccessful, the employee may make a final “mercy appeal” to the owner. The grounds for this appeal must be submitted in writing within 14 days of the employee being notified of the Committee’s decision. *An employee who feels that s/he has been unfairly dismissed may refer a case under the Unfair Dismissals Acts, 1977-2005 within 6 months of the date of dismissal.*

Appendix 1: Probationary Employees

Where employees are required to serve a probationary period, the contract of employment will specify its duration, terms of notice that apply during the period, the possibility of its extension at the discretion of management and a review of the employee’s performance during the period of probation, e.g. *“A probationary period of one year shall apply from commencement of employment, during which the contract may be terminated by either party in accordance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973-2001 and the procedure outlined in Appendix 1 of the Disciplinary Procedure. The probationary period may be extended at the discretion of management. Confirmation of your appointment as a permanent employee is subject to the successful completion of the probationary period.”* The objective of the probationary period is to monitor new employees’ progress in the job in order to establish their suitability for continued or permanent employment. Although a probationary employee must clearly establish his/her suitability for the job, there is a corresponding obligation on the line manager to ensure that the employee is given the necessary training and assistance to enable him/her to meet the required standards.

Managing the Probationary Process

The employee will be advised of the length of the probationary period and that his/her performance, conduct and attendance will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine suitability for continued employment. The line manager will conduct progress reviews with the employee at regular intervals and keep a formal record of his/her assessment for the period under review. The line manager will also document any follow-up action that was agreed during the discussion. Where the new employee persistently fails to achieve the required standards, the line manager will advise the employee of his/her deficiencies. The objective at this stage will be to help the employee to improve whilst making it clear that failure to do so will result in his/her employment being terminated.

The line manager will carry out a final overall assessment prior to the end of the probationary period and arrange to meet with the employee to advise him/her of the outcome. In cases where the employee clearly demonstrates his/her unsuitability during the probationary period, his/her employment may be terminated at any stage during the probationary period. Where the employee does not satisfactorily complete the probationary period, s/he will be given notice that his/her employment will be terminated. *The employee will be advised of his/her right to appeal this decision in the normal manner to a higher level of management and the right representation by a union member or a member of staff during the appeals process. Appeals must be made in writing setting out the grounds for appeal within 7 days of the employee being notified of the decision.*

In accordance with the employee’s contract of employment, the probationary period may be extended at the discretion of management. However, this provision does not apply automatically to employees who have not successfully completed their probationary/assessment period. The probationary period will only be extended in exceptional circumstances. In cases where an allegation of serious misconduct is made against a probationary employee, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with stage 4 of the disciplinary procedure. Nothing in this procedure will affect the employee’s statutory rights under the Industrial Relations Acts, 1946-2004 or any other statute.

Appendix 2: Conducting a Disciplinary Hearing

Before a decision is made regarding disciplinary sanction, a disciplinary hearing must be held. The rules of natural justice require that the employee be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation and make representations before a decision is reached. The decision-maker must keep an open mind during the hearing and not form any conclusions until all the facts have been considered.

Notification Requirements

The employee should be informed that s/he is required to attend a disciplinary hearing under the formal disciplinary procedure. The employee should be advised of:

- The reason for the hearing, i.e. outline the specific aspects of the employee's performance, conduct or attendance which have fallen below the required standards
- The possible outcome of the hearing, e.g. issuing of an oral warning under stage 1 / written warning etc.
- The right to representation by a union representative or work colleague
- The employee should be given sufficient notice of the hearing to enable him/ her to arrange for representation and prepare for the hearing. The following details should be confirmed in writing:
 - The time and place of the hearing
 - The status of the meeting (i.e. that it is a formal disciplinary hearing under the disciplinary procedure)
 - The precise nature of the complaint
 - The right to be accompanied by a union representative or work colleague
 - A copy of relevant documentation (e.g. timekeeping/attendance record) should be attached.

Conducting the Disciplinary Hearing

The purpose of the disciplinary hearing is to allow the employee to respond to the allegations before deciding whether or not to take disciplinary action. The employee must be made aware that the outcome of the hearing may result in a disciplinary sanction so that they appreciate the seriousness of the meeting. However, the decision-maker must not pre-empt the outcome of the hearing, for example, by entering the hearing with the warning already written up. The final decision with regard to disciplinary action can only be made when the employee has had the opportunity to state his/her case and plead any mitigating circumstances. A disciplinary hearing should follow a structured format as follows:

- Introduce those present.
- Confirm that this is a hearing under the formal disciplinary procedure. Specify the stage, e.g. stage 2 – written warning.
- Outline the precise nature of the allegation and refer to any supporting evidence, e.g. attendance record (the employee should have been given a copy of any such relevant documentation in advance).
- Allow the employee to respond to the allegation and give an explanation.
- Invite representations on the employee's behalf.
- Close the hearing by summarising the key points raised.
- Allow the employee to have a final say.
- Adjourn the meeting to allow for careful consideration of the facts and any explanations put forward by the employee or his/her representative.

Each case should be considered on its merits before deciding on what sanction, if any, to apply. The outcome of the hearing may be one of the following:

- A formal warning / final written warning
- No further action on the grounds that the employee has given a satisfactory explanation of events or there were strong mitigating circumstances
- Non-disciplinary action e.g. arrange for the employee to receive coaching/training and set targets for improvement.

Reconvene the hearing and advise the employee of the decision.

Appendix 3: Issuing Warnings Under the Disciplinary Procedure

The primary purpose of a warning under the disciplinary procedure is to give the employee an opportunity to make the required improvements whilst making clear the consequences of failing to do so. A warning (including an oral warning) should contain the following information:

- the stage of the disciplinary procedure which has been invoked
- details of the unsatisfactory attendance, conduct or work standards
- details of the improvements required and timescale for improvement
- measures to assist the employee (e.g. training or coaching)
- duration of the warning
- what further action will be taken if the employee does not make the necessary improvements within the agreed timescale or if there are further instances of unsatisfactory attendance/work/conduct during this period

Follow-up Action

The outcome of the hearing should be confirmed to the employee in writing and copied to his/her representative. The employee's performance/conduct/attendance should be monitored during the review period and agreed support measures (e.g. coaching) should be put in place without delay.

Removal of Warnings

Where a warning is issued under stages 1-3 and the employee makes the required improvements, the letter of warning and all documentation relating to the disciplinary process itself should be removed from the employee's file. Where the employee does not make the required improvements and the matter progresses to the next stage of the disciplinary procedure, all documentation relating to the previous warning should be retained.

Appendix 4: Investigation

The investigation into allegations of serious misconduct will be carried out in accordance with the following principles:

- The investigation will be conducted as expeditiously as possible and without inordinate delay.
- The investigation will be carried out in strict accordance with the terms of reference and with due respect for the right of the employee who is the subject of the allegation to be treated in accordance with the principles of natural justice, including a presumption of innocence.
- The investigation team will have the necessary expertise to conduct an investigation impartially and expeditiously.
- Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation to the greatest extent consistent with the requirements of a fair investigation. It is not possible however to guarantee the anonymity of the complainant or any person who participates in the investigation.
- A written record will be kept of all meetings and treated in the strictest confidence.
- The investigation team may interview any person who they feel can assist with the investigation. All employees are obliged to co-operate fully with the investigation process.
- Employees who participate in the investigation process will be required to respect the privacy of the parties involved by refraining from discussing the matter with other work colleagues or persons outside the organisation.
- It will be considered a disciplinary offence to intimidate or exert pressure on any person who may be required to attend as a witness or to attempt to obstruct the investigation process in any way.

Steps in Conducting the Investigation

- The investigation will be conducted by person(s) nominated by senior management and acceptable to both parties.
- The investigation will be governed by predetermined terms of reference based on the alleged misconduct (which will be set out in writing) and any other matters relevant to the allegation. The terms of reference shall specify the following:
 - The timescale within which the investigation will be completed
 - Scope of the investigation will be confined to deciding whether or not the allegation has been upheld
 - The employee against whom the allegation is made will be advised of the right to representation and given copies of all documentation prior to and during the investigation process, e.g.
 - Details of alleged misconduct

Witness statements (if any)

Minutes of any interviews held with witnesses

Any other evidence of relevance

- The investigation team will interview any witnesses and other relevant persons. Confidentiality will be maintained as far as practicable.
- Persons may be required to attend further meetings to respond to new evidence or provide clarification on any of the issues raised.
- The investigation team will form preliminary conclusions based on the evidence gathered in the course of the investigation and invite the person adversely affected by these conclusions to provide additional information or challenge any aspect of the evidence.
- On completion of the investigation, the investigation team will form its final conclusions based on the balance of probabilities and submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to senior management.
- The employee against whom the allegation is made will be given a copy of the investigation report.

On completion of the investigation, the investigation team will submit a written report in accordance with its terms of reference. However, no decision regarding disciplinary sanction should be decided upon until the decision maker has held

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Pugwash Bay aim to deal with all grievance issues in a confidential manner while at all times trying to maintain the best working relationships between colleagues and management. Issues are dealt with swiftly with both parties having the right to reply.

Grievance Procedure:

At Pugwash Bay we are committed to promoting and maintaining good employee relations and fostering the commitment and morale of staff. The purpose of this procedure is to enable employees to raise any complaints concerning work-related matters so that the issue may be addressed promptly and as close as possible to the point of origin without disruption to customer care.

Definition of Grievance

A grievance may be defined as a complaint which an employee(s) has concerning his or her terms and conditions of employment, working environment or working relationships. This procedure covers individual and collective grievances, i.e. complaints raised by or on behalf of a group of employees.

Scope of the Procedure

The types of issues which are appropriate for referral under this procedure include:

- Allocation of work
- Assignment of duties
- Rostering arrangements
- Granting of all forms of leave, i.e. annual leave, compassionate leave
- Conduct of disciplinary proceedings
- Access to courses
- Health and safety issues
- Acting-up/deputising arrangements
- Relationships with work colleagues
- Organisational change/new working practices

Note: This list is not exhaustive.

The grievance procedure does not cover matters relating to improvements in pay or existing terms and conditions of employment which are of general application.

Principles

- The grievance procedure will be communicated to all staff.
- The employee should always raise complaints on an informal basis in the first instance before invoking the formal grievance procedure.
- Every effort will be made to address complaints quickly and fairly and at the lowest level possible at which the matter can be resolved.
- An employee will not be penalised in any way for making a complaint in good faith regardless of whether or not the complaint is upheld.
- The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or staff representative at all formal hearings under the grievance procedure.
- While every effort will be made to adhere to the prescribed time limits these may be extended at any stage in exceptional circumstances.

This procedure provides a comprehensive method for the resolution of grievances in a confidential manner. In the norm issues raised under it will be processed in accordance with the principles of full consultation and agreement during the process or following third party recommendation. In the event of a grievance arising, and where an employee(s) is/are working under protest, a meeting with senior management will be held within 3 working days of the request being received. Where the matter remains unresolved following this meeting the issue may be referred to a third party as a priority. In the event that a grievance is referred to a third party, both sides will co-operate fully with the proceedings in accordance with the Industrial Relations Acts, 1946-2004.

The grievance hearing cannot be used as an opportunity to address shortcomings in the employee's work standards, conduct or attendance. Any deficiencies will be dealt with through informal counselling or under the progressive stages of the disciplinary procedure.

Informal Discussions

Most routine complaints are capable of being resolved on an informal basis without recourse to the formal grievance procedure. Before invoking the grievance procedure the employee may raise the matter informally with his or her immediate supervisor/manager. If the complaint relates to the immediate supervisor/manager, the employee may discuss the matter informally with another manager. If the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily through informal discussions, the employee may raise a formal complaint under the grievance procedure.

Grievance Procedure

Stage 1

The employee should refer the complaint to the crèche manager (or senior manager if the issue lies with the crèche manager). A meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter not later than **seven working days** following receipt of the complaint. The employee will be advised of his/her right to be accompanied by a work colleague or union representative. Following this meeting, the decision will be conveyed in writing to the employee within **seven** working days. The Employee will also be advised how to move to the second stage of the procedure.

Working Under Protest

Where the grievance relates to an instruction issued by the supervisor/ manager that the employee does not agree with they are obliged to carry out the instruction "under protest". A meeting with senior management will be held within **3 working days** of the grievance being received.

- In the event that a grievance is referred to a third party, both sides will co-operate fully with the proceedings in accordance with the Industrial Relations Acts, 1946-2001.
- The grievance hearing cannot be used as an opportunity to address shortcomings in the employee's work standards, conduct or attendance. Any deficiencies will be dealt with through informal counselling or under the progressive stages of the disciplinary procedure.

Stage 2

If agreement cannot be reached at Stage 1, the matter may be referred to the appropriate Senior Manager. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter not later than seven working days following receipt of the complaint. The

Employee will be advised of his/her right to be accompanied by a work colleague or union representative. Following this meeting, the decision will be conveyed in writing to the Employee within seven working days. The Employee will also be advised how to move to the third stage of the procedure.

Stage 3

If agreement cannot be reached at Stage 2 the matter may be referred to the owner. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter not later than seven working days following receipt of the complaint. The Employee will be advised of his/her right to be accompanied by a work colleague or union representative. Following this meeting, the decision will be conveyed in writing to the Employee within seven working days. The Employee will also be advised how to move to the fourth stage of the procedure.

Stage 4

If the issue remains unresolved after Stage 3, the matter may be referred to an appropriate third party:

Rights Commissioner

Labour Relations Commission

Labour Court

Equality Tribunal

No strikes or other forms of industrial action should be initiated or threatened until all stages of the Grievance Procedure, including third party referrals, have been fully exhausted.

Appendix 1

Guidelines for Managers on the Operation of the Grievance Procedure

Introduction

It is management's responsibility to deal promptly and fairly with any complaints raised by employees either informally or under the formal grievance procedure. Managers are expected to handle all complaints in a manner that respects the right of the employee to air his/her grievances and to seek redress without fear of reprisal. If an employee feels sufficiently aggrieved to make a complaint then any attempt by a manager to trivialise the issue may result in a local issue escalating into a more serious dispute. Managers are required to address grievances at the lowest level possible and to give careful consideration to the merits of the employee's case before reaching a decision. Where a complaint is not upheld the employee is entitled to a clear explanation as to how the decision was reached.

Third party referrals should be viewed as a 'last resort' having exhausted the internal stages of the grievance procedure. In the event that an employee refers the matter to a third party, the manager must respect the employee's right to exercise his/her statutory entitlement to seek redress by co-operating fully with proceedings and maintaining normal working relationships. Managers have a duty to ensure that no employee suffers detrimental treatment as a result of making a complaint either internally or to a third party.

Preparing for the Hearing

The manager conducting the hearing should establish the precise details of the complaint in advance in order to check any policies or rules relevant to the matter. Where appropriate the manager should talk to the employee's immediate supervisor and/or any other relevant person to ascertain all the facts pertaining to the issue. The manager may also need to contact a senior manager to obtain advice on how best the issue might be resolved.

The manager should arrange for a colleague to attend the hearing to take notes. Sufficient time should be set aside for the hearing and reasonable efforts made to avoid unnecessary interruptions. The employee should be notified of the arrangements (date, time and venue) for the hearing and informed of his/her right to be accompanied by a union representative or work colleague.

Conducting the Hearing

- The manager should begin by introducing those present and outlining the purpose of the meeting.
- The employee should be invited to state his/her case and how s/he would like to see the matter resolved. The employee may wish his/her representative to present the case on his/her behalf.
- The manager should encourage an open discussion of the issue and where appropriate explore possible options for resolving the complaint.
- The hearing should be adjourned – even for just a short period – to allow the manager to consider all the issues raised and undertake further enquiries, if necessary, before reaching a decision. A timescale for re-convening the hearing must be agreed. The manager may need to seek advice from senior management about how the issue might best be resolved and whether there is scope for compromise. This will help to ensure a consistency of approach and avoid decisions that have repercussions for the rest of the organisation.
- The meeting should be reconvened within the agreed time limits to inform the employee of the decision. The manager must outline fully the reasons for his/her decision and afford the employee and his/her representative an opportunity to respond. If the employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the hearing, s/he should be advised of his/her right to progress to the next stage of the procedure.
- A letter should be issued to the employee (and copied to his/her representative) confirming the outcome of the hearing, the reasons for the decision and what action, if any, will be taken.
- A detailed and accurate record of the hearing and its outcome should be retained on the employee's personnel file. This documentation may be required as evidence in the event of an employee referring the matter to a third party.
- Any action agreed must be implemented without undue delay.

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Every employee is responsible for promoting the reputation and image of the Company. Employees must not make detrimental statements in respect of the Company during dealings with individuals inside of outside of the Company. No employee is permitted to give press or other media interviews or assist with or be involved in the publication of any article relating to the business affairs of the Company or in relation to the Company's intellectual property, without prior consent from the Managing Director.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The first twelve months of your employment will be a probationary period whereby a full induction will be held and training will be ongoing. During this time your performance and conduct will be monitored and if it is found to be unsatisfactory, your employment may be terminated at any stage in the twelve months with the following notice:

- In the first 13 weeks of employment - no notice is required and either party can terminate the contract at the end of shift on any given day.
- After 13 weeks and for the remaining duration of the probation period – one weeks' notice will be given. Annual leave due to the employee may be given in lieu of notice.

At the end of the probationary period your performance and conduct will be reviewed and if found satisfactory your appointment will be confirmed. It is only at this time that you will become a permanent member of staff (unless on a fixed term / temporary contract). If however, your performance is deemed unsatisfactory at that time in the opinion of your manager your contract will be terminated. If it is felt that you may improve with further training and / or guidance then the probationary period may be extended. This will be notified to you in writing outlining the reason for the extension and the length of time you will remain on probation for.

If your contract is terminated during or at the end of your probation period you may appeal to a manager in a higher position. You must appeal in writing to this person within seven days of being notified of the decision to end your employment.

Probationary Employees

Where employees are required to serve a probationary period, the contract of employment will specify its duration, terms of notice that apply during the period, the possibility of its extension at the discretion of management and a review of the employee's performance during the period of probation, e.g. "A probationary period of one year shall apply from commencement of employment, during which the contract may be terminated by either party in

accordance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973-2001 and the procedure outlined in Appendix 1 of the Disciplinary Procedure. The probationary period may be extended at the discretion of management. Confirmation of your appointment as a permanent employee is subject to the successful completion of the probationary period.” The objective of the probationary period is to monitor new employees’ progress in the position in order to establish their suitability for continued or permanent employment. Although a probationary employee must clearly establish his/her suitability for the job, there is a corresponding obligation on the line manager to ensure that the employee is given the necessary training and assistance to enable him/her to meet the required standards. We have a strong phased induction process to ensure employees are given every chance to succeed.

Managing the Probationary Process

The employee will be advised of the length of the probationary period and that his/her performance, conduct and attendance will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine suitability for continued employment. The line manager will conduct progress reviews with the employee at regular intervals and keep a formal record of his/her assessment for the period under review. The line manager will also document any follow-up action that was agreed during the discussion. Where the new employee persistently fails to achieve the required standards, the line manager will advise the employee of his/her deficiencies. The objective at this stage will be to help the employee to improve whilst making it clear that failure to do so will result in his/her employment being terminated.

The line manager will carry out a final overall assessment prior to the end of the probationary period and arrange to meet with the employee to advise him/her of the outcome. In cases where the employee clearly demonstrates his/her unsuitability during the probationary period, his/her employment may be terminated at any stage during the probationary period. Where the employee does not satisfactorily complete the probationary period, s/he will be given notice that his/her employment will be terminated. The employee will be advised of his/her right to appeal this decision in the normal manner to a higher level of management. Appeals must be made in writing setting out the grounds for appeal within 7 days of the employee being notified of the decision.

In accordance with the employee’s contract of employment, the probationary period may be extended at the discretion of management. However, this provision does not apply automatically to employees who have not successfully completed their probationary/assessment period. The probationary period will only be extended in exceptional circumstances. In cases where an allegation of serious misconduct is made against a probationary employee, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with stage 4 of the disciplinary procedure. Nothing in this procedure will affect the employee’s statutory rights under the Industrial Relations Acts, 1946-2004 or any other statute.

MINIMUM NOTICE POLICY

Both the company and the employee are obliged to give notice in the case of termination of employment. Employees are obliged to provide notice as per below to your employer and failure to do so may result in the company’s refusal to provide you with a reference. The company will provide notice based on the length of an employee’s service based on the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973.

Procedure:

- ❖ The employee is obliged, if they have been in employment for thirteen continuous weeks, to give the company notice as outlined below.
- ❖ If the employer wishes to terminate the employment contract they must give the following notice based on the length of the employee’s service (except during the first 13 weeks of employment where no notice is required):

Length of Service	Minimum notice
Thirteen weeks to 12 months	One Week
12 months to 2 years	Two Weeks
2 years to 3 years	Three Weeks
3 years to 4 years	Four Weeks
5 years +	Five Weeks

- ❖ If the employer does not require the employee to work out any part of their notice, the employer is obliged to pay the employee for that period.
- ❖ The company requests that employee's give as much notice as possible when leaving the company. This is to facilitate the appropriate replacement being found and inducted into the company.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION POLICY

Pugwash Bay management will carry out regular support and supervision meetings to ensure that employees are fully supported in carrying out their role and fully supervised in order to achieve the highest quality of care and ensure the welfare of the child is always paramount.

Procedure:

- ❖ Every 8 weeks a one to one meeting between staff and their manager will be carried out.
- ❖ These meetings will be kept between 5 and 10 minutes in duration. If additional time is required this can be scheduled.
- ❖ These meetings will be positive in nature however the purpose is to give feedback on performance and as such there may be constructive feedback given to allow for improved practice
- ❖ These meetings are not the time for staff to speak negatively about their colleagues. If there is an issue it can be raised with your manager but it must be noted that the manager will have to act on all that they are told – it is not acceptable to ask them not to.
- ❖ These meetings are not for the purpose of discussing pay or issues you have with the manager or the company. If you have issues of this nature you should ask to speak with your manager at another time.
- ❖ All points discussed in the meeting will be documented and both parties are required to sign off on this at the end of the meeting.
- ❖ The records of this meeting will form part of your Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and will be kept on this file.
- ❖ Feedback given and improvement's requested must be acted upon immediately. This process forms part of your overall performance review and failure to take action requested by your manager may result in an escalation into the disciplinary process.

It is envisaged that these meetings, when conducted correctly, will create a positive working environment. They are designed to help us reach for higher quality and as such they will have a very positive impact on the children in our service. This should be our main focus and motivating factor.

STAFF TRAINING

At Pugwash Bay we are committed to supporting our staff in their goal for further training. In house training is done every regularly for all staff. Individual training is done with staff during the induction period and then as and when it is required. Out of house training is arranged for staff where necessary or where regulations or legislation require it.

Procedure:

- In house training is compulsory and viewed as a rostered shift. Advance notice of this will be given – all staff must attend

- Staff meetings will be held bi-monthly and are considered part of the training offered internally
- In house training is held to update staff on changes in the regulations, to meet any gaps in knowledge, to enhance performance in certain areas or to refresh staff on policies and procedures
- Out of house courses will be arranged for the same reasons or where the staff member has requested a particular course
- If the company has arranged, and you have agreed to attend, external training for which the company has paid and you fail to attend then you must pay the full cost of your place on the training
- Where staff attend external training then they must act professionally and maintain the good reputation of the company for the duration of the course. They must also abide by the companies policies and procedures while on the course.

PAYMENT OF WAGES POLICY

It is our policy to pay staff weekly for the amount of hours they have worked less break periods and statutory deductions. We endeavour to transfer wages into the employee's bank account no later than Thursday with the exception of closures and public holidays.

Procedure:

- ❖ New employees or those changing bank accounts must complete and sign a salary details form. This indicates agreement to have their wages transferred into the named account.
- ❖ The hours worked less break periods are received by the financial administrator for statutory deductions to be made. Any other deductions such as VHI, pension etc. must be agreed in writing with your employer.
- ❖ The amount for payment is calculated by the financial administrator. Where a public holiday or service closure occurs the receipt of the amounts for payment and the transfer will be made at the earliest possible time.
- ❖ The employer will then transfer the amount into the designated bank account. If for some reason this is not possible wages may be paid via another method of payment i.e. cheque.
- ❖ A pay slip will be issued to each employee before the end of every week. Payslips are issued by email to those who have consented and a password is used to maintain privacy. It is the responsibility of employees without email to ask for their pay slip to be printed if they require a copy.

Any queries regarding payment of wages should be discussed with the crèche or senior manager as soon as they arise. Every effort will be made to ensure employees understand the process surrounding payment of wages.

WORKING TIME POLICY

Pugwash Bay operates Monday to Saturday from 7.30am to 6.30pm. All employees must be available to work within these hours. Employees are expected to be in the crèche and ready to start work at their rostered time (which means arriving 5 minutes earlier). Employees are responsible for ensuring they are aware of their rostered hours. The company operates within the regulations set out in the Organisation of Working Time Act 2001.

Procedure:

- ❖ The crèche manager constructs a roster each Thursday.
- ❖ Holiday or leave requests must be received one month in advance and agreement must be sought from the senior manager.
- ❖ The crèche manager will formulate agreed leave into the weekly roster.
- ❖ Staff are rostered for the hours that they are required in accordance with the contracted hours for each member of staff.
- ❖ From time to time staff may be rostered to work evenings and / or weekends and your cooperation on this is much appreciated. Failure to show for any rostered shift will result in disciplinary action being taken.
- ❖ Break periods are defined by law and will be strictly adhered to by the company.

- ❖ Where, due to circumstances outside the control of the Company, there is insufficient work, the Company reserves the right to place staff on Lay Off or Short Time working. In such circumstances the Company will give as much notice as is practical. Selection for Lay Off or Short Time working will be dependent on operational needs.

LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS POLICY

Pugwash Bay comply will all relevant legislation with regard to leave entitlements. We ask that as much notice as possible but no less than one month notice be given of an employee's intention to take any type of leave from the company. Exceptional circumstances will be considered individually.

Procedure:

- ❖ A separate policy on public holidays, annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, force majeure and parental leave entitlements is contained in the company's policies and procedures document. Please refer to these for more information on leave entitlements.
- ❖ Managers are available to discuss questions employees may have regarding their entitlement to take leave from the company.
- ❖ Employees should make themselves aware of their own rights and should also keep a personal record of the leave they take.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT

There are nine public holidays (OWT Act 1997) as follows:

- 1) New Year's Day (January 1),
- 2) St. Patrick's Day (March 17),
- 3) Easter Monday,
- 4) The first Monday in May,
- 5) The first Monday in June,
- 6) The first Monday in August,
- 7) The last Monday in October,
- 8) Christmas Day (25th December),
- 9) St. Stephen's Day (December 26)

Good Friday, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve are not public holidays and staff are asked in their contracts to save annual leave to cover these closures.

ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

Pugwash Bay aims to give every employee the leave that they request, however due to the nature of our work and the fact that our priority is to maintain adult child ratios at all times, this may not always be possible. Employees are asked to give as much notice as possible and no less than one month so that suitable cover can be arranged. Annual leave is calculated in line with relevant legislation, that is, 8% of hours worked up to a maximum of four weeks (20 days if you work 5 days per week). Annual leave will be paid based on an average working day calculated over the previous thirteen weeks.

Procedure:

- ❖ A leave request form should be completed and given to your manager at least one month before you intend on taking leave. No arrangements should be made before your manager has confirmed that your leave has been granted. Management have the right to decline leave requests if necessary.
- ❖ Leave may not be taken during busy and important months such as September, December and January.
- ❖ Normally no more than 10 working days can be taken at any one time, however special circumstances will be taken into consideration.
- ❖ Management reserve the right to assign leave to staff especially during the holiday periods (Christmas, summer, Easter, etc.). Two weeks' annual leave **must be** taken during the months of July and August.
- ❖ Annual leave must run from Monday to Friday.
- ❖ Annual leave must be kept to cover Good Friday and the Christmas closure.
- ❖ The leave year runs January through to December. All leave must be taken in this time. Leave cannot be carried over.
- ❖ Upon termination of employment you will be entitled to salary in lieu of any outstanding holiday entitlement or be required to repay to the company any salary received in respect of holiday taken in excess of your proportionate holiday entitlement.
- ❖ In the case of part time employment or where only part of a leave year is worked, holiday entitlements will be calculated pro-rata in accordance with the organisation of working time act, 1997.
- ❖ Annual leave is not affected by other leave provided by law for example, maternity, adoptive, parental, force majeure and the first 13 weeks of carers leave. While you are on sick leave from work you do not accumulate annual leave entitlement unless your leave is certified.
- ❖ Leave can only be taken during term time if no other staff member is off and a maximum of two days will be approved.
- ❖ Annual leave should for the most part be taken during non-term time, for example, October and February mid-terms, Easter and summer holidays.

MATERNITY LEAVE POLICY

This policy covers all pregnant female employees and also fathers. It is our aim to treat the employee who is out on maternity leave as if they had not been absent. Upon return to work the employee will be expected to fulfil her original position under terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have been applied had she not have been absent.

Procedure:

- ❖ The company encourages employees to inform their manager as soon as they are aware of the pregnancy. This means that the company can ensure a safe working environment which is supportive to their needs during pregnancy.
- ❖ The employee will be asked to produce a medical certificate confirming the pregnancy and where possible the expected due date.
- ❖ The employee is expected to take responsibility for their own health and safety by refraining from duties which may cause harm to themselves or their unborn child. This includes lifting or carrying heavy objects or children.
- ❖ A risk assessment will be carried out for the pregnant employee and risks identified will either be removed or the employee will be removed from the risk. If neither these options is possible the employee will be asked to take health and safety leave.
- ❖ The employee will be entitled to a reasonable amount of time off for medical visits. The employee must give 2 weeks' notice of medical visits and may be asked to show an appointment card. Employees are asked to make appointments for early morning or late evening where possible.
- ❖ Pregnant employees are entitled to one set of ante-natal classes except for the last 3 classes of the set. Fathers are entitled to paid time off to attend the last 2 classes of the set.
- ❖ Pregnant employees are entitled to 26 weeks maternity leave. At least 2 weeks and not more than 14 weeks leave must be taken before the end of the week in which the baby is due. At least four weeks must be taken after the due date. The employee must give 4 weeks written notice of their intention to take maternity leave.
- ❖ The employee is entitled to take up to 16 additional weeks at the end of her maternity leave. These 16 weeks are unpaid. Notification in writing at least 4 weeks before the end of the 26 week leave period is required but can also be given with notice of maternity leave.
- ❖ Notification in writing of the employee's intention to return to work is required 4 weeks before the return date.

- ❖ For the duration of the maternity leave an employee will be deemed to be in continued employment and her rights are reserved as such. Public holiday and annual leave entitlements will be accrued as normal.
- ❖ The employee is entitled to return to the same job with the same contract of employment. If this is not reasonably practicable then we must provide you with suitable alternative work on terms no less favourable than when you left.
- ❖ In the same way on return to work the employee is expected to continue in her original position unless a request to alter the contract of employment has been made at least 4 weeks in advance.
- ❖ If you have a stillbirth or miscarriage after the 24th week of pregnancy then you are entitled to your full maternity leave entitlement.
- ❖ Fathers are only entitled to maternity leave if the mother dies within 24 weeks of the birth. Where the father qualifies for the leave under these circumstances he also has the optional right to the additional maternity leave period.

SICK LEAVE POLICY

Pugwash Bay Ltd. aims to support staff who become unwell and are unable to attend work for this reason. The company does not pay staff that are absent through illness, however, will support staff in claiming benefits from the state. We ask that staff appreciate the pressure that sickness places on their colleagues and the upset caused to children and where possible minimise the number of sick days taken. Sick days are monitored and will be recorded as part of your staff records. Pugwash Bay places great importance on attendance and punctuality. Persistent lateness or absenteeism may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Procedure:

- ❖ Staff must phone 086 3822518 two hours prior to the start of the shift if they are unable to attend work that day. As a courtesy please also let your manager know.
- ❖ Text messages or emails are not permitted and you must speak directly with a manager.
- ❖ Staff should contact their manager before 2pm that day to let them know if they will return to work the following day. Failure to do so may result in cover being arranged for your shift.
- ❖ A sick note **MUST BE** provided for absence on a Monday or Friday and / or the third consecutive day of illness. Sick notes must be given to your manager on the day or day after its issue but no later.
- ❖ We reserve the right to request a 'Fit to Work' note from your GP where this is deemed necessary.
- ❖ A 'Back to Work' meeting will be held after all certified absences and is carried out to ensure the welfare of the employee. A back to work form will be completed and filed after all absences.
- ❖ If the employee is absent for more than 8 weeks, the company may ask for an examination by a medical practitioner of our choosing. All results will be kept confidential and recorded on your staff file.
- ❖ The company may also request to meet with the employee to discuss the illness and the timeframe in which they will return to work. In this case no pressure is intended to be put on the staff member, it is simply a method of trying to arrange suitable cover for the necessary period of time.
- ❖ Employees are obliged to maintain regular contact with the company for the duration of their leave.
- ❖ In cases of sick leave lasting 26 weeks or more (not caused by a workplace accident) the employee may be formally asked whether or not it is their intention to return to work and if so the expected return date. Failure to discuss the situation with your employer may lead to termination of the contract, however, each situation will be considered individually and in line with the law.
- ❖ An employee loses their right to pay for public holidays and accrue annual leave if their sick leave has lasted more than 26 weeks.
- ❖ The company will do all that it can to facilitate an employee's return to work. The employee will where practical be returned to their original position, however, in some cases this may not be possible due to continued illness or injury. Where this occurs the employee will be facilitated in a similar position with the same working conditions being applied.

FORCE MAJEURE LEAVE

Pugwash Bay aims to support working parents and will comply with all relevant legislation. Force Majeure Leave is leave with pay for urgent family reasons relating to illness / injury of an immediate family member where the employees presence is indispensable.

Procedure:

Force majeure leave does not give any entitlement to leave following the death of a close family member.

Force majeure leave is in response to an unexpected incident regarding a close family member which is defined as one of the following:

- A child or adopted child of the employee
- The husband/wife/partner of the employee
- Parent or grandparent of the employee
- Brother or sister of the employee
- Person to whom the employee has a duty of care (that is, he/she is acting in loco parents)
- A person in a relationship of domestic dependency with the employee, including a same-sex partner (since 18 May 2006)
- Persons of any other class (if any) as may be prescribed

The maximum amount of leave is 3 days (not consecutive) in any 12-month period or 5 days in a 36-month period. You are entitled to be paid while you are on force majeure leave.

PARENTAL LEAVE

1. The Company wishes to support working parents.
2. Employees who have been continuously employed for one year qualify for 14 weeks unpaid parental leave in respect of each child (either born to them or adopted by them) who is under 8 years of age.
3. Leave must be taken within the first 8 years of the child's life. In the case of a child who is under the age of 3 at the time of adoption, the leave must be taken before the child's 8th Birthday. However, if the child is aged between 6 years and 8 years at the time of adoption, the leave must be taken within 2 years of the adoption order.
4. In cases where the child is approaching the age threshold and the employee has more than 3 months' but less than 1 years' service with their employer, the employee shall be entitled to pro rata parental leave. In such a case, the employee will be entitled to 1 weeks' leave for each month of continuous employment completed with the employer, when the leave begins.
5. Employees who are the parents of a disabled child may take parental leave until the child's 16th birthday.
6. Requests for parental leave will be considered in the light of the needs of the business but every effort will be made to allow employees who qualify for parental leave to take the leave they have requested at the time of their choice.
7. Where an employee qualifies for parental leave in respect of more than one child, the employee may not take more than 14 weeks parental leave in a 12 month period, unless in agreement with their employer. This does not apply in the case of multiple births.
8. It is the responsibility of the Employee, when requesting parental leave, to comply with the specified notice provisions.

Procedure:

1. Parental leave may be taken in a continuous block of 14 weeks.
2. An Employee requesting parental leave should do so no later than 6 weeks before the leave is due to commence. The employee is required to provide the date on which they intend to start their parental leave, the duration of the leave, the manner in which the employee proposes to take the leave, and their signature. A written and signed letter must be used for this request.
3. The Company will agree to the request unless it would be detrimental to the business to do so, in which case the Company will seek to postpone the parental leave. This will be done in consultation with the employee

- with a full explanation of the reason for the postponement. A decision to postpone parental leave will be notified to the Employee in writing not less than 4 weeks before the date of commencement of the leave.
4. Parental Leave will not be postponed for any more than 6 months from the date on which the Employee requested it to start. The Company will try to agree a suitable alternative time with the Employee but if this is not possible, the Company will guarantee that the Employee will be able to take his/her parental leave at a time, not more than 6 months ahead which best fits the needs of the business and the needs of the Employee. The Employee will be allowed to take the postponed parental leave even if it is postponed beyond the 5 year limit.
 5. Parental leave can only be postponed once in respect of any particular child.
 6. When the employer and employee have reached agreement on parental leave, a confirmation document must be completed. This should be prepared no later than 4 weeks before the leave is due to start, and must include the date on which the parental leave will commence, the duration of the leave, the manner in which the leave will be taken, and the signatures of the employer and employee.
 7. Once the document has been signed by the employer and employee, it is unable to be altered unless both parties agree. The leave cannot be postponed by the employer once the confirmation document has been agreed and signed.
 8. The Company may request the employee to provide evidence of their entitlement to parental leave in the form of a child's birth certificate, the date of the adoption order, or evidence of parentage.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND MOBILE PHONE USAGE POLICY

Pugwash Bay asks that all staff understand that they are not responsible for lost or stolen property. Mobile phones and other personal items **must** be stored in the designated staff belonging storage area. Phones must remain in this area and silent throughout the day so as not to disturb the children or other staff. Personal calls are to be taken on break times only or on shift but only with prior permission from your manager.

Procedure:

- ❖ Do not bring valuables of any kind to work and do not keep large sums of money with your belongings. If required managers can store money and valuables in the office / safe but are not responsible for the loss or damage of these items.
- ❖ Store your phone out of the children's reach and ensure it is kept on silent mode at all times.
- ❖ Making calls, sending texts or using social media sites while on shift will be treated as misconduct and disciplinary action will be taken.
- ❖ Calls and texts are only permitted during break times or if absolutely necessary during working hours but only with prior permission from your manager.
- ❖ Staff must remember that their property is their own responsibility and that the company will not be held responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.

ABSENTEEISM POLICY

We will at all times meet the adult child ratios as set out in the Preschool Regulations 2016. During break times, when staff are ill or absent for any reason cover will be provided. Staff are required to give as much notice as is practical if they are to be absent.

Pugwash Bay places great importance on attendance and punctuality. Persistent lateness or absenteeism may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Procedure:

- ❖ Lunch cover will be provided by available staff. (staff not included in ratios) or the manager on duty. Breaks are most often covered within each crèche without the need for additional cover.
- ❖ If one member of staff is absent the manager will look at the number of children on the register for this day and see if there is sufficient cover within the crèche.
- ❖ If there is not sufficient cover or more than one staff is absent the manager will call upon the managers from the other centres to provide the cover. Staff that are either surplus in these crèches or staff who are not rostered for that day will be called upon.

- ❖ In serious cases when all staff available have been included in ratios and there is still cover required parents may be called and asked to collect their children. This will be done only when it is a last resort.

STAFF MEETINGS POLICY

Pugwash Bay requires all staff to attend bi-monthly staff meetings. Time in lieu of these meetings will be offered back at a time that is convenient to the company. The company requires all staff to fully participate in these meetings and consider them part of the companies Training Policy. These meetings are part of the communication process and all feedback is welcome. However, it is desired that any feedback whether positive or negative be offered in a civil manner when the meeting allows for it and must have been added to the agreed agenda by you manager.

Procedure:

- ❖ The crèche manager will call meetings at a time they feel is convenient to all staff. As much notice as possible and no less than one weeks' notice will be given.
- ❖ Staff are asked to make necessary arrangements so that they can attend as this is deemed to be a rostered shift.
- ❖ Staff are asked to be on time for all meetings.
- ❖ An agenda will be issued at the meeting and it will allow time for feedback from staff.
- ❖ Order is necessary to ensure all points are covered in the allocated time.
- ❖ Staff meetings are considered part of the companies Training Policy and therefore it is important that staff take on board any suggestions made by the manager and if necessary put any changes into practice.
- ❖ To get the most from a staff meeting employees are asked to participate, share ideas and give feedback.
- ❖ Continued non-attendance at staff meetings may give rise to disciplinary action being taken. Continued non-attendance will be missing two or more meetings in a six month period.

STAFF RECORD REQUIREMENTS POLICY

Pugwash Bay compile and maintain all records to the standard set by the Preschool Regulations 2016 and in accordance with all relevant legislation. We hope that staff will cooperate with us when gathering necessary information. All records are kept for the duration as defined by legislation and regulation.

Procedure:

- ❖ It is the responsibility of the successful applicant to compile a full staff file in line with regulation. Management must see the originals of all documentation.
- ❖ References supplied must be from a reputable body and one must be from your most recent employer. It is expected that at least one reference will pertain to work with children.
- ❖ Verification of the references, interview notes and garda clearance when returned will also be kept on file.
- ❖ Any communication between you and the company both verbal and written will be recorded and kept on file.
- ❖ Appraisals, support and supervision and all meetings will be recorded and kept on file.
- ❖ An employee details form, salary details form and pension details including personal and financial information will also be kept on file.
- ❖ All files are made available to all relevant statutory bodies upon inspection.
- ❖ Staff files and the information in them are confidential. Only the individual staff member, management and the relevant statutory bodies have access to the files.
- ❖ To view your file you will need to make a request to a senior manager and at a time and in a place that is deemed appropriate the file will be made available to the employee.
- ❖ All records that are no longer required will be disposed of safely so that no personal information will be exposed to the public.

GARDA VETTING POLICY

At Pugwash Bay our aim is to ensure all staff, students and volunteers are garda vetted before they commence their time with us. Our vetting is carried out through Early Childhood Ireland and the Central Vetting Unit. Garda vetting for all is refreshed every two years. If an offence is highlighted by the vetting team a decision will be made in line with this policy. External vetting must be carried out by the individual if they lived outside of the Republic of Ireland for a period of 6 months or more.

Process for Vetting:

- ✚ We process vetting for all staff, students and volunteers regardless if they have an old vetting form from previous employment, placement or their college.
- ✚ Vetting documents are kept confidential in the staff files and garda vetting folder.
- ✚ A form is fully completed, a copy kept on file and the original sent for processing. Once returned the original is kept in the staff file and a copy kept on the garda vetting file.
- ✚ External vetting is required for each country in which the individual has lived for a period of 6 months or more. They must carry this out themselves and it will be kept on file also.
- ✚ Garda vetting for each employee is refreshed every two years. The old vetting documents will be stored safely for the duration of the employment and for seven years thereafter.
- ✚ If a new staff member begins employment without time to await completion of the vetting process it is our policy that this staff member will not work unsupervised until the vetting process has been completed.

Offences:

- ✚ If an offence is highlighted it should be brought to the attention of senior management.
- ✚ If the offence does not relate in any way to working with children (e.g. road traffic offence, failure to pay TV licence etc.) it should not affect the decision to employ.
- ✚ If the offence relates in any way to caring for children or is something which causes concern for work with children (e.g. assault, violence of any kind, neglect, sexual assault etc.) then a decision will be made on whether or not it is safe to employ the candidate.
- ✚ This decision will not be made lightly and in the process of making it we may seek legal advice and support from external agencies.
- ✚ If the decision is made not to employ the candidate will be informed of this.

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

In order to operate effectively and fulfil its legal obligations, Pugwash Bay Ltd. needs to collect, maintain and use certain personal information about current, past and prospective employees, customers, suppliers and other individuals with whom it has dealings. All such personal information, whether held on computer, paper or other media, will be obtained, handled, processed, transported and stored lawfully and correctly, in accordance with the safeguards contained in the Data Protection Acts 1998 - 2003 (DPA).

Pugwash Bay is committed to the eight principles of data protection as detailed in the DPA. These principles require that personal information must:

- be fairly and lawfully processed and not processed unless specific conditions are met;
- be obtained for one or more specified, lawful purposes and not processed in any manner incompatible with those purposes;
- be adequate, relevant and not excessive for those purposes;
- be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
- not be kept for longer than is necessary;
- be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights under the DPA;
- be kept secure from unauthorised or unlawful processing and protected against accidental loss, destruction or damage; and
- Not be transferred to countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA), unless the country or territory ensures adequate protection for the rights and freedoms of the data subjects.

In order to comply with the data protection principles, Pugwash Bay will:

- observe fully all conditions regarding the fair collection and use of personal information;
- meet its legal obligations to specify the purpose for which information is used;
- collect and process appropriate personal information only to the extent that it is needed to fulfil operational needs or to comply with legal obligations;
- ensure the quality of the personal information used;
- apply strict checks to determine the length of time personal information is held;

- ensure that individuals about whom information is held are able to exercise their rights under the DPA, including the right to be informed that processing is taking place, the right of access to their own personal information, the right to prevent processing in certain circumstances and the right to correct, rectify, block or erase incorrect information;
- take appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information; and
- Ensure that personal information is not transferred outside the EEA without suitable safeguards.
- Overall responsibility for ensuring that the Company complies with its data protection obligations rests with the owner.
- It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that personal information provided to the Company, for example current address, is accurate and up to date. To this end employees are required to inform the Company immediately when changes occur.
- Employees whose role involves the collection, maintenance and processing of personal information about other employees, customers, suppliers or any other individuals with whom the Company has dealings are responsible for following the Company's rules on good data protection practice as notified from time to time by their Manager.

Information about employees

Pugwash Bay holds personal information about its employees which is used for payroll and administrative purposes.

We also hold sensitive personal information about employees which is used for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring, health and safety monitoring, compliance monitoring and to fulfil our duties as the employer.

Access to information

Anyone who is the subject of personal information held by the Company has the right to make a subject access request. Employees who wish to exercise this right should write to a senior manager. The Company reserves the right to charge €20 for responding to such requests to cover the cost of the time it takes to prepare, gather and display the requested material. If, as the result of a subject access request, any personal information is found to be incorrect it will be amended. The Company will deal promptly with subject access requests and will normally respond within 40 days. If there is a reason for delay, the person making the request will be informed accordingly.

IT COMMUNICATIONS AND MONITORING

Pugwash Bay provides employees with access to various computer facilities for work and communication purposes. In order to ensure compliance with all applicable laws in relation to data protection, information security and compliance monitoring, the Company has adopted an IT communications and monitoring policy, which should be read in conjunction with the data protection policy.

IT and Computer Usage and Monitoring

- ❖ Staff must use computers only to carry out work tasks
- ❖ Personal tasks must not be carried out on work computers
- ❖ Staff are not permitted to check personal email, social media sites and / or other personal business using work computers
- ❖ Senior management have the right to check all company owned computers for recent internet usage, for the presence of non-work related content and downloads and for other incorrect usage

Breach of this policy will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the Company's formal discipline procedure.

Employees who consider that there has been a breach of this policy in relation to personal information about them held by the Company should raise the matter via the Company's formal grievance procedure.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

It is our policy to ensure all staff are aware of the sensitive nature of their work and information which they might acquire throughout the day. Staff are contractually obliged to treat all information regarding the business, including staff, child and family details, as confidential. Any breach of this agreement will be treated as a serious breach of contract and disciplinary action will be taken as necessary. This policy is underpinned by the Freedom of Information Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 2002 and the Preschool Regulations 2006.

Procedure:

- ✦ Staff should not discuss amongst each other any information that they have received which is not directly linked with the care of the child.
- ✦ Anything which staff hear through the course of their work should be treated as confidential and not discussed with colleagues, parents or anyone outside the crèche.
- ✦ Discussing any details about the business, other members of staff or the customers outside of the crèche will be treated as a serious breach of the confidentiality agreement and disciplinary action will be initiated.
- ✦ Any child protection issues should be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Welfare Policy.
- ✦ All information stored in staff files; children's file etc. is confidential and should only be accessed with your manager's permission.
- ✦ Any information found in these files should be necessary to the work you are doing and used for no other purpose. They should only be discussed with other members of staff if absolutely necessary.
- ✦ Negative remarks or comments of any kind (which includes needless gossip) about another person will be treated very seriously.
- ✦ Staff are to deal with parents professionally both inside and outside of the crèche. Contact with parents in relation to the care of their child is to be made either in person during your shift or via the work phone.
- ✦ In relation to the care of their child it is never acceptable to text or email a parent using your personal phone or email.
- ✦ If you meet a parent outside of the crèche and/or your work hours this policy still applies and should be followed by all staff.
- ✦ This specifically includes babysitting for families who attend the crèche. A breach of this policy in any form may result in disciplinary action and the staff member may be asked to refrain from babysitting for customers in the future.
- ✦ Staff who agree to babysit for families must be aware that they are acting as a representative of Pugwash Bay. While babysitting staff accept full responsibility for their own welfare and that of the child. Pugwash Bay is in no way liable for staff while babysitting and parents should be made aware of this from the outset.

STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

At Pugwash Bay, we are committed in helping people gain experience in the sector and as such welcome students who are over 18 years of age. Students must provide the necessary documents and paperwork in accordance with the preschool regulations and legislation. Students will not be included in the adult child ratios and will not be left unsupervised at any time. The necessary support and supervision will be provided to them to ensure they get the most out of their time here. We do not accept volunteers.

Procedure:

The following must be given to the crèche manager prior to a student's placement commencing:

- Full name, address, contact number and next of kin details
- A letter from the college confirming the duration of the work placement
- A letter from the college confirming the student is covered by their insurance while on placement
- A garda vetting form / letter confirming garda vetting has been completed and details of the outcome
- A note from the tutor / supervisor confirming the student's suitability for work in childcare
- The work placement manual / documents required by the college
- Valid identification
- A full file (same requirements as staff file) must be compiled and this is the responsibility of the student and must be in place prior to the commencement of the placement

The following rules apply to students:

- Never to be left alone with a child / children
- Only change nappies with direct supervision from a member of staff and only for training purposes
- Must follow the staff code of conduct
- Must be polite and helpful to the staff while they are here
- Must follow the policies and procedures
- Must be respectful, gentle and caring to the children
- Must introduce themselves to parents to avoid being confused as a member of staff
- Should follow direction given by members of staff and by management
- Must read and sign an orientation booklet to make themselves aware of important health and safety matters

IMPORTANT

Please note the following points which have been extracted from our policies and procedures as they are important:

- ❖ Always ensure that personal protective equipment (ppe) is worn. This includes aprons, gloves, oven gloves and full uniform.
- ❖ Fridge temperatures must be checked in the AM and the PM. If the temperature is above 5 degrees appropriate action must be taken and the temperature must be checked again one hour later.
- ❖ All food must be labelled using stickers or a permanent marker. This includes containers and beakers.
- ❖ All medicines must be stored out of children's reach. Antibiotics are stored on the top shelf of the fridge in the kitchen. Other medicines, which do not need to be refrigerated, can be stored in the medicine press.
- ❖ Parents must sign their children in and out in the book kept in reception area. Staff must check this regularly throughout the day to ensure it is accurate.
- ❖ The register must be completed as and when a child arrives. The arrival and departure time must be clearly recorded. All staff are responsible for ensuring this is done.
- ❖ Sleep checks must be completed every ten minutes. It is a very serious matter if a check is not carried out every ten minutes.
- ❖ Babies must be held when being given a bottle. They are never to be given a bottle while seated in a chair or lying on a mat.
- ❖ Nappy bins must be emptied after dinner and then again in the evening during lock up.
- ❖ The window in each changing area must be opened all day, every day and the doors must be kept closed.
- ❖ Always greet a parent by their first name and when a child is collected their daily diary information should be read to the parent.
- ❖ Cleaning sheets must be filled in throughout each day and all tasks must be carried out.
- ❖ When cleaning toys, surfaces etc. hot soapy water should be used along with the appropriate cloth (see colour chart).
- ❖ Children's hands must be washed after toilet or nappy change, after being in the garden and before all meals.

Signed:

Staff Member

Signed:

Manager

Print Name:

Print Name:

Date:

Date: