



We demonstrate tolerance and respect through child-led play

## **Staff Code of Conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice Policy**

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# **Staff Code of Conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice Policy**

## **1 Scope & Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected for all staff employed at Croft Playgroup.
- 1.2 To acknowledge the position of influence that staff have and to ensure that staff behaviour models the highest possible standards for children, parents and colleagues.
- 1.3 To acknowledge that each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the playgroup, whether inside or outside of working hours.

## **2 Outline**

- 2.1 This Code of Conduct should be read and adhered to in conjunction with the following Croft Playgroup policies:

**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**Whistleblowing Policy**

**Keyworker Policy**

**Behaviour Policy**

**Health and Safety Policy**

**Data Protection Policy (GDPR)**

**Equal Opportunities Policy**

**Confidentiality Policy**

**Disciplinary Policy**

- 2.2 At Croft Playgroup we want to ensure that all children who attend receive the highest possible quality of teaching and learning within a positive and respectful environment.
- 2.3 Staff should understand that they are role models for the children and that their own behaviour and the manner in which they conduct themselves with their colleagues, pupils, parents and others, sets an example.
- 2.4 Staff members are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children.
- 2.5 All staff members are expected to act appropriately and treat each other with dignity and respect.
- 2.6 This document forms part of a staff member's employment contract and failure to comply with it and with the associated policies may result in disciplinary action being taken, including legal action where it is warranted.
- 2.7 All staff have a personal and legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for themselves, colleagues, children and visitors to the playgroup. These responsibilities are identified in the Health and Safety policy.



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### **3 Appearance and dress**

- 3.1 Staff should remember that they are role models for pupils and that their dress and appearance should reflect this.
- 3.2 All staff and volunteers should ensure that their appearance is clean and neat when at work or representing the playgroup and dress in a manner that is comfortable and appropriate to their role.
- 3.3 Staff should not dress in a way that would cause embarrassment to pupils, parents, colleagues or others.
- 3.4 Staff are able to wear a blue tabard and playgroup hoodie should they wish to do so.
- 3.5 We expect staff to ensure that personal hygiene is kept to a high standard.
- 3.6 We expect staff to only wear simple jewellery and have nails a suitable length for working with young children.

### **4 Attendance**

- 4.1 Staff must attend work in accordance with their contract of employment and associated terms and conditions in relation to hours, days of work and holidays.
- 4.2 Staff are expected to arrive in plenty of time, and be ready to begin work at least 5 minutes prior to the start of their shift.
- 4.3 We expect that, wherever possible staff will make routine medical and dental appointments outside of their working hours or outside of term time, during school holidays.
- 4.4 Staff should speak to Managers regarding special circumstances where they require time off for any reason other than personal illness.
- 4.5 Staff should follow Croft Playgroup's absence reporting procedure when they will be absent from work due to illness or injury: calling the office as early as possible or informing the Manager, Deputy or Room Leader giving as much notice as possible.
- 4.6 Any overtime should be agreed with the Manager or Deputy before it is undertaken.
- 4.7 All staff members are required to attend staff, supervision and appraisal meetings. Managers will give notice of regular staff meetings and supervisions at the start of the academic year and at the beginning of each academic term. Staff should make every effort to attend these dates.

### **5 Safeguarding children**

- 5.1 All staff should be aware of systems within their setting which support safeguarding and these will be explained as part of staff induction and in staff meetings and regular staff training sessions.
- 5.2 All staff have a responsibility to keep children safe and protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional, neglect).
- 5.3 Children have a right to feel safe and be treated with respect and dignity. Staff are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.



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5.4 The safeguarding culture of Croft Playgroup is in part exercised through respectful and caring relationships between adults and children, with the expectation that adults demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement. We expect staff members to:

- Act in an open and transparent way that would not lead to any suspicion about their actions or intent.
- Respect their duty to protect children and young people from harm and to maintain professional boundaries.
- Acknowledge that deliberately intended/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded.
- Read and understand Croft Playgroup policies on behaviour, child protection and safeguarding, including their obligations to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Continually monitor and review practice to ensure that this guidance is followed.

5.5 Staff working in one to one situations with pupils can be more vulnerable to allegations and complaints. To safeguard both child and adult, a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work should always be undertaken.

5.6 Arranging to meet with children from the setting away from the work premises should not be permitted unless the necessity for this is clear and approval is obtained from a senior member of staff, the child and the parents/carers.

5.7 Where home visits are arranged to support a child's settling in, two members of staff will visit together and parental permission sought for the visit to take place.

5.8 A risk assessment should be in place before any home visits take place.

## **6 Professional behaviour and conduct**

6.1 Croft Playgroup is an inclusive and welcoming setting which acknowledges that all children have a right to an early education without discrimination or bias.

6.2 Discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated at Croft Playgroup.

6.3 In order to ensure a happy and inclusive working environment in which children and adults feel safe we ask that all staff:

- Apply the same professional standards to all their interactions regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation.
- Treat other colleagues, pupils, parents, and external contacts with dignity and respect.
- Work and be seen to be working in an open and transparent way.
- Follow the expectation for their role as a keyworker as outlined in our Keyworker policy.
- Commit to attend training and to develop their skills and abilities.
- Never swear on site.
- Acknowledge that they have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of the children, adopting high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

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- Be aware that their behaviour, either within or outside of the playgroup, could compromise their position within the setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute.
- Acknowledge that they are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Always respect and abide by our confidentiality policy. Ensuring that any incidents with children or parents, certain behaviour concerns, discussions that may have taken place with parents are dealt with discreetly and sensitively and should only be shared with parents if they are directly involved.
- Discuss and /or take advice from their manager and committee if they have acted in a way that may give rise to concern.
- Never misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the playgroup into disrepute.
- Inform the manager or the chair of the committee if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution.
- Never discuss other staff members in any way and to raise any concerns or issues with the Manager or Deputy in absence.
- Be open about any relationships which may impact safeguarding at the playgroup, so that appropriate safeguards can be put in place to minimise any potential risk posed to the children.
- To understand that they have a duty to notify the playgroup of any circumstances which may affect their suitability to work with children.

## **6 Physical contact**

6.1 There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have physical contact with children. However, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

6.2 Not all children feel comfortable about physical handling, so in some cases it may be necessary for staff to ask the child's consent prior to handling.

6.3 Any physical contact should be in response to the child's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Adults should therefore use their professional judgement at all times and in line with our Intimate Care and Touch policy.

6.4 Physical contact should not be secretive, changes should be done in sight and or hearing of others where possible.

6.5 When changing a child, they should be encouraged to act as independently as possible, ensuring that the child's dignity and privacy is respected.

6.6 A general culture of "safe touch" maybe needed to assist in everyday learning for a child with medical or additional development needs. These arrangements should be made known and understood by all staff.



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## **7 Probity of records (showing integrity and being trustworthy with the use of children's records)**

7.1 Staff members should never use confidential or personal information about a child or family for their own advantage.

7.2 Information must remain confidential and must never be used to intimidate; embarrass or humiliate a child.

7.3 Confidential information should never be used in casual conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis.

7.4 In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously.

7.5 The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. Where a staff member falsifies records or other documents, including those held electronically, this will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter and potentially a criminal offence.

7.6 Where a staff member has claimed any benefit, either directly or indirectly, or has failed to disclose their full earnings, this will be treated as gross misconduct and the employee may be dismissed and referred to the police.

## **8 Power and positions of trust and authority**

8.1 All those working with children are in a position of trust in relation to all pupils on roll. The relationship between a person working with a child/ren is one in which staff have a position of power or influence. It is vital for staff to understand this power; that the relationship cannot be one between equals and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence.

8.2 This means that staff should not:

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a pupil's detriment.
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with pupils which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.

8.3 Staff must acknowledge the potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable pupils and ensure that they behave in a way that keeps any vulnerable pupils are treated with respect and kept safe from harm.

## **9 Gifts, rewards, favouritism and exclusion**

9.1 Staff should take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

9.2 There are occasions when pupils or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

9.3 Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to pupils or their families. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture to bribe or even 'groom'. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

9.4 Any reward given to a child should be in accordance with agreed practice (see behaviour policy) and never based on favouritism.



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9.5 Adults should exercise care when selecting children for specific activities, jobs or privileges in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when pupils are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear, fair, agreed criteria.

## **10 Smoking and vaping**

10.1 We comply with health and safety regulations and the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage in making our setting a no-smoking environment - both indoors and outdoors:

“3.22 Providers must not allow smoking in or on the premises when children are present or about to be present. Practitioners should not vape or use e-cigarettes when children are present and providers should consider Public Health England advice on their use in public places and workplaces. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-e-cigarettes-in-public-places-and-workplaces>”

10.2 We expect that all staff adhere to our no smoking policy. Failure to adhere to our policy and procedures may result in disciplinary action.

10.3 Those who smoke should follow the guidelines outlined below:

- Staff who smoke during working hours and traveling to and from work must not do so whilst wearing any identifying uniform, or must at least cover the uniform with a garment which is removed and kept away from the children.
- E-cigarettes are not permitted to be used on the premises.
- Staff that smoke or use e-cigarettes during their scheduled breaks must go well away from the premises.
- Staff who smoke during their break make every effort to reduce the effect of the odour and passive smoking for children and colleagues through wearing a garment over their uniform which can be removed before returning to the children.
- It is a criminal offence for employees to smoke in smoke-free areas, with a fixed penalty of £50 or prosecution and a fine of up to £200.

## **11 Staff taking medication, alcohol and illegal drugs**

11.1 As outlined in the EYFS: “Staff members must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If a practitioner is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, they should seek medical advice. Practitioners must only work directly with children if the medical advice received confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that person’s ability to look after children properly. All medication on the premises must be stored securely, and out reach of children, at all times.”

11.2 Pain relief medication, such as paracetamol, should be stored in the locked medicine cabinet in the staff room.

11.3 The taking of illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

11.4 If alcohol or drug usage impacts on a staff member’s performance, playgroup has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, including referral to the police.

11.5 Staff members taking any medication during their working hours must declare this to the manager and provide details of any side effects the medication may have.



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## **12 Social networking**

12.1 Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to national and local guidelines and acceptable use policies.

12.2 Staff must not access social networking sites for personal use whilst working with the children. Use of social media out of working hours should be at the discretion of each individual so that there nothing written or posted could be interpreted as detrimental to their work.

12.3 Staff must act in the best interests of the Playgroup and not disclose personal data or information about any individual, including staff members, children and young people.

12.4 Staff members should not seek to link up with parents of children currently at playgroup on social networking websites. Where parents of children who join playgroup are already on friendly terms with staff members, confidentiality of the children and other adults at playgroup should be respected and maintained at all time.

12.5 Staff should be mindful of any actions made from a page affiliated to them to ensure that safe and responsible online behaviours are adhered to. So, that they are not put in a position which compromises their position at the playgroup.

12.6 Disciplinary action will be taken if there is a breach of confidentiality or defamatory remarks are made against the playgroup by any individual staff member working at the playgroup.

## **13 Data protection (GDPR Regulations)**

13.1 Staff members are required, under the Data Protection Act 2018, to collect, maintain and dispose of sensitive or personal data in a responsible manner.

13.2 Staff members are responsible for keeping up to date with any paperwork and should alert the senior colleagues if they are falling behind.

13.3 Staff members should not disclose sensitive information about Croft playgroup, its employees, or the local authority, to other parties, unless it gives rise to concerns about the safety or welfare of a child.

13.4 Staff members have the right to request access to data that is held about them and such requests should be made to the Manager, Deputy or chair of the Committee.

13.5 Any breaches of confidentiality will be reported to the Information Commissioners Office.

## **14 Social contact outside of workplace**

14.1 We acknowledge that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of children, independent of the professional relationship.

14.2 Staff should make Management aware of friendships/family prior to the child joining Playgroup.

14.3 Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child.

14.4 It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

14.5 Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with children or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the setting into disrepute.





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14.6 If a parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contact made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

## 15 Mobile Phones, Cameras and Electronic Devices

In line with our Technology and Online safety policy, all members of staff must keep personal mobile phones, cameras and electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities (including smart watches) in a secure place, in a staff area only. Personal mobile phones, cameras and electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are not to be used in any spaces that are accessed by children at any time.

There may be occasions, for example an agreed outing, where staff are required to have access to their personal mobile phone to ensure the safety of children and staff. During these circumstances, staff must ensure that their personal mobile phone is only used for the direct reason for having it available, for example contacting the setting in time of an emergency.

Personal mobile phones, devices and cameras must never be used to take photographs of any nature of children from the setting or their families. When families from the setting are around the children from the setting, for example during stay and play sessions, all staff must ensure that families do not take photographs of children within the setting.

## 16 Baby sitting

15.1 At times parents may ask for staff of Playgroup to care for their children out of the setting of Playgroup. In most circumstances we would recommend that staff do not enter into such arrangements with parents of children from Playgroup. However, where there are relatives of staff or friendships established prior to the contact at Playgroup we acknowledge that such circumstances may occur outside of Playgroup.

15.2 Any babysitting entered into is entered into between the individual and family.

15.3 Croft Playgroup take no responsibility for any care outside of the setting. Staff **MUST** make parents aware of this prior to babysitting and parents/staff do this at their own risk.

15.4 Staff will not receive any remuneration from playgroup for this.

## 17 Other statutory legislation

16.1 In conjunction with this 'Staff Code of Conduct', staff should also read and acknowledge any points made in ***the 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (2025)*** and ***'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2025)***



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**This policy was adopted by Croft Playgroup**

Croft Playgroup Committee

Croft Playgroup Managers

Jason Adams

Michelle Barrow and Helen Dearlove

Date: 09/09/2025

Date: 09/09/2025

*Date policy to be reviewed: September 2026 or earlier if required*



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### *Appendix 1*

#### **Staff Code of Conduct form**

I can confirm I have read the Staff Code of Conduct, Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (2025) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

I have read and fully understand what is expected of me in relation to my conduct as a staff member at Croft Playgroup.

I agree to adhere to all areas outlined in the code of conduct and understand that failure to abide by these could result in disciplinary action.

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_