

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and records

Providers must maintain records and obtain and share information to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to ensure the needs of all children are met.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS (September 2018)

Policy statement

"Parents are the children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's learning and development". EYFS, DfES, 2008

We believe that children benefit most from preschool education and care when parents/carers and settings work together in partnership.

Our aim is to support parents as their children's first and most important educators by involving them in their children's care and education and in the full life of our setting. We also aim to support parents in their own continuing education and personal development.

Some parents can be under represented in early years settings; these include fathers, parents who live apart from their children, but who still play a part in their lives, as well as working parents. In carrying out the following procedures, we will ensure that all parents are included.

When we refer to 'parents', we mean both mothers and fathers; these include both natural or birth parents, as well as step-parents and parents who do not live with their children but have contact with them and play a part in their lives. 'Parents' also includes same sex parents, as well as foster parents.

The Children Act (1989) defines parental responsibility as 'all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property'.

Procedures

- We encourage parents/carers to visit the setting before applying for a place for their child, and to make two visits ('pre-visits') in the weeks before their child starts with us.
- We encourage parents/carers to decide how best to settle their child with us when first starting and after a period of prolonged absence, and we are led by the parents/carers in our approach.
- As part of the registration process we ask parents/carers to provide us with as much information as possible about their child's likes and dislikes, abilities and requirements. In addition, we are committed to an ongoing dialogue with parents/carers to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families.

- We inform all parents/carers about how RMOP is run and of its policies. All parents/carers are required to read the policies and sign to say they have done so as part of the registration process. They are available to view both in the preschool on request and online on the RMOP website: www.ridingmilloutdoorpreschool.btck.co.uk. We check to ensure parents/carers understand the information which is given to them.
- We aim to keep parents/carers informed about the day-to-day running of the preschool by both formal and informal methods, both verbally and in writing eg:
 - news and information on our website www.ridingmilloutdoorpreschool.btck.co.uk
 - a parents/carers noticeboard
 - by talking to parent/carers at the beginning and end of sessions
 - letters to parents/carers
- We offer an invitation to an informal 'new parent/carer' chat in the term after their child starts. This may double up as a '2 year developmental check.' This is a statutory requirement for children between 2-3 years of age, with the aim of flagging up any concerns that may need further action.
- We provide each child and their family with a named key person, who acts as their first point of contact for any queries, concerns and discussions. We encourage all our staff to take pride in their role, and to increase their own knowledge when questioned by a parent/carer rather than passing the query onto a more senior member of staff.
- We inform all parents/carers on a regular basis about their children's progress, informally (verbally) through access to their child's online learning journal, and/or by appointment, known as a 'check-in' meeting. These meetings can be requested by parents/carers.
- We involve parents/carers in the shared record-keeping about their children either formally (at the 'check-in meeting'), or informally via the online learning journal, where they can add their own observations, or comment on those by staff. We ensure parents/carers have access to their children's written records.
- We provide opportunities for parents/carers to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of RMOP.
- We inform parents/carers about relevant conferences, workshops and training.
- We offer flexible appointments to avoid excluding anyone.
- We provide information about opportunities for being involved in RMOP in ways which are accessible to parents/carers with basic skills needs, or those for whom English is an additional language and we welcome the contributions of parents/carers, in whatever form these may take.
- We inform all parents/carers of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions and check to ensure these are understood. All parents/carers have access to our written complaints procedure via our website or by speaking to staff.
- We provide opportunities for parents/carers to learn about the RMOP curriculum and about young children's learning, in the preschool and at home, on our website and through written and verbal information provided at check-in meetings.

Management Committee

Riding Mill Outdoor Preschool is run and managed by a voluntary committee drawn from the parents/carers of children currently attending RMOP as well as other members of the Riding Mill community. All new parents/carers are encouraged to join the committee and contribute ideas, time and skills. The Chair of the committee will endeavour to arrange meetings which are open to all parents and carers, at times and venues which do not exclude anyone. Where it is unavoidable for some parents/carers not to be able to attend, the minutes of the meetings are made available to anyone who requests them.

- We encourage and support parents/carers to play an active part in the governance and management of the Pre-School, by joining the committee.
- We encourage parents/carers to discuss with each other the various ways they can contribute to the running and practices of Riding Mill Outdoor Preschool (RMOP) through being on the committee, giving out questionnaires and conducting parental consultations as appropriate.
- We acknowledge that some parents/carers may feel more comfortable discussing our practice with another parent/carer rather than a member of staff and we ask our committee members to keep themselves informed so that they may feel confident to discuss any issues with other parents/carers.

In compliance with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, the following documentation is also in place at our setting:

- Admissions Policy.
- Complaints procedure.
- Record of complaints.
- Developmental records of children