**St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre Policies**

This policy document was updated January 2015 and will be updated from time to time, as appropriate, to reflect any legal or regulatory changes, or changes to best practice.

We are always interested in feedback from parents, so please free to provide feedback on the enclosed policies to the manager at any time.

**Working in Partnership with parents**

**We value our relationship with parents and are committed to working in partnership to provide top quality play and care for your children.**

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre will:

* Welcome you at all times to discuss our work, take part in activities or simply have a chat.
* Keep you informed of opening times, fees, and changes to the programme of activities, policies, procedures and fundraising events.
* Be consistent and reliable to enable you to plan with confidence and peace of mind.
* Share and discuss your child’s achievements, experiences and friendships.
* Invite you to join our Management Committee.
* Organise regular meetings to involve you in decisions about the running of the Centre.
* Ask your permission for any outings or special events.
* Ensure that all of our policies are followed at all times, and are available for parents to read.
* Assure you that information held on file contributes only to the health and wellbeing of your child.
* Allow parents access to their children’s records at any convenient time.
* Not release any personal information given to us in confidence.
* Listen to your views, concerns and suggestions to ensure that we continue to meet your needs.

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# Quality Statement

We will endeavour to develop, demonstrate and sustain quality in all areas of the Centre. This is a positive and visual way of ensuring that parents and children are offered the top quality childcare they deserve.

“Quality” at St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre means:

* A warm and supportive environment
* A child centred service
* Partnership with Parents
* Positive play opportunities
* Accessibility
* Good management
* Up to date administration
* High quality Staff
* Safe Premises
* Nutritious Snacks

We are committed to delivering a quality service for all, and:

* + - * Strive for continuous improvement in all that we do
      * Promote equality of opportunity through our internal and external conduct
      * Are accountable for our actions
      * Are of value to our users and parents
      * Agree requirements with parents and endeavour to meet or exceed these *first* time and *every* time.

# Aims and Objectives

“To provide top quality Pre-school childcare and education”

* To provide opportunities for creative, challenging and worthwhile play within a safe, caring and friendly environment.
* To offer places to all children when available, regardless of gender, origin or ability.
* To help and work in partnership with parents/carers and the local community.
* To provide an affordable childcare opportunity for parents who would otherwise be unable to work or undergo training.
* To reflect and meet the needs of the local community.
* To provide a secure environment for children to develop emotionally, physically, intellectually, creatively and socially.
* To incorporate equal opportunities into all areas of our work.
* To ensure all policies and procedures are followed and assessed for their effectiveness regularly.
* To offer training to staff members and placements for childcare students.
* To offer opportunities of employment to the community.

# Access Policy

As St Thomas’ Children’s Centre is a good quality childcare provision we have premises and policies in place, which makes our provision accessible for special needs children and parents on low income.

The admissions policy is drawn up in an Equal Opportunities framework. This will be reviewed regularly, kept open and clear to all.

The waiting list will be monitored regularly, reviewing the process and sorting any appeals that may occur.

An access strategy will be discussed in the early setting up process of the club and not be left until the club faces a problem.

The Children’s Centre is registered with Ofsted, this means that many parents who claim the Working Families Tax Credit, can now claim the additional childcare element within it. This can be worth up to 70% of the parent’s eligible weekly childcare costs.

# Accident policy

**Staff are encouraged to hold First Aid Certificates and there will always be trained staff on duty**

Any accident happening at the Centre will be recorded, noting in writing:

* Date of incident
* Time of incident
* Nature of injury
* Name of injured party
* Member of staff who responded
* Name of any witnesses
* Action taken or treatment administered

Every accident/incident will be reported to the parent/carer who will be asked to read and sign the accident record.

Parent/carer will be notified, and kept fully informed as to the procedures taken.

If the incident involves more than one person e.g. a bite, both parents concerned will be required to read and sign the report.

PROCEDURE

* ASSESS SITUATION – Secure from danger, remove from other people
* TREAT INJURY
* CALL ASSISTANCE – other staff or emergency services, if necessary
* INFORM PARENT – by telephone, or when child is collected according to the severity of the accident/incident.

ANY SERIOUS ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT WILL BE REPORTED TO OFSTED AND THE HEALTH & SAFETY EXECUTIVE (RIDDOR)

The Centre has valid Public and Employers Liability Insurance cover

ALL ACCIDENTS MUST BE RECORDED IMMEDIATELY!

PARENT MUST SIGN THE ACCIDENT RECORD!

# Admissions policy

General

* We offer places to all children, regardless of gender, origin or ability, subject to availability.
* Invoices are issued monthly, see “Fees and Payments” Policy for payment terms.
* Financial advice and information on fees is available from the Centre, please ask.
* We require four weeks’ notice of cancellation of places, or normal charges will be payable for a further four weeks.
* Holidays should be booked at least four weeks in advance on a holiday form to qualify for reduced rates whilst away.

Pre-school

St. Thomas’ Pre-school is open to all children aged 2 to 5 years.

Children are admitted by virtue of age and availability of places. If several children reach these stages at the same time, then places will be offered in the first instance to those children who are eligible to receive Early Years Entitlement (EYE), as required by Lincolnshire County Council. Funded places will be offered in accordance with the code of practice for Early Years Entitlement and any local conditions in place at the time. Any further available places will then be offered to those who have been on the waiting list longest.

Out of School Care

St. Thomas’ Kids’ Club and Breakfast Club are open to any pupil of

St. Thomas’ Primary School.

St. Thomas’ Summer/Easter Kids’ Club is open to any child aged 4 to 11 years

Places are available on a “first come, first served” basis, with a waiting list coming in to operation once the session is full on a particular day.

# Allegation of Abuse by Staff procedure

If an allegation is made against a member of staff that they have abused a child in their care, the Management Committee will take advice from the Designated Officer at Lincs Safeguarding Children Board and decide whether the staff member should be suspended until the allegation has been thoroughly investigated.

If the allegation is found to be true, this will result in instant dismissal. If, after a full investigation has been carried out, the complaint is unfounded, the Management Committee may act to lift the suspension and reinstate the staff member, if all other aspects of their work are found to be satisfactory.

# Anti-Bullying policy

St. Thomas' Children's Centre is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all children, so they can play and learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If it does occur, all children should be able to tell staff, and know that the incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying can take several forms :

* Emotional………..being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
* Physical……………pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, violence
* Racist……………….racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
* Homophobic…….because of, or focussed on, the issue of sexuality
* Verbal………………name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

All staff members have an awareness and understanding of bullying and it’s implications.

Children and parents should be assured that they will be supported when an allegation of bullying is made.

Any reports of bullying should be made to the Manager or Deputy, and an official complaints form may be completed.

Parents will be informed, and may be asked to a meeting to discuss the problem.

The bullying behaviour or threats will be thoroughly investigated and every effort made to stop the bullying quickly.

The reasons behind the bullying will be discussed with both parties, and an attempt will be made to help the bully/ies change their behaviour.

ST. THOMAS’ CHILDREN’S CENTRE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW REGISTRATION OF CHILDREN PROVED TO BE BULLYING IF ALL ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM FAIL.

# 

# Appeal Procedure

Every employee has the right to appeal against a decision at any stage of a formal process.

The appeal must be made in writing to the individual’s line manager within 5 working days of the date of the letter confirming the outcome of the formal meeting/hearing (10 working days for flexible working requests).

Flexible working appeals must be made within 14 days of date of the letter refusing the request for flexible working, and the appeal must be heard within 14 days of receipt of the appeal letter from the employee.

Redundancy appeals should be made within 5 working days of the date of the letter confirming notice of termination of employment by reason of redundancy. The letter should clearly outline the basis for the appeal, which could be related to redundancy selection or the process followed.

The appeal will be considered by an individual not previously involved in any investigation, meeting or hearing at an earlier stage.

Appeal hearings will be arranged and concluded as soon as possible and may be conducted by way of a re-hearing. This means that (whether or not relied upon at the original meeting), you may rely upon further or new representations or arguments, and evidence.

In certain circumstances, dependent upon the grounds of the appeal, the person handling the appeal (the appeal manager) may decide not to hold a further meeting, but will instead review the decision.

Employees should have the right to state their case, clearly establishing the reasons for the appeal. They may be accompanied during any appeal hearing by a work colleague or trade union representative, and will be afforded the opportunity to state their case and advance any explanation they wish with regard to the circumstances giving rise to the original decision. They may also invite the appeal manager to interview or re-interview witnesses or otherwise suggest any further investigation they may consider appropriate before an appeal decision is reached.

If the appeal manager needs to make further enquiries, the appeal meeting should be adjourned to enable these to take place. Once the appeal manager is satisfied that they have heard all of the relevant information, they will make a decision on the outcome of the appeal.

The appeal manager has the right to confirm, reduce or remove the sanction. In exceptional circumstances the sanction may be increased.

The appeal manager will, where practical, confirm the final outcome of the appeal in writing within 5 working days after the conclusion of the appeal process.

# Arrival and Collection policy

ARRIVAL

Breakfast Club

Children may be brought to the Centre from 7.45am. The parent or carer must sign the child in on the attendance register.

Kids’ Club

Key Stage 2 children attending Kids’ Club make their own way to the Centre at the end of the school day. They are expected to go there directly, unless attending another after-school club about which we have had prior notification, from the parent.

On arrival, children are marked in the attendance register.

Key Stage 1 children will be collected by Centre staff from their classrooms and, once assembled, escorted to the Centre. Again, each child is marked in the attendance register. If for any reason a child is missing, a staff member checks with the School office and/or class teacher to find out whether they know the reason for this, e.g. illness or holiday. If this does not resolve the matter, a telephone call will be made to the parent or other contact number.

***It is vital that we are told if your child will not be attending their usual session, as much time can be wasted searching for a child who has simply been collected by the parent.***

COLLECTION

Pre-school

Children should be collected promptly at the end of their session (12noon, 3pm or 3.15pm), as the next group of children arrive shortly afterwards. This also ensures that young children do not suffer undue distress if a parent/carer is late.

## When parents/carers arrive at the end of the session, children will be supervised and called individually once staff has identified who has arrived to collect each child.

## Breakfast Club

All children are escorted safely onto the school premises at 8-45am, at which time school staff take over supervision of the children.

## Kids’ Club

Parents may collect their child at any time during the session up to 6pm at the latest. All children must be signed out by the person collecting them.

To ensure the safety of the children in our care, children will only be released to the parent/carer or the person named on the registration form, unless we are notified beforehand. If you wish another person to collect your child on a particular occasion, prior written authority must be given, with a brief description of the person. The Centre reserves the right to not allow a child to be collected if we are in doubt of the authenticity of the person calling i.e. if the child seems in distress or does not know the person, or if the parent/carer appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance.

If, as the legal carer of the child/ren, you are aware that there is a particular person who should not collect your child/ren, we must have details in writing. In case of emergency, we may be able to act on telephone instructions if the caller can be identified.

If a child is not collected within ten minutes of the end of a session, we will try to ring the parent or other contact numbers held to arrange alternative collection. If a child is not collected on time, we will *never* leave the child alone, but stay until arrangements have been made and the child has been collected. If, however, the child has not been collected within an hour of the session ending and staff is unable to make contact with their parent, carer or emergency number, we will contact the police and Social Services to advise them that the child has not been collected and a parent/carer cannot be contacted. Staff will then act on the advice given by these agencies.

A “Late Collection” fee will be charged if a child is not collected promptly at the end of a session, as follows : £5 up to 15 minutes after the end of a session, plus £10 for each 15 minutes after that, or part thereof.

# Attendance Management Policy, including sickness absence procedure

At STCC, we are committed to treating everyone in a fair and sensitive way if they are ill and unable to attend work. We understand that employees will, on occasions, find they are unable to attend work due to sickness, but do expect them to present themselves for work whenever practicable.

# Attendance Management policy

**Unacceptable levels of attendance**

Due to the nature of our business, high levels of absenteeism (whether it be long term absence or repeated spells of short term sickness absence) cause considerable disruption. They also place an undue burden upon other team members.

In order to monitor sickness absence and its effect on the business more efficiently and effectively, where an individual has four separate occurrences or 10 days of sickness absence within a twelve month period, a formal meeting will be arranged.

**Types of absence**

**Long-term absence**

STCC defines long-term absence as absence of more than 4 weeks.

We will maintain reasonable contact with anyone who is likely to be absent from work for more than 4 weeks. It may be appropriate for a meeting to be held (this may, with the individual’s agreement, be at their home) to discuss their sickness absence. The individual’s views will be sought regarding the expected length of absence, the longer-term effects of the illness/injury (if any), the possibility of a gradual return to work, and the possibility of a recurrence. The employee may wish to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or by a work colleague. If the meeting is to take place at the individual’s home, a friend/relative may accompany them.

Where a period of sickness absence is expected to last for longer than 4 weeks, we may seek the employees permission to obtain a report from their doctor with the objective of providing sufficient medical information to enable a decision to be made as to how to proceed (what amounts to sufficient medical information will depend on the circumstances of each case.).

Once sufficient medical advice is available, a further meeting will be arranged to discuss the next steps. If it is not appropriate for a meeting to take place, a telephone conversation will occur instead.

**Intermittent absence**

Persistent intermittent absence will be investigated to understand why an employee is repeatedly absent from work and to set the level of attendance required. Should there be no improvement in the employee’s attendance record, meetings may be conducted in accordance with either the Disciplinary or the Capability procedure depending upon the circumstances.

STCC will attempt to establish if there is an underlying medical cause for the absences. If medical opinion suggests there is an underlying medical reason, we will usually follow the steps described for handling long-term sickness absence.

Where a pattern of absence is established, if an employee has a serious medical condition, or where the health or safety of fellow employees is at risk, the company reserves the right to require an employee, even during the first seven calendar days of an absence, to attend a formal medical assessment.

If an employee refuses to provide their consent for a medical report, or refuses to attend a medical assessment arranged by the company, they should be aware that a decision about their capability and likely return to work will be made based on the information available.

In most cases, intermittent sickness absence will be managed via the Capability procedure. There may sometimes be circumstances, however, where it is appropriate to deal with persistent intermittent absence as a conduct issue. Such circumstances will be rare.

**Unauthorised absence**

Failure to notify the appropriate manager of any absence is considered unauthorised absence, and may lead to disciplinary action, unless there are mitigating circumstances.

**Pregnancy-related illness**

Where an absence is due partially or wholly to pregnancy or childbirth, this will be managed under the terms of the Maternity procedure.

**Disability Discrimination**

Where an employee is (or may be) disabled, the company will consider reasonable, practical adjustments that may be made to work practices, premises or equipment as detailed in the Equality Act 2010.

An individual is deemed to be disabled, for the purposes of the Act, if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long-term impact on their normal day to day activities.

**Alternative Employment**

Where, as a result of a medical condition, and following an investigation into and consideration of potential reasonable adjustments to the existing job, an individual is unable to continue in their normal position, STCC will consider the types of duties the individual may be able to undertake that would not endanger the health of the individual or their fellow employees.

Where the medical advice is unable to foresee a return to work in the near future, alternative employment is not available or practical, and where no return to work action plan can be initiated, STCC must make a business decision regarding the continued employment of the individual. Meetings to discuss this will be carried out in line with the company’s capability policy.

**Sickness Absence procedure**

**Notification**

Irrespective of the length of time an employee expects to be unable to attend work due to sickness, they are required to contact Emma Martin or Kelly Wilkinson at the earliest opportunity.If it is not possible to speak to either of them, one of them will call back as soon as is practicable.

Initial notification must be by personal contact on the telephone. It is not acceptable to leave a message on an answering machine/voicemail, or via text or email.

Whilst recognising an employee’s right to confidentiality, the employee, or the employee’s nominee in the event of a serious illness or accident, should provide the following details:

* reason for absence
* expected length of absence; details of action being taking to ensure absence is minimised e.g. whether they are visiting their doctor
* details of any other key stakeholders that need to be notified

Where no satisfactory notification or reason is given for the absence, it will be treated as unauthorised and will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

After the initial contact, the employee must maintain regular contact. For absences of over one week’s duration, contact must be at least weekly.

**Certification**

For absences of up to and including 7 calendar days (inclusive of Saturday, Sunday and other non-working days) the employee must complete a Self Certification form as soon as they return to work, to cover the period from their first day of absence. This should be completed on their first day back in the office.

If the period of sickness absence lasts for more than 7 calendar days (i.e. 7 or more consecutive days) the employee must obtain a Fit Note from their doctor or hospital and forward this to their manager as soon as possible.

Further Fit Notes must be submitted when the period of absence continues after the expiry of any previous documentation and must account for each and every day of absence.

Failure to comply with this procedure may lead to disciplinary action.

**Return to work**

Upon their return to work an employee will have a return to work meeting with Emma Martin.

The primary purpose of this meeting is to confirm that the employee is fit to resume their normal duties, to discuss the likelihood of a recurrence of the illness and to ascertain whether or not any action needs to be taken to enable the employee to resume working or to prevent recurrence of the illness.

Where an employee’s attendance levels are giving cause for concern, this meeting may also be used to discuss the individual’s absence record and to advise the employee of potential future action as detailed in the Attendance Management Policy.

The Return to Work section on the Self Certification form will be completed by Emma Martin.

Where a doctor recommends that an employee should return to work on alternative temporary working arrangements to aid their recovery, the manager will need a letter confirming this medical advice. Full consideration will be given to the request, taking into account the needs of the individual and the business.

**Payment for sickness absence – Statutory Sick Pay**

In accordance with government legislation, Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is provided to all employees who are eligible for payment under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992. It is paid by us as your employer through the normal payroll for up to 28 weeks in any period of incapacity for work or linked periods.

**Amount of SSP**

There is one rate of SSP payable for employees earning over the lower earnings limit set by the government. SSP is subject to deduction of income tax and Class 1 National Insurance contributions and any other lawful deductions.

**Eligibility for SSP**

All employees are eligible provided:-

* Your average weekly earnings are at least the lower earnings limit.
* You are incapable of work for four or more consecutive days including Saturdays and Sundays and Public and Bank Holidays. Sickness on these days must be reported whether or not you would normally work. Periods of incapacity for work (PIWs) separated by less than eight weeks count as one single period of incapacity. Spells of sickness lasting less than four days do not count and cannot be linked with earlier spells.
* You are sick on “qualifying days”. Your qualifying days will be those normally worked under your contract of employment. The first three qualifying days in any PIW or linked PIWs count as waiting days and no SSP is payable. On the fourth qualifying day SSP becomes payable.
* You do not fall into any of the following categories on the first day of a PIW:-
  + You have just started work and have done no work for us when you fall sick
  + You are pregnant and fall sick within the qualifying period or are receiving Statutory Maternity Pay
  + You have already received 28 weeks SSP in a single PIW or linked PIWs.

**Purpose of SSP**

It can only be paid when you are genuinely ill and incapable of coming to work. We may be entitled to investigate your reasons for absence before making payments of SSP to you.

**Employment and Support Allowance**

You may be eligible to receive further state benefits. The rates differ from SSP and they are not paid at a flat rate and subject to tax. If you receive any state benefits you must inform us as they will normally be deducted from your pay.

**Authorisation of SSP**

SSP may be withheld if there is any reason to believe you are not ill or your injury or illness does not prevent you from working. If you fail to comply with any rules you may not receive SSP. Government regulations contain a Right of Appeal to an adjudication officer at the DWP if you believe your SSP has been withheld incorrectly.

**Leavers**

If you are sick when you leave our employment you may request we supply you with a statement relating to the payment of SSP, which you should give to any new employer if you obtain new employment within eight weeks of receiving it.

**Records**

We are obliged to keep records for three years from the end of each tax year showing the dates of each reported PIW and details of SSP paid to each employee.

**Sickness during annual leave or on a bank holiday**

Where an employee falls sick or is injured while on holiday, STCC will allow the employee to elect to take sick leave instead of annual leave and take replacement holiday at a later time. This is subject to the following strict conditions:

* The total period of incapacity must be fully certificated by a qualified medical practitioner.
* The employee must follow the sickness absence reporting procedure as soon as he/she knows that there will be a period of incapacity during a holiday, and continue to report each day of absence, even if the employee is abroad at the time of sickness.
* The employee must submit a written request no later than 5 days after returning to work setting out how much of the holiday period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to take at another time.
* Where the employee is overseas when he/she falls ill or is injured, evidence must still be produced that the employee was ill by way of either a medical certificate or proof of a claim on an insurance policy for medical treatment received at the overseas location.
* In the event that the employee is unable to obtain medical evidence of incapacity during annual leave, the employee must notify their manager immediately and provide full details of attempts made to obtain medical evidence.
* Note – days taken as sick leave, rather than annual leave, will be paid SSP only.

Where the employee fulfils all of the above conditions, the employee will be granted the same number of days' replacement holiday leave as the number of holiday days lost due to sickness or injury.

If an employee is ill or is injured before the start of a period of planned holiday, consideration will be given as to whether or not it is appropriate for the employee to postpone the holiday dates to another mutually agreed time. The employee must submit a written request to postpone the planned holiday and this must be accompanied by a letter from his/her doctor confirming that he/she is unfit, or is still likely to be unfit, to take the holiday. In the event that the employee is unable to obtain medical evidence, the employee must provide full details of attempts made to obtain medical evidence in their request for postponement. It will be at the Manager’s discretion as to whether the planned holiday is postponed.

An employee must request to take any replacement holiday in the usual way, and all holidays must be taken in the same holiday year in which it was accrued. However, where an employee has been prevented from taking the holiday in that particular holiday year due to sickness absence, the Manager will exercise his/her discretion to allow the employee to carry that leave forward into the next holiday year. The manager may require an employee to take all or part of his/her replacement holiday on particular days and it is not required to provide the employee with any minimum period of notice to do this, although s/he will aim to provide reasonable notice.

**Holiday entitlement during sick leave**

An employee who is absent on sick leave will continue to accrue his/her full statutory holiday entitlement. However, contractual holiday entitlement over and above the minimum statutory holiday entitlement provided for by the Working Time Regulations 1998 will not accrue during any period of sick leave once an employee has been absent for a period of 52 weeks.

An employee on long term sickness absence will be informed of their accrued holiday entitlement and will be afforded an opportunity to elect to take a period of their accrued holiday entitlement during sickness absence. During an elected period of holiday, the employee will be paid at the rate of their normal salary. The period of elected holiday will not count towards the employee’s total period of sickness absence.

An employee on short-term sick leave may also elect to take his/her accrued holiday entitlement while on sick leave. During an elected period of holiday, the employee will be paid at the rate of their normal salary. The period of elected holiday will not count towards the employee’s total period of sickness absence.

An employee must request to take any accrued annual leave whilst on sick leave in the usual way, and are encouraged to do so during the holiday year in which it is accrued. However, where an employee has been prevented from taking the holiday in that particular holiday year due to sickness absence, or where they have elected not to take it, their manager will exercise his/her discretion to allow the employee to carry forward the statutory leave accrued into the next holiday year.

On return from sickness absence the employee may be required to take all or part of this accrued and carried forward leave on particular days and it is not required to provide the employee with any minimum period of notice to do this, although it will aim to provide reasonable notice.

In all cases of sickness absence from work, the company expects that an employee will do everything to help a speedy return to work. The company would not expect any employee who is absent to undertake any employment elsewhere or to participate in any activity which is inconsistent with the nature of their illness, eg sports, social activities or home improvements

# Behaviour Management policy

The Centre believes in promoting positive behaviour.

We aim to encourage self-discipline in the children and develop their consideration for each other, their surroundings and property. This will be done by praising and acknowledging positive actions and attitudes. In this way we hope to ensure that the children realise we value and respect them.

The member of staff with responsibility for behaviour management issues is:

**Kelly Wilkinson, in her absence it is Emma Martin**

Our rules concern safety, care and respect for each other. Staff will deal with inappropriate behaviour at the time it occurs. How a particular incident is handled will depend on the child involved and the circumstances.

The Centre staff will not use any form of punishment or practices which humiliate or frighten the children. Physical intervention will only be used to manage a child’s behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children, an adult, or serious damage to property. ANY occasion where physical restraint is used will be recorded and parents/carers informed when the child is collected. Positive techniques will be employed to counteract and pre-empt possible problems before they arise. Children will be given the opportunity to release their feelings in a more creative way. Staff will attempt to focus directly on positive features of the child’s behaviour.

Adults will:

* Be kind, caring and fair
* Praise and give encouragement
* Be patient
* Not smack, swear or shout
* Realise that the needs of the child are more important than the routines of the Group
* Redirect unwanted behaviour between children
* Intervene in the early stages of an disagreement
* Discuss difficult, recurring problems and possible causes with parents, and agree how best to respond to the child
* Comfort children upset by the unwanted behaviour

Children will be encouraged to:

* Not smack, bite, hit, kick or show aggression
* Respect and share toys and equipment
* Respect adults and be courteous
* Be patient

# Child Protection procedure

We intend to create in our group an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

1. All known abusers will be excluded
2. All staff will be interviewed and asked to provide at least two references that will be followed up, and be DBS cleared before employment commences.
3. All applicants both paid and voluntary will be subject to a probationary period and their appointment will not be confirmed until the group is confident that they can be entrusted with the children, and have been authorised by a DBS check to work with children.
4. All staff should be aware of their responsibility as childcare workers to share any concerns they have about a child with the supervisor. If they feel this not being taken seriously they should share their concerns with Social Services or the Police.
5. All staff should be aware of possible indicators of child abuse. Relevant training and

information will be sought and passed to all.

1. Where an allegation of child abuse is made against a member of staff :
2. Request the allegation in writing.
3. The written allegation will go to the chair/manager.
4. A decision will be made on who should be informed i.e. Ofsted, Social Services and the rest of the committee (if appropriate).
5. If the allegation is of a serious nature then the Management and/or Ofsted will decide if the employee should be suspended on pay whilst investigations are being made.
6. The investigation will include obtaining statements from all witnesses available and from the employee who is involved.
7. At all times the employee will have the right to representation.
8. Depending on the outcome of the investigations, the Disciplinary Procedure will be followed if necessary.
9. Records will be kept as appropriate.

Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child’s behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a specific and confidential record will be set up. This record will include the child’s name, address, age, times and dated observations. The report will objectively describe the child’s behaviour and appearance without comment or interpretation, and where possible, the child’s exact words spoken, the date, time and signature of the recorder. These records will be kept as confidential and will not be accessible to anyone other than the persons concerned.

1. We will liaise with other bodies

The group operates in accordance with local authority guidelines. All confidential records on a child will be shared with the professional bodies on a “need to know” basis. The group will maintain ongoing contact with the registering authority (Ofsted).

Records will be kept of the local NSPCC contact and the 24 hr help line number, which is 0800 800500.

1. We will support families

We will take every step to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff/volunteers in the group. Where abuse at home is suspected, the group will continue to welcome the child and their parents into the group while investigations are carried out.

1. Child Safety policy (including sun protection policy)

Employers are responsible for making sure the workplace (play setting) and the equipment is in a safe condition that presents no risk to health. Employees and volunteers have a parallel responsibility to co-operate with employers to take care of themselves and others.

The Health and Safety Act 1974 protects the health, safety and welfare of workers, children, parents and public. The recent Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1992 has more specific regulations. It now includes the basic principles of managing risk through a mixture of assessment, training and balanced control measures.

**St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre must:**

* Ensure the setting/equipment (handling, storage, transporting) is in a safe condition and presents no risk to health.
* Provide adequate welfare facilities and a safe working environment to ensure staff and children are not exposed to Health and safety risks.
* Entrust tasks to employees taking into account their capabilities as regards health and safety.
* Appoint people who are competent to carry out specific tasks.
* Provide information, training and supervision.
* Assess all risks to the health and safety of employees, visitors and children who may be affected by the activities and the use of their premises by others. Measures must be put in place to remove or adequately control these risks.
* Develop emergency procedures i.e. accident and fire.
* Provide training to recognise hazards, assess the risk and implement the measures for their protection and the protection of others.
* Monitor and review procedures and practice.

**Employees must:**

* Co-operate with their employer and take care of themselves and others.
* Not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.
* Undertake appropriate health and safety training so that they are fully aware of the relevant issues, regulations and procedures for all play activities with which the children are involved, for example, fire safety, visits, moving and handling equipment etc.
* Undertake child protection training to ensure awareness of possible risks.

**Sun protection policy**

Babies and young children do have thinner, more delicate skin than adults. Because of this, their risk of getting sunburnt is much higher. STCC want all children to have the benefit of their spending time outside in safety without the danger of the harmful effects of the sun.

* Parents/Carers will be asked to provide sunscreen for the children as well as sun hats, suitable clothing and hats. We would recommend that sunscreen is applied prior to coming into pre-school if possible.
* Babies and young children should wear sunscreen. Parents whose children are sensitive to sunscreen should try to find another option or ensure that their baby/young child is well covered.
* When appropriate, staff will reapply cream on children if they have been playing in the water.
* Activities set up outdoors should be kept in the shade where possible and children encouraged to use shaded areas for their games. Babies and young children should be kept in entirely shade where possible, under trees, canopies or indoors.
* Babies and young children should be dressed in cotton clothing that is loose and of a close-weave fabric. Children should be encouraged to wear hats with brims so that most of their face is shaded.
* Sunscreen cream should be applied that is factor 15+, to all exposed parts of the body 15-30 minutes before going out in the sun, on shoulders, necks, ears, noses and tops of feet etc.

# Complaints policy

Any complaints lodged against the Centre or its staff will be treated very seriously, and all issues will be responded to verbally or in writing, as appropriate. If you have cause for complaint, our procedure is as follows:

* In the first instance, the verbal or written complaint must be made to the Manager, who will endeavour to investigate and respond within two working days.
* If the response is unsatisfactory, the Chairperson of the Management Committee should be contacted, who will try to resolve the complaint within five working days.
* If the matter is still not resolved, the complaint should be addressed to

OFSTED, as below:

OFSTED

National Business Unit

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel : 0300 123 1231

1. Confidentiality policy

St. Thomas' Children's Centre takes the confidentiality of all employees, children and families very seriously. We will only use and share confidential information when necessary to support the wellbeing of individual children.

*Staff at the Centre will not discuss confidential information about children and their families with other parents/carers. Management Committee members and volunteers will have the importance of maintaining confidentiality stressed, and they will not have access to any personal files or information.*

Records are kept as follows:

Child

* Personal records - each child will have records kept which contain personal information such as registration details, enrolment forms, consent forms, information provided by parents and other professionals and medical details. Records of information relating to the child or observations made by staff may also be kept, such as developmental concerns or safeguarding issues. These may also include reports or minutes that may arise from meetings that concern the child, or from other agencies working with the child/family.
* Pre-school Learning and Development records - each child's individual file may include observations, assessments, photos, developmental records and samples of the child's work. These files are stored securely and to ensure confidentiality. These records can be accessed and contributed to by staff, the child's parents and the child themselves, on request.

Other records

* Employee - each employee has a personnel file containing personal information, emergency contact details, next of kin, recruitment information, employment details, matters relating to disciplinary procedures, references, training records, qualifications, appraisal records and evidence of Disclosure & Barring records. The file can be accessed by the individual to whom the file relates upon request.
* Student records - each student has a file containing personal information, emergency contact details, next of kin, details of course and induction, confirmation of CRB clearance. The file can be accessed by the individual to whom the file relates upon request.
* Medication records - individual records relating to each child, detailing ongoing medication and emergency treatment with consent given by the parent/carer.
* Accident/Incident records - individual records relating to each child/staff member detailing the nature of the incident/accident, pre-existing injuries, who dealt with it and what the outcome was.

All records relating to the children and individuals who have worked at the Centre will be archived for a period of time in line with regulations and guidance provided by Ofsted (minimum 3 years). After this time, records will be shredded to maintain long term confidentiality.

Sharing information with confidence

* Parents have access to the records of their own child but are not permitted to have access to information relating to any other child.
* Personal records are stored in lockable filing cabinets and will be accessed only by STCC employees.
* Information given will be shared on a "need to know" basis with the child's key person, other staff members and other professionals. This will only be done in cases of safeguarding issues, or with the consent of the parent/carer.
* Issues relating to the employment of staff will remain confidential to the people directly involved in making workforce decisions.

Management Committee and Staff:

St. Thomas' Children's Centre will ensure that all employees, volunteers and students are aware of and understand the Confidentiality Policy, and will be asked to sign a record to agree they have read and will abide by it. Everyone concerned needs to pay attention to the possible implications in the following circumstances:

1. Discussing information in front of the children.
2. Having conversations with other adults.
3. Discussing work/Committee matters outside of the Centre.
4. Identifying to whom and why you are passing on information.
5. Secure storage of files and information.
6. Recording and updating of information and records, with staff taking personal responsibility for maintaining confidentiality of records they are working on at any time.

***Any breach of confidentiality is a disciplinary matter.***

1. Data Protection policy

St. Thomas' Children's Centre is required to keep and maintain certain records to comply with Ofsted Registration requirements, and the legal requirements of EYFS and the 1998 Data Protection Act.

The Data Protection Act requires that all data users register the purposes for which they hold personal data, whether it is on computer or manual files.

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre follows the principals of the Act, which state that personal data must be:

* Obtained and processed fairly and lawfully;
* Held for the lawful purpose described in the Centre’s registration entry
* Used only for those purposes stated;
* Adequate and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is held;
* Accurate and kept up to date;
* Held no longer than is necessary, allowing for Ofsted requirements;
* Accessible to the individual concerned, or individuals with parental responsibility;
* Stored confidentially, and disclosed only by following approved access procedures.

The personal data that we hold on children will used in cases of emergency only, to provide the best possible care, and to be aware of the individual needs of each child.

The information that we hold is strictly confidential.

We make every effort to ensure that data is correct and updated regularly.

The information will not be disclosed to any third party without parental consent, or in cases concerning safeguarding issues.

The details held on file may be seen by the subject or their representative (i.e. Parent or guardian), on request.

Alterations may be requested and made at any time.

St. Thomas' Children's Centre is registered to hold and process data with the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office). This authority upholds information rights in the public interest, and ensures data privacy and rights.

1. Disciplinary Procedure

St. Thomas' Children's Centre views breaches of discipline as extremely serious. Those involved with, or responsible for, breaches will be subject to disciplinary proceedings at an appropriate level. This procedure does not apply to dismissals due to redundancy, dismissals during a probationary period or the non-renewal of fixed term contracts. This procedure is non-contractual but does apply to all STCC employees, to ensure fairness and consistency.

Disciplinary Procedure

STTC requires rules and procedures to be complied with to ensure a good relationship between employees and their Managers. It is hoped that there will be no need to use the disciplinary procedure. However, should such action be deemed necessary, the procedure laid down below should allow all relevant issues to be dealt with fairly, reasonably and in a timely manner. Disciplinary action is initially at the discretion of the individual’s immediate Manager.

Employees will only be disciplined or dismissed after the appropriate Manager has confirmed the decision to take disciplinary action with the Management Committee.

The steps referred to below aim to correct unacceptable behaviour and promote acceptable levels of attendance and performance subject to the following key principles:

* No disciplinary action will be taken until the facts of the case have been established;
* Employees will be informed of any complaint against them and afforded the opportunity to state their case before any decision is reached;
* Except in the case of gross misconduct or exceptional circumstances no employee will be dismissed for a first disciplinary offence;
* Employees will always be given an explanation for disciplinary action and will be made aware of the level of improvement expected to avoid further disciplinary action;
* Employees will always have the opportunity to appeal any disciplinary sanction;
* Employees will be treated consistently with others involved in similar cases; and
* Employees are entitled to be accompanied at any formal disciplinary hearing.

The purpose of the disciplinary procedure is to provide you with the opportunity to respond to allegations made against you. If the allegations are admitted, or if the disciplinary manager is reasonably satisfied, after considering the full circumstances of the case, that there is substance to the allegations, disciplinary action appropriate to the circumstances will be taken.

There are a number of stages in the procedure and STCC has sole discretion whether to omit the initial stages depending on the facts of the case. Except for acts of gross misconduct, the following stages will normally be adopted:

* Informal Warning
* Recorded Verbal Warning
* First Written Warning
* Final Written Warning
* Dismissal

1. Employee Responsibilities (including Observations)

* Face to face contact with parents and children
* Confidentiality and trust
* Ability to communicate with parents
* Organise events that open up the centre in a variety of ways
* Make every effort to be fair in building relationships
* Hold organisation as the key to maximising time and resources
* Encourage and work with other play/ care workers as a team
* Make best use of the time available
* Recognise skills in oneself and others, and use them to the full potential
* Plan activities and work with groups of children
* Have knowledge of child development and apply it in practice
* Have commitment to and understanding of equal opportunities
* Provide warm and consistent care

Observations policy

Pre- School

The children will be regularly observed and assessed, as is required by OFSTED, and this is explained fully to parents/carers on registering with the group. Parents have full access to these records and are invited to see them to check their child’s development.. Occasionally, written work may be submitted by a member of staff if required as part of a qualification assessment. In this case the parent will be informed and has the right to see any comments made.

Breakfast Club & Kids’ Club

Reception class children have a named Key person who helps them to compile a book about their time at the Centre. This may include examples of their own work, photos and written observations about older children. Occasionally, written work may be submitted by a member of staff if required as part of a qualification assessment. In this case the parent will be informed and has the right to see any comments made.

# Employment policy

St. Thomas' Children's Centre recognises the need to meet the Welfare Requirements in relation to appropriate qualifications of staff, ratios of staff to children and staff checks.

We aim to provide children with high quality care, education and individual attention.

We will:

1. • Ensure all staff and volunteers satisfy Disclosure and Barring checks and health checks.
2. • Ensure that all staff and volunteers are on or have applied to go on the ISA
3. (Independent Safeguarding Authority) register.
4. • Any existing staff not giving consent to check the ISA register will be lawfully
5. dismissed. The disciplinary procedure will not be implemented as dismissal will be
6. instant.
7. • Any newly-employed staff refusing to register will not be employed.
8. • Any persons not on the register will not be deployed/employed in the setting.
9. • Undertake relevant recruitment processes to include a minimum of 2 reference
10. checks, including last employer.
11. • Ensure the recruitment processes work within an equal opportunities framework.
12. • Provide a full induction within the first week of employment.
13. • Ensure all staff members are provided with a job description and contract of
14. employment.
15. • Provide relevant training and development opportunities identified through the
16. appraisal process.
17. • Undertake regular staff meetings
18. • Ensure all staff members are given opportunity to participate in planning meetings.
19. • Provide all staff with health and safety training.
20. • Ensure that all staff are aware of the policies and procedures of St. Thomas' Children's Centre.
21. • If under the vetting and barring scheme the employer is informed that an employee has been added to the ‘Barred’ list, the individual will be removed from regulated activities or dismissed. The individual will have no legal rights or claims for unfair dismissal. The disciplinary procedure will not be implemented as dismissal will be instant. Further information is available at www.isa-gov.org
22. • Where an employee becomes barred from ‘regulated’ activity, the employer will consider on an individual basis, if that individual is suitable for ‘controlled activity’. There will be no guarantees of a transfer to controlled activity and dismissal may still result. Where dismissal results, the disciplinary procedure will not be implemented as dismissal will be instant.
23. • Where an employee displays inappropriate behaviour towards a child, the ISA will be notified as part of the legal reporting duty.

• If a member of staff under investigation leaves the provision, the ISA will be notified.

• St. Thomas' Children's Centre will ensure that the Manager and Deputy hold a relevant level 3 qualification and that 50% of staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications in line with legal requirements.

•All staff are required to undertake training and continuous professional development.

# Equal Opportunities Policy

Everyone at St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre is fully committed to our

Equal Opportunities Policy

The policy aims to challenge discrimination in all areas of the Centre. It is reviewed and monitored by taking into account relevant information, updates and legislation, staff training and observation, and monitoring of staff and children. In this way, evaluations are made of the effectiveness of our inclusive practice.

We aim to ensure that we reflect and meet the needs of the local community, recognising the individuality of all persons, regardless of their background.

We welcome, value and respect families of all ethnic and racial groups, religions, linguistic backgrounds, gender, social groups and abilities. Our service will not be refused to anyone on the basis of race; disability etc. and we will not discriminate directly or indirectly against any child or family. Medical, cultural and dietary needs will be met.

Discrimination will not be tolerated and will be dealt with immediately by the Management Committee and Manager. For staff it will be treated as a disciplinary matter. Any discriminatory remarks made by children or adults will be challenged, and it will be explained as to why this is not acceptable.

All children will be respected, and their individuality and potential recognised. There will be equality of choice for all. Activities are arranged to suit the ages and needs of the children in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination. No child will be stereotyped and all toys, games and activities will be available to everyone, regardless of gender.

The Centre aims to develop a child’s positive self-esteem and the esteem of others. Staff are expected to set a good example by treating one another and the children with respect. A conscious effort will be made by staff to develop positive self-identity for all children, and to encourage them to value and respect others.

# Ethnic Minority policy

This policy aims to challenge discrimination and raise achievement in all areas of the Centre. We aim to ensure that we reflect and meet the needs of the local community, recognising the individuality of all persons, regardless of their background. We promote and encourage children to value and respect all cultures and racial groups.

We welcome, value and respect families of all ethnic and racial groups, religions, linguistic backgrounds, gender, social groups and abilities. Our service will not be refused to anyone on the basis of race, disability etc., as this would be in breach of the Equality Act 2010. We will not discriminate directly or indirectly against any child or family.

Information, both written and spoken, will be clearly communicated, and we will try to engage the services of an interpreter if necessary. Medical, cultural and dietary needs will be met.

The Centre reflects and promotes the multi-cultural society we live in by use of displays, posters, resources and activities. A planned Pre-school curriculum aims to widen knowledge of other cultures, which is an essential learning experience.

We aim to raise achievement for ALL children, including those from ethnic minority groups, with English as an additional language and from the Traveller community. We work closely with the “Equality in Minority Communities” service (EMC) and Birth to 5 Service. Our staff receives appropriate training and are committed to providing inclusion for all children.

St. Thomas' Children's Centre works in partnership with parents to reinforce the basic values for children from each and every background – respect, tolerance and co-operation.

# Exclusion procedure for Illness and Communicable Diseases

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DISEASE/ ILLNESS** | **MINIMUM EXCLUSION** |
| Temperature | Until temperature is normal for 24 hours |
| Conjunctivitis | At least 2 days, or as long as eyes are no longer weeping |
| Vomiting/Diarrhoea | 48 hours after last episode |
| Gastro-enteritis, food poisoning,  Salmonellosis, Dysentery | Until authorized by G.P. |
| Impetigo | Until skin is healed. |
| Pediculosis (lice) | Until appropriate treatment is given and live lice are no longer present. |
| Ring worm of scalp or body | No need to exclude, providing treatment is given. Spread can be prevented by good personal hygiene and separate towels etc being used. |
| Scabies | No need to exclude once appropriate treatment is given |
| Chicken pox/shingles | 5 days from onset of the rash, or until spots are dry and scabbed with no further outbreaks |
| Measles | 7 days from rash appearance |
| Mumps | At least 7 days from onset or until swelling has subsided |
| Rubella (German Measles) | 4 days from appearance of rash, or until well enough to attend |
| Tuberculosis | Until authorized by G.P. “Open” cases-until 2 weeks after treatment starts. (“Open” is determined by sputum samples) |
| Scarlet Fever/Scarletina | At least 3 days from start of treatment, or until well enough to attend |
| Streptococcal infection of the throat  (tonsillitis/pharyngitis) | At least 3 days from start of treatment, or until well enough to attend |
| Glandular Fever | Until person feels well enough to attend |
| Hand, Foot and Mouth | Until person feels well enough to attend |
| Hepatitis | Hep A – 7 days after onset of jaundice  Hep B – until well enough to attend  Hep C – no need to exclude, care to be taken with the transfer of bodily fluids |
| HIV/Aids | Should not be restricted or excluded |
| Meningitis | Too ill to attend, no need to exclude siblings or other close contacts. |
| Rashes | If the reason for the rash is unknown, a G.P. should confirm the reason, diagnose and advise. |
| Fifth disease (Slapped cheek) | No need to exclude |
| Typhoid/paratyphoid | Too ill to attend, should be excluded while still infectious |
| Warts/verrucae | No need to exclude |
| Pertussis (Whooping cough) | 5 days from start of antibiotic treatment. Unvaccinated contacts under 7 years of age should also not attend for the same period. |
| Worms | No need to exclude |

If staff have reason to believe or are told that any child is suffering from a notifiable disease which is identified in the Public Health (Infection Diseases) Regulations 1988, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and Ofsted will be informed. Any advice given by the HPA will be acted on, and Ofsted informed of the action taken. The HPA’s list of notifiable diseases can be found on [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk), and is displayed on the Centre’s notice board.

[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk).

Further guidance on infection control in schools and childcare can also be found on [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk).

# Fees and Payments policy

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre aims to meet the needs of all of our families.

Monthly invoices will be issued at the start of each month. We accept card payments, cash and cheques, or by direct bank payment by prior arrangement.

It is recognised that some parents/carers may, at times, experience some form of financial difficulty. It is not the intention of the Centre to penalise or pressurize families. However, please speak to the Manager or Deputy if you are experiencing difficulties with paying your fees. We will endeavour to arrange a payment plan, acceptable to both parties, which will enable the child to continue to attend the Centre.

**If a parent/carer fails to pay the fees due :**

A verbal reminder will be given 2 weeks from the date of the invoice. Should the fees remain unpaid by the end of the invoiced period, the parents/carers will be contacted to establish if there is a reason as to why the bill has not been paid.

If arrangements fail and payment is not made within the invoiced period, St. Thomas' Children's Centre will carry the amount due forward to the following months invoice, and an administration charge of £10 will be added.

If two consecutive months remain unpaid then St. Thomas Children’s Centre will hand the debt over to Chattertons Solicitors Debt Recovery Team, whose charges will be added to the outstanding fees amount. The Compliance Unit at Working Families Tax Credit will also be informed.

All financial matters will be handled with the utmost consideration and in total confidence.

All monthly invoices must be fully settled by the end of each school term. Failure to do so will result in us contacting Chattertons Solicitors Debt Recovery Team.

St. Thomas' Children's Centre reserves the right to cancel registration and withdraw childcare if all measures fail to resolve problems with outstanding debts.

**Your right to cancel :**

Once a booking is made and confirmed, you have the right to cancel the place provided you give more than five working day’s notice prior to the start date. Less notice will result in fees being charged.

Full fees are due unless 4 week’s notice of absence or cancellation of the booking is given. Where 4 week’s notice is given, fees will be charged at half price to keep your child’s space open. Charges for absences may be reduced at the Manager’s discretion.

Four weeks’ notice of total cancellation of the booking is required.

**Extra Charges**

A fixed charge of £10 will be made for each time a cheque is returned unpaid.

If your child is not collected at the end of the session, a “Late Collection” fee will be charged, as follows : £5 up to 15 minutes after the end of the session, plus £10 for each 15minutes after that, or part thereof, except in genuine cases of emergency.

**Early Years Entitlement (EYE) Invoices** (Pre-school children)

For families with children booking care which is extra to their free EYE entitlement, an invoice will be issued clearly showing the free hours plus the hours they need to pay for. These invoices need to be paid in full by the end of the EYE period for which they are issued. Payments may be made by instalments using the methods described above.

All invoices must be fully settled by the end of each school term. Failure to do so will result in us contacting Chattertons Debt Recovery Team.

# Fire Evacuation policy

**Clearly written instructions for the Fire Drill will be on display at all times**

* Fire drills will be practised at least once per term to ensure all staff and children are fully aware of the procedure.
* The Drill will be practised on different days of the week, at different times and using different fire exits to cover all eventualities and include all children and staff.
* The Register, signing out book, visitor’s book and telephone will be easily accessible at all times.
* All fire exits and doors will be kept free from obstructions.
* All fire fighting equipment is regularly checked and maintained.
* Any recommendations made by the fire prevention officer must be carried out and adhered to.

# Grievance Procedure

* If you have a grievance you should first inform your Manager, if that person is not the subject of the grievance; or the next higher level
* If the issue cannot be resolved informally, employees should raise a formal grievance with their immediate Manager not involved in the grievance. They may also ask a colleague, to accompany them to any interview following the informal stage
* Every attempt should be made to resolve grievances within 5 working days, before referring the matter to the next stage
* If the grievance is not satisfactorily dealt with at the first formal stage, you should raise a formal appeal against the outcome of the first stage by putting your grievance in writing to the Chair of the Management Committee.

# Health and Safety policy

**We aim to create a safe environment and encourage working methods which ensure the safety of children, staff and all other visitors**

The Manager is responsible for the general implementation of the policy, and ensuring that it is followed. Matters concerning Health and Safety should be brought to their attention in the first instance.

Play/care workers are responsible for the children in their care. They also have a responsibility to work in a way that will ensure the health and safety of themselves and all other persons they come into contact with.

*FIRE*

* Safe evacuation of the premises is of primary importance.
* Exits must be kept clear at all times.
* A copy of the Fire Drill must be displayed on the notice board.
* A practice Fire Drill will be carried out at least once during every term. All details must be recorded.
* Routes, times and days should be varied and recorded.
* Fire appliances are checked annually and staff should familiarise themselves with their use and where they are kept.
* Nothing should be placed on top of or near heaters.
* Matches must *not* be accessible to children.
* No smoking is allowed on the premises.

ELECTRICS

* Any faults must be reported to the Manager.
* Electrical leads must not trail or hang over the edge of the work surface.
* Electrical points should be covered with socket covers.

STRUCTURES

* Doors, windows etc. should be checked regularly for faults, and any defects reported to the Manager, who will make every effort to ensure they are rectified.

OUTSIDE

* The play area should be checked for hazards before the children play outside.
* The storage shed should be kept neat and tidy to prevent accidents.
* Children must not be allowed to play outside of the designated area.

KITCHEN

* All cleaning products must be kept out of the reach of children.
* No children are allowed in the kitchen unsupervised.
* The kitchen surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned before food and drinks are prepared.
* While food is being prepared, the kitchen should be used exclusively for that purpose.
* The entire food preparation area should be cleaned after use.
* Tables should be wiped with anti-bacterial cleaner before children are seated and food served.
* Splashes and spills should be wiped up immediately.
* Food should be stored in suitable containers.

STORAGE of CLEANING EQUIPMENT

* Any potentially dangerous substance must be kept out of sight and reach of children.
* Containers should have childproof lids and be fastened tightly.

HYGIENE

* It is the responsibility of staff to maintain very high standards.
* Paper towels and soap will be provided for children, staff and visitors.
* Everyone should ensure they wash their hands after using the toilet, and before handling food.
* Toilet areas will be checked regularly to ensure high standards of hygiene and safety.
* Splashes and spills must be mopped up immediately.
* Disposable gloves must be used when coming into contact with bodily fluids.
* Tea and hand towels will be washed daily.
* Adequate ventilation should be maintained.

ACCIDENTS and SICKNESS

* A First Aider will always be on duty.
* A First Aid box will be available at all times. Its contents will be checked, replaced and updated regularly.

Procedure (See Accident policy)

* All accidents and sickness must be reported to the Manager.
* All entries in the Accident record must be made in permanent ink.

TOYS and EQUIPMENT

* All equipment should be stored and stacked safely.
* Children must not carry heavy boxes, chairs etc.
* Toys are made to the BSI Standard, and non-toxic.
* There will not be too many toys on the floors at once, and they will not obstruct doorways.
* The toys and equipment will be checked, washed and maintained regularly.
* All children should be taught the correct use and care of equipment.

STORAGE

* Staff must take care when lifting and moving heavy equipment.
* Equipment should be packed away safely.
* No more than two boxes are to be carried at once.
* No more than three chairs are to be carried at once.

GENERAL TIDINESS

* The premises will kept as tidy as possible to reduce the risk of accidents.
* All waste to be removed from building at the end of each day.
* Equipment will be used with adequate space between to enable ease of movement.

SUPERVISION of CHILDREN

* Children must be supervised at all times, whether indoors or outside.
* At Kids’ Club, children must be “signed out” when they are collected, and no child will be allowed to leave the premises without parental consent.
* All records must be maintained in permanent ink.
* If anyone uninvited enters the grounds, staff will try to identify them and the purpose of their visit. If staff are in any doubt as to who the person is or why they are there, they will be asked to leave. It will be ensured that the children are inside the building and appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety of everyone.
* Close supervision and special care will be taken concerning the use of apparatus and any activity using possible hazardous items e.g. sand water etc.
* To ensure safe supervision and working practices, the consumption of alcohol and other substances on the premises is strictly forbidden.

OFF the PREMISES

* A safe and efficient routine must be followed for the delivery and collection of children (see relevant policies).
* The whereabouts of staff and children will be recorded when they are off the premises during a session.
* Correct staff: child ratios will always be maintained when escorting children off the premises.
* Written parental permission must be sought for trips off the premises.

FOOD

* All staff will be encouraged to gain a Food Hygiene certificate.
* All staff involved in food handling will comply with regulations related to food health and safety.
* Different cloths will be used for food preparation and eating areas.
* Raw and cooked foods will be prepared and stored in separate areas.
* All fruit and vegetables will be washed thoroughly.
* Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
* Food will be covered or kept in airtight containers.
* Perishable foodstuffs will be kept in a refrigerator.
* Any cracked or chipped crockery or utensils will be disposed of.

# Health policy

**Our aim is promote a healthy environment for the children and we therefore need your co-operation to achieve this.**

Any child suffering from the following should be kept at home until a doctor has certified that the symptoms are clear:

* Doubtful rash
* Discharge from the eyes
* Diarrhoea
* Vomiting
* Fever of 101f/38c.

If you notice that your child is becoming unwell or has signs of an infection you should inform the Centre and have regard to the “Exclusion for Illness” list.

If a child becomes unwell while at the Centre, every effort will be made to contact the parent/carer or the second emergency contact number if unavailable. It is essential, therefore, that we have up to date information to be able to contact parents/carers during a session.

In the event of us not being able to contact either yourself or the second emergency contact, St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre reserves the right to arrange for your child to be taken to hospital in an emergency, or if it is thought necessary. Parents/carers are required to give signed consent for this procedure on registering their child at the setting.

# Healthy Eating policy

St. Thomas Children’s Centre believes refreshment sharing can play an important part in the social life of the Centre, as well as reinforcing children’s understanding of the importance of healthy eating.

Fresh drinking water will be on offer for the children to help themselves throughout the session.

Where possible, fresh unprocessed wholesome foods will be given to the children, as these are better for children’s health than processed or refined foods. An example menu is displayed within the foyer area for parents to read and contribute ideas, ask questions and take advice from:

Health experts agree that children should cut down on fats, sugars, salt and additives, and instead increase their intake of fibre, fresh fruits and vegetables.

We will make every effort to help promote healthy eating at the Centre through the refreshments given. We will also encourage parents to provide same or similar healthy food choices within their child’s lunches from home.

We request that lunches brought in from home include a lunch box ice pack to keep food at required temperature.

We use snack times as an opportunity to talk to children about healthy eating, why we eat what we do and cultural awareness of foods from around the world.

This can also be done through cooking activities held, for example ones to show the nutritional value of different foods and why a healthy diet is important.

Multi-cultural foods are offered to all children at different times of the year to suit our activities, so that all children have the opportunity to try unfamiliar foods alongside ‘conventional’ food if preferred.

Any specific dietary requirements of the children will be adhered to. These should be declared on the child’s registration form, and notification given of any changes. All staff preparing and handling food are competent and qualified in basic food hygiene.

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre adheres to the statutory framework for the early Years Foundation Stage food and drink section. (3.45 – 3.47)

# ICT policy

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre provides the use of digital cameras and computers for children and staff, as well as internet facilities for staff.

Digital Cameras

Children use the child-friendly digital cameras, and photographs are downloaded or deleted at the end of each term. Staff is permitted to use digital cameras belonging to the Centre. These cameras are not allowed to be taken off the premises, and photographs are deleted after the term has ended. Staff are not permitted to use any other digital device to take photographs within the Centre.

Computer and Internet Use

The computer system is owned by St. Thomas' Children's Centre and has appropriate software to ensure safe internet use by staff members

(see Internet Use Policy).

Computer Use by Children

St. Thomas' Children's Centre does not provide internet facilities for the children attending to use. Children are able to use age appropriate software and games, and create Word and Power Point documents. These documents are examined and monitored regularly by staff, and any inappropriate items are deleted.

Mobile Phones

Staff are not permitted to carry or use their personal mobile phones whilst working with the children, or in any area of the Centre when children are present. Staff are allowed to use their mobile phones during breaks or when they are not in an area of the Centre occupied by children. Staff are not permitted to use any camera facility on a mobile phone within the premises. Children are not permitted to use mobile phones at the Centre. If a child brings a mobile phone, it will be retained by staff until they are collected, and then it will be handed over to the adult collecting them.

Electronic Devices

Use of any device such as IPod, PSP, DSI, Tablets or any other portable electronic device with recording or internet facilities is not permitted by staff, children or visitors. If a child brings one of these items to Centre, it will be retained by staff until they are collected, and then it will be handed over to the adult collecting them.

**Any misuse of ICT equipment by staff will result in disciplinary procedures being followed, and could lead to dismissal.**

# Internet Use policy

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre provides the use of internet facilities for staff. The internet provides opportunities to enhance training provide information, help with planning, electronic correspondence and communication.

*St. Thomas' Children's Centre does not provide internet use for the children attending.*

The computer system is owned and maintained by St. Thomas' Children's Centre, and has appropriate software to ensure safe internet use.

The Management reserves the right to examine or delete any files that may be held on its system or to monitor the internet sites visited.

* Activity that is found to be unsuitable or that attacks or corrupts other systems is forbidden.
* Users are responsible for all e-mails sent and for contacts made that may result in e-mails being received.
* Use for gambling is forbidden.
* Copyright of materials must be respected.
* Use of the system to access inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist or offensive material is forbidden.

Rules for Responsible Internet Use

* All internet activity should be deemed appropriate.
* Other user’s files should not be accessed without their permission.
* Computers will only be used for agreed reasons.
* E-mail correspondence will be directed only to people who have been approved and messages sent will be polite and responsible.
* Computer files may be checked and the internet sites visited may be monitored.

All staff must adhere to the above, and breech of this policy could result in disciplinary procedures.

1. **Intimate Care Policy**

Definition of Intimate Care

Intimate care involves helping children at St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre with aspects of personal care which they are not able to undertake for themselves, either because of their age and maturity or because of developmental delay or disability. Children and young people with disabilities may require help with moving and handling, eating and drinking and all aspects of care including:

* Washing
* Dressing and undressing (including P.E. and water/messy play)
* Supported eating (including tube feeding)
* Administering medication (e.g. rectal diazepam)
* Toileting and Menstruation
* Physiotherapy Exercise Programme/ Manual handling
* Massage/ Intensive interaction
* Dental hygiene
* Care of Tracheostomy
* Applying topical medicines (e.g. Sun creams, eczema creams)
* Applying Cold compresses, wet paper towels and plasters

Principles of best practice:

* To allow the child or young person to care for him/herself as far as possible, to encourage independence and to encourage him/her to carry out aspects of intimate care as part of his/her personal and social development. Targets may be set in developing these life skills.
* To provide facilities appropriate to the child or young person’s age and individual needs.
* To show awareness of and be responsive to the child or young person’s reactions, their verbal and non-verbal communication and signifiers.
* To use the opportunities during intimate personal care to teach children and young people about the value of their own bodies, to develop their personal safety and to enhance their self-esteem.
* To ensure two members of staff are present when administering medicines (as stated in the Medication policy)

Our mission statement

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children and young people in St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre recognises that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain. The child’s welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. Every child’s right to privacy will be respected. Parent/carers views will be sought and listened to with regard to every part of the full policy.

# Manual Handling policy

St. Thomas' Children's Centre works within a safe handling policy and as part of this will ensure a current policy of minimal lifting. The Centre accepts responsibility for compliance with regulations.

The staff member with responsibility for the implementation of the Manual Handling Policy is ***Emma Martin.***

The main objective is to reduce the risk of injury and disablement caused by manual handling to a minimum. The Centre has a duty of care to ensure that:

* Minimum requirements for the manual handling of loads are followed where there is a particular risk of back injury to workers;
* The need for manual handling is avoided, or when it cannot be avoided, an assessment is made of the procedure and risk. If there is a risk of injury, appropriate steps are taken to reduce or avoid the risk;
* Assessment of manual handling operations take into account factors including characteristics of the load, the physical effort required, the working environment and the requirements of the task;
* Information is provided to workers on assessment and manual handling principles.

The designated person must :

* Be aware of manual handling operations within the organisation.
* Avoid the need for employees to undertake manual handling operations which involve a risk of injury, as far as possible.
* Assess hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided to reduce risk of injury.
* Introduce appropriate measures to avoid or reduce risk by elimination, re-designing the operation or the use of mechanical aids.
* Provide information to ensure staff are aware of safe manual handling techniques.
* Ensure that any mechanical aids used are well maintained and easily accessible.
* Ensure that safe systems of transportation are used for loads and equipment.
* Make allowance for any known health problems which may affect the employee's ability to carry out manual handling operations safely.
* Maintain records of accident or ill health related to manual handling operations.

All Employees Must :

* Take responsible care of their health and that of others whose safety may be affected by their activities, when involved in manual handling operations.
* Co-operate in making assessments of hazardous manual handling tasks.
* Observe safe systems of work and use of safety equipment.
* Report any medical conditions which may affect their ability to handle loads safely.
* Report any change in working conditions or a significant change in the task or load which may need the assessment to be reviewed.
* Use any manual handling equipment provided, ensuring it is used correctly.

# Medications policy

St. Thomas' Children's Centre ensures that effective systems are in place to support individual children with medical needs.

Pre-school

If a child requires medication during a session, the parent/carer must give permission for staff to administer it and complete detailed medication consent for it to be given.

Out of School

There must be a detailed medication consent form completed and signed by the parent.

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* The medication to be given must be from the original container into which it was dispensed, and must have the child’s name on it.
* All medications must be stored out of the reach of children.
* All details must be entered in the Medications Record, including a signature of a witness.
* Parents must sign the record before they leave the premises, so that they are fully aware of all details of the medication given.

Specialist medication

Specific permission, instruction and training must be obtained before an agreement is reached with a parent to administer specialist medications (e.g. insulin), and lifesaving or emergency treatment (e.g. adrenaline injections).

The person in charge must ensure the Centre has:

* A letter from the child’s GP or consultant stating information on the child’s condition.
* Instructions on how and when the medication is to be administered, and what training is required.
* Written proof of any specialist training necessary for the administration of the medication – this should be from the child’s GP, District Nurse, Specialist Nurse or Paediatric Nurse.
* Prior written consent from the parent to allow the medication to be given.

# Missing Persons policy

1. **Find out quickly**

The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child’s absence is soon discovered. Staff should know how many children should be present and carry out regular counted checks.

1. **Search systematically**

Staff are responsible for the missing child and also for the other children in the group. Without alarming them, the children themselves may be asked whether they have seen the child who is missing, as they can sometimes be a useful source of information.

Every room in the building and also any accessible outside area will be checked.

1. **Parents**

Alarming them as little as possible, the child’s parents will be called to warn them that the child may be attempting to get home. If they are out or at work, the Centre should have an alternative number to call in emergencies. If the child lives within walking distance of the group, one adult should make the journey on foot in order to catch up with or intercept the child if possible. Remember that as soon as parents are informed, they will need advice and support.

1. **Police**

If the above steps do not locate the child, the police must be called. They have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important.

1. **Informing other people**

Regular checks will be made to ensure that if an incident of this sort does happen, we have all the necessary phone numbers at hand – correct, up to date and kept all together.

If the police have to be called, Ofsted will be informed. They will need to know –

* What systems are operated for preventing such occurrences
* What happened
* What was done, at what time and in what order
* Who was informed and when.

They may wish to conduct their own investigation.

# Outings policy and procedure

### At all times it is the policy of the Centre to ensure that:

* Equal opportunity exists for all on outings i.e. children with disabilities and cultural requirements etc are included
* A first aider will be in attendance
* No child will ever be left unattended at any time
* Safety is maintained whilst children board or exit vehicles, or whilst walking
* Access to a mobile phone by the whole group and by individual group leaders is always available
* Adult/child ratios are adhered to at all times - this may be raised according to circumstances.
* Essential records are carried out at all times i.e. registration documents, medical forms

### At all times the following procedures must be carried out:

* A risk assessment of the venue prior to the visit to assess any potential risks en-route and at the venue
* Full details of the outing must be given to all parents
* Written parental permission must be obtained
* Telephone contact details for each group are circulated, along with relevant copies of policies for all volunteers
* Transport checks, to include:

- Insurance on private hire vehicles/coaches

- Records of vehicles and drivers including licenses and MOT certificates are in order, if staff vehicles are being used

- Contracted drivers or escorts are suitable if they are to have unsupervised access to children

- Harnesses, seat belts, booster seats and airbags are fitted where needed

- Maximum seating will not be exceeded

##### Essential equipment must be taken and should include:

* First aid kit
* Medication
* Spare clothing
* Plastic bags
* Bucket and paper towels

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

##### In the event of an accident staff will:

* Administrate first aid if it is required whilst ensuring that the remaining children are supervised and ratios are maintained
* Call an ambulance if one is required
* Inform the Manager or co-ordinator about the accident
* If the parent is unavailable a member of staff would accompany the child in the ambulance should this be necessary
* The Manager or senior staff member would then make arrangements for the remainder of the group, depending on the circumstances of the emergency

#### In the event of a child being lost:

* The Manager or senior staff member on the outing must be informed as soon as it is realised that a child is missing
* An immediate roll call and register would be taken of each individual group or the whole group, if you were together in one large group
* Dependant on the venue and the risk assessment already taken then instructions would be followed from that assessment and where possible the group/groups reassembled
* Ensuring remaining staff/child ratios and safety of the children, staff would be deployed with mobile phones to search the immediate area. The Manager would contact the facilities at the venue to alert them that a child is missing and their own procedures would be put into place
* If the child could not be located then the parents would be contacted and informed of the situation in a clear, calm, concise manner
* Actions would then be taken in line with the parents instructions e.g. contact the police
* If no immediate contact could be made with the parents then the police would be informed
* Ofsted would be informed

# Pet Policy

* St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre has two pet guinea pigs which are kept in a hutch at our setting.
* All children are encouraged to care for our pets under the supervision of our staff members.
* The children and staff will take turns to ensure the guinea pigs are always fed, watered and their cage is cleaned out.
* The cage is cleaned with anti-bacterial spray and paper towels then all discarded of in the outdoor dustbin. Children and staff will then wash their hands with soap and water.
* The guinea pig food is stored in a sealed container away from the children’s reach and so is the bedding material.
* Children are supervised at all times when handling the guinea pigs and are sent to wash their hands after every time they have handled them.
* A risk assessment will be completed and mitigations acted upon as soon as any animal enters the Centre.
* A list of children’s allergies is included on all admission forms. Children who have allergies to animals, animal bedding or food will not be allowed in the same vicinity as the animals. If a child is allergic to a pet we will ensure that they do not come into contact with them although they will be able to enjoy the experience in another way.
* We will adhere to RSPCA recommended welfare standards for any pet. We will seek veterinary care for any pet that appears to be unwell and all appropriate registrations, inoculations, etc. will be kept up to date.
* When handling animals, to protect children and staff from cross contamination, any pre-existing skin lesions or wounds will be covered with appropriate dressings.
* A first aid kit will be available nearby and a trained first aider is also on site at all times.

# Play policy

Each child will be provided with the opportunity to experience a varied programme of activities which include a balance of active and quiet play. The toys and equipment will provide opportunities for children to develop new skills and ideas in the course of their play and exploration.

Outdoor play will be as important as indoor play.

All toys and play equipment will be sturdy and well made, constructed of non-toxic materials.

Regular checks will be made on all toys and equipment to ensure they are clean and not broken. Written records will be kept of these checks.

Toys and equipment will be provided to stimulate all ages and abilities. The Centre will ensure that stereotypes are challenged and that positive images of gender, race and ability are promoted.

All activities will be adapted to the child’s needs.

Each child’s activity will be freely chosen by them.

The staff will gently encourage any child who is isolated or withdrawn, suggesting they may like to join in. We will, however, recognise that children have the right to be left to be quiet and play alone if they wish.

The following activities and toys will be available each session:

* Role play
* Construction
* Imaginative play
* Art and Craft
* Physical activity
* Quiet activity

# Polite Conduct policy

**St. Thomas' Children's Centre has a duty of care as an employer, child carer and service provider. This means that all children, staff and visitors to the premises have the right to play, learn, work and conduct their business in an atmosphere free from threatening behaviour, violence, verbal and physical abuse.**

Any incidence of this will not be tolerated and will be treated very seriously. If it does occur, this procedure will be followed:

* The person concerned will be asked to conduct their business in a polite and respectful manner.
* If it continues, they will be asked to leave the premises.
* If necessary, further assistance will be sought.
* The police will be summoned.

The Management Committee of St. Thomas' Children's Centre will seek to prosecute anyone who threatens persons on the premises.

# Recruitment Policy

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre recognises the need to meet the legal requirements for childcare in relation to safe recruitment. All advertising and recruitment processes will be in accordance with our equal opportunities policy.

Advertisements will state that positions are subject to Disclosure and Barring checks and registration with the Independent Safeguarding Authority, and that positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation Offender’s Act 1974. This includes any convictions considered as “spent” under the Act.

An appropriate application form will be used by all applicants, and a C.V. with covering letter will not be accepted alone. In line with statutory requirements, applications will only be sought from persons over the age of 17 years.

All short listed applicants will be interviewed, and references sought to demonstrate suitability for the position offered. The interview process will ensure fair selection for the most appropriate candidate.

Each new member of staff will have a job description, induction pack, employee handbook, personal record sheet and contract of employment.

Recruitment Procedure

* An application form and job description will be sent to interested parties. Full employment history, qualifications, references and experience will be requested.
* Face to face interviews of potential candidates will be held to explore their suitability for the post, and they will be required to bring proof of identity and right to work in the UK, and qualifications.
* The successful candidate will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring check prior to starting their new job, and will NOT be able to work unsupervised until clearance is received.
* The post is offered subject to satisfactory Disclosure and Barring check, ISA registration checks and references being received
* All permanent positions of employment will commence with a 6 month probationary period.

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# Redundancy Procedure

It is our intention to avoid redundancies wherever possible. Should we find ourselves in the position of making this difficult decision, our aim is to ensure that a fair and consistent approach is taken throughout the process. We aim to ensure that effective communication and consultation is carried out, with all employees, at all stages of the process.

Meetings will be held with all affected employees and will include providing information and the opportunity to discuss the following:-

* the reason for the proposal for a reduction in staff numbers;
* the steps that have already been considered and/or taken to avoid any reduction in staff numbers (e.g. natural wastage, restricted recruitment, reduced reliance on contract or agency workers);
* what impact the proposed reduction will have on the working procedures of other employees;
* the numbers and job descriptions of employees whose positions may no longer be required;
* the basis of, or suggested method of, selection;
* the time-scale over which the reduction in staff is proposed to take place;
* the proposed method of calculating redundancy payments; and
* options and alternative employment opportunities available to avoid or mitigate compulsory redundancies.

# Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that hazards are identified, risks are assessed and removed or minimised to an acceptable level to create a safe environment in which children can thrive.

St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre will ensure that all areas, equipment and outings are safe for children. We encourage ways of working that ensure the safety of children, employees and all other persons who come into the premises.

The health and safety officer responsible for the general implementation of this policy is: **Emma Martin**.

The named person will undertake any relevant training to support their role.

All staff members have a responsibility to bring to the attention of the above named any concerns with regards to health and safety. The above named person is responsible for recording any concerns raised and acting upon them.

We recognise that children need some level of risk in their activities and outings in order to ensure that they continue to develop, but these risks are assessed to ensure that they are appropriate to the age and stage of development for that child/ren.

All staff are responsible for the health and safety of themselves, children and any other persons on the premises and access relevant training.

All new members of staff will be inducted into the settings health and safety policies and procedures including those for risk assessments within their first week of their employment.

Risk assessments will be conducted to assess the environment, identify hazards and minimise risks to ensure that our environment is safe and suitable for all children, employees and all other persons who come onto the premises.

Some written risk assessments relating to specific issues will be kept on site and will be accessible at all times to inform staff practice and to demonstrate how we manage risks. Risk assessments will be carried regularly and will be appropriately recorded clearly stating who undertook the risk assessment, the date of the review and any action taken following the review or incident.

Daily checks will be carried out on the indoor and outdoor environment before children access these areas.

COSHH legislation will be followed and COSHH assessments will be recorded.

This policy is implemented in conjunction with our health and safety policy.

Any breaches of this policy are subject to the settings disciplinary procedure.

Risk Assessment Procedure

When conducting risk assessments staff will:

* Walk around the setting and identify potential hazards
* Evaluate the level of risk, considering who might be harmed and how
* Where it is helpful the risk assessment will be written in relation to specific issues to record any existing precautions and any action necessary to further minimise risk.
* Written risk assessments will record who undertook the assessment, the date of the assessment and the review date.

# Safeguarding policy

**“THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS PARAMOUNT” (Children Act 1989)**

We work in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board. St. Thomas' Children's Centre fully recognises its responsibility for safeguarding children. We intend to create an environment in which children are safe from abuse and any suspicions of abuse are promptly and appropriately responded to.

* Our recruitment procedures ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers working with children, and follow welfare requirements regarding Disclosure and Barring checks, Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) registration and references.
* Procedures are in place to identify and report concerns or suspected cases of abuse.
* Incidents and suspicions are recorded as they happen, including dates and signatures. A second signature is required for witnessed evidence.
* We ensure a safe environment is provided in which children feel valued and secure, can learn, develop and socialise, are encouraged to talk and know they will be listened to.
* Suspend disbelief – everyone may be capable.

The designated member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding issues is

***Kelly Wilkinson*** in her absence it is ***Emma Martin***

She is the link with the statuary agencies (Lincs Safeguarding Children Board, Social Services, and Police) and is responsible for gathering and recording information, and making referrals. All staff will be required to attend Safeguarding training and are aware of appropriate safeguarding issues.

If a referral to LSCB/Social Services is necessary, it must be clear, accurate and relevant. It should be done initially by telephone, and then followed up in writing within 24 hours.

If staff have sufficient concern about the welfare of a child, St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre reserves the right to:

* Ensure the child receives immediate medical care if necessary.
* Inform the parent (only if appropriate).
* Inform work colleagues and other interested professionals such as Health Visitor, School Nurse or teacher, but only on a “need to know” basis.
* Request assistance and support from within our organisation.
* Not allow the child to be collected from the Centre if they believe the parent/carer collecting is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance.
* Contact LSCB/Social Services and make a referral, if this is necessary.

Digital Cameras

Children use the child-friendly digital cameras, and photographs are downloaded or deleted at the end of each term. Staff are permitted to use digital cameras belonging to the Centre. These cameras are not allowed to be taken off the premises, and photographs are deleted after printing. Staff are not permitted to use any other digital device to take photographs within the Centre.

Mobile Phones

Staff are not permitted to carry or use their personal mobile phones whilst working with the children, or in any area of the Centre when children are present. Staff are allowed to use their mobile phones during breaks or when they are not in an area of the Centre occupied by children. Staff are not permitted to use any camera facility on a mobile phone within the premises. Children are not permitted to use mobile phones at the Centre. If a child brings a mobile phone, it will be retained by staff until they are collected, and then it will be handed over to the adult collecting them.

Advice about concerns can be sought from Social Services or Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board by contacting:

Lincs Safeguarding Children Board……….01522 782111 (Out of Hours 01522 782333)

Social Services, Boston……………………………01205 310010

Social Services, Out of Hours service….01529 413366

Local police………………………………………………….01205 366222

OFSTED………………………………………………………0300 123 1231

# Sanctions policy

We expect all children to behave appropriately and abide by our rules, which are concerned with safety, care and respect for each other. Inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with during the session at the time it occurs.

We will encourage co-operative behaviour and respect at all times. Under no circumstances will any member of staff physically or verbally harass any child, as it will result in instant dismissal.

Positive behaviour will be praised and each child starts every day with a ‘clean slate’. Staff will attempt to focus directly on positive features of the child’s behaviour.

Any sanctions will:

* Take into account the age and stage of development of the child
* Be applied at the time of the inappropriate behaviour, be relevant and fair
* Be done in a way that assures the child of our continuing care and regard for them.

We will follow this procedure for any child not behaving in an acceptable manner:

**Initial stage** – A staff member will discuss the problem with the child and the reason for the behaviour being unacceptable. Verbal requests for a change in behaviour will be made.

**Second stage** - Staff will discuss and implement rewards and sanctions. This may involve the child not being able to continue with their choice of activity and having “time out”. In extreme cases where we need to consider the safety and care of other children, the child will be removed until he/she has calmed down. However, the child will always be supervised and never left alone. The incident will be discussed with parents/carers, who will be asked to sign a form to say they were informed about it.

**Third stage –** If the situation does not improve, a letter will be sent to the parents/carers of the child, detailing what has happened and the behaviour management strategies which are being tried.

**Final stage** - If, after the involvement of all parties, there is still no improvement in behaviour, parents/carers will be informed in writing that their child’s place will be suspended either for a period of days or completely. This means that care will not be available during that time for the child involved.

Parents/carers will be kept fully informed and involved in any potential or on-going problems, enabling us to work together to try and resolve them.

# Settling In policy

Staff will work in partnership with parents to settle a new child into the Group.

During their first session, they will be introduced to staff members and to the other children. They will be shown the room and toys, and have a few simple rules explained – e.g. Safety, behaviour, toilets etc.

We realise that some children find new settings difficult to adjust to, and we will offer extra help and reassurance to those who need it.

Any further help and information will be given to familiarise the child with routines and activities as and when they occur.

# Smoking, Alcohol and Solvents policy

Smoking

There is strictly **NO SMOKING** allowed on the premises. This policy applies to all employees, contractors, customers, and visitors.

Appropriate ‘No Smoking’ signs will be clearly displayed at the entrance to and within the premises.

Disciplinary procedures will be followed if a member of staff fails to comply with this policy and those persons who fail to comply with the smoke free law of 2007 may be liable to a fixed penalty fine and possible criminal prosecution.

STCC will offer support to any employee wishing to stop smoking or the free NHS Smoking helpline is available on 0800 169 0 169.

Any matches on the premises must be inaccessible to the children.

It is illegal to sell cigarettes to children under 16, and it is also illegal for them to smoke in public.

No cigarettes are allowed on the premises.

Alcohol

There is strictly **NO ALCOHOL** allowed on the premises.

It is illegal for children under 18 to buy alcohol and drink in public.

All staff/ volunteers must not work if under the influence of alcohol.

Solvents

There is strictly **NO SOLVENTS** allowed on the premises.

It is illegal to sell solvents to children under 18.

**All glues etc. used at the club will be safe to be used by children.**

# Social Networking policy

St. Thomas' Children's Centre realises that social networking has now become an integral part of everyday life, and that many people enjoy membership of social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter. However, the Centre Management is well aware that these sites can become a negative forum for complaining or gossiping, and that care must be taken not to breach confidentiality or offend anyone using these sites.

The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. When using social networking sites staff and Committee members must give regard to the following:

* Personal blogs should have clear disclaimers that the views expressed by the author are theirs alone, and do not represent the views of the Centre. They should be clear and written in the first person, ensuring that the reader is clear that they are written from a personal perspective, not on behalf of the Centre.
* Anything written must comply with the Centre’s Confidentiality Policy, including comments posted on other blogs, forums and social networking sites.
* Any comments written should be respectful to the Centre, staff members, parents and relatives, children, partners and competitors. Staff and Committee members should be aware that any disrespectful comments to any of the above may be seen as libellous.
* Social media activities should not interfere with work commitments
* Staff and Committee members are ambassadors for the Centre, both in and out of working hours. Actions that are captured via images, posts or comments can reflect on your place of work and/or colleagues.
* No reference should be made to the names of the parents and children who use St. Thomas’ Children’s Centre.
* St. Thomas' Children's Centre logos must not be used.
* Any employee or Committee member of St. Thomas' Children's Centre who becomes aware of social networking activity that may be seen as distasteful, insulting or breaking any of the Centre’s policies, should make their manager aware of their concerns.

**Any breach of this policy or confidentiality by a staff or Committee member will result in disciplinary action being taken.**

# Special Needs policy

St Thomas’ Children’s Centre is committed to making sure the setting is inclusive and accessible to all who enter. Making sure the children that attend the centre reach their full potential. All children have the right to access the Early Years Foundation Stage and all the staff are committed to meet the needs of all children attending the setting.

Working together for your child’s future, our passion for ensuring the children in our care are happy, supported and enjoy the activities we provide enable us to play our part in ensuring each and every child can be all that they can be in their future.

**Definition of a child with Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.)**

A child or young person has S.E.N if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

**Our aim is to foster an environment where all children are:**

* Seen as children first
* Listened to and voice of the child is valued
* Fully accepted and involved in all activities
* Encouraged and enabled to be as independent as possible
* Respected when care is of a personal nature

**In order to meet the needs of all children including those with special educational needs and / or a disability, we consider the following issues:**

* Voice of child
* Working in partnership with parents/carers and professionals
* Access
* Quality learning opportunities for each individual child
* Staffing levels monitored
* Training of staff (training will be sorted out for individual children’s needs, also staff training is reviewed yearly)
* Resources and equipment are reviewed regularly
* Positive attitudes are promoted and any stereotyping is challenged
* Additional support plans (ASP) are put in place these are monitored and reviewed.

St Thomas’ Children’s Centre endeavour to ensure that all children are treated with equal care and respect. All children will be encouraged to take part in a range of opportunities and experiences. We will assess the specific needs of every child and take the relevant steps to adapt our facilities and resources to meet the needs of everyone.

When a member of staff has concerns about the development of a child in one or more areas, this will be discussed with the parents/carers in partnership with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) in order to decide on the best way to meet the child’s current needs. If appropriate, an additional support plan (ASP) may be set up for the child, which will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**St. Thomas’ will ensure that:**

* The indoors and outdoors provision is accessible to all children and any adjustment needed will be made taking advise from parents/carers and others professionals
* Policies are consistent with current legislation and available to parents at all times
* Children with special educational needs and disabilities have equality of access to facilities,

The role of the Special educational needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

***Kelly Wilkinson*** is the named Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). The SENCo is responsible for monitoring the needs and progress of the children with SEND. The SENCo will ensure that liaison takes place with parents/carers and appropriate professionals as well as ensuring that the setting is up to date with current legislation and practice.

**The SENCo is responsible for:**

* Ensuring all practitioners in the setting understanding their responsibilities to children with SEN and the setting’s approach to identifying and meeting SEN.
* Advising and supporting colleagues
* Ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insight inform action taken by the setting.
* Liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting

Other staff have had special educational needs and disabilities training all staff will continue to be up dated within the legislation guidelines.

**Admissions arrangements:**

All children, including those with identified special educational needs and or disabilities are admitted to the setting following discussions with parent/carers.

**Partnership with parents:**

St Thomas’ Children’s Centre believes in working closely with parents and carers. Children with SEN and disabilities will be given the appropriate time to support the family with all aspects of the child’s care and education.

The SENCo is available at the beginning and end of most sessions and will endeavour to return phone calls and emails the same day. Key persons are available most sessions, if these are not convenient times for the parents/carers appointments can be made at an appropriate time for both parties.

Parents/carers will be informed of any other services available. The SENCo works with all outside agencies closely.

St Thomas’ Children’s Centre works hard to support children’s transitions into the setting by having stay and play visits and meetings with parents, also transitions into school or other settings, we offer extended visits, if possible, with them

ST THOMAS’ CHILDREN’S CENTRE DO NOT CONTACT OTHER PROFESSIONALS ABOUT A CHILD WITHOUT PARENTAL CONSENT UNLESS THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION. See confidentiality policy and safeguarding policy.

# Suggestions and Concerns policy

Any suggestion or concern that a parent may have about the Centre will be welcomed and encouraged. It should be raised with the Manager, who will act on it accordingly.

All suggestions and concerns will be taken seriously and treated positively.

All staff, parents and children have the right to be consulted, and are free to express their opinion and have it taken into account.

# Supervision Meeting Policy

Supervision is a framework to provide direction and guidance to individual staff member on a regular basis. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Our supervision framework fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement that encourage confidential discussion of issues. (3.10- EYFS 2012)

Supervision provides opportunities for practitioners to:

* 1. Discuss any issues- particularly concerning children’s development or well-being.
  2. Identify solution to address issues as they arise.
  3. Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness Receive feedback on their work/ performance
  4. Clarify roles and responsibilities
  5. Discuss career progression
  6. Have a documented record of their individual progress

The benefits of the supervision for the setting are:

* Improve communication with staff
* problems identified at the earliest opportunity
* faster more effective solutions to any problems and concerns
* Improved time management due to reduced ‘ad hoc’ discussions/ meetings
* written records of discussions/meetings

Format of supervision meetings

Supervision meetings will take place every term and will be conducted with the Manager and deputy manager in a confidential environment lasting approximately half an hour. The standard agenda items for a supervision meeting will be:

* Work activity ( Role, responsibilities, current and planned activity)
* Progress and performance ( Feedback on the implementation of the role, identification of training needs/ requirements, career progression)

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* Issues and concerns ( specifically in relation to the safeguarding duty, discussing concerns about the behaviour of adults both colleagues and parents. this section can include issues in relation to the employee’s poor time keeping, attitude to work, relationships with others, etc.)
* Support (discussing what support the practitioner might need to follow anything identified above, personal issues and resources needed to fulfil any current work activity)

Supervision Meetings will be recorded on a standard supervision meeting record and signed copy kept by the practitioner and the manager/ deputy manager with the original retained on the employee’s personnel file. this will either be hand- written at the time of the meeting or typed after the meeting.

Supervision meeting will be two-way process, where both the practitioner and the manager/deputy have the opportunities to raise items for discussion. They are a constructive and supportive tool to allow practitioners and the manager/ deputy’s time to reflect on current work activity and identify any issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity.

# Visitor policy

Visitors to the Centre will be welcomed, treated politely and their enquiries dealt with as soon as possible.

All visitors to the Centre will be requested to sign in and out from the premises, giving their reason for the visit.

All visitors are valued for whatever reason, but the children are our priority and must come first.

No visitor will be allowed to escort children to the toilet or be left with a child unaccompanied, unless they have been cleared by OFSTED.

The use of mobile phones is not permitted on the premises, unless used in an area only used by staff, i.e. Staff Room and office.

Parents and children are most welcome to visit us before joining a Group.

# Volunteer/Student policy

* Volunteers can offer help on a regular or casual basis.
* All volunteers and students will satisfy official checks required of them, and never be left alone with a child.
* They will be treated and respected as part of the team.
* They will abide by the Centre’s rules and policies.
* All opinions will be valued, and all input greatly appreciated

# Whistle Blowing policy

St. Thomas' Children's Centre is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. We encourage employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the Centre or work carried out there to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy is to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns about the Centre rather than overlooking a problem or taking their concern outside, and without fear of reprisals.

Staff have the right and responsibility to raise concerns regarding poor work practice. They are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all children who attend the Centre, and this must be a priority over loyalty to colleagues.

This policy is intended to:

* Encourage and enable individuals to raise genuine and legitimate concerns;
* Support staff to take an active role in the elimination of bad practice;
* Ensure concerns are appropriately investigated;
* Protect those making the complaint from victimisation or retaliation.

This policy should complement others such as those covering discipline, grievance and complaints, and cover concerns that fall outside of these.

The Management and/or Committee will investigate promptly and thoroughly all matters raised relating to this policy, and take appropriate action.

Confidentiality

The Management will endeavour to protect the person's identity when a concern is raised, however in some circumstances, this may not always be possible.

The complainant will be asked to provide written or verbal evidence to support their complaint. If a person's identity is to be disclosed, they will be told before the disclosure and the reasons why is necessary. Once the complaint has been made, the complainant will be expected to maintain confidentiality while the matter is investigated.

Anonymous Complaints

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful and harder to investigate, but they will still be considered.

Untrue Allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith but is not confirmed when investigated, no action will be taken against the complainant. If, however, an allegation proves to be malicious, action may be taken against the person responsible for the malicious act.

Procedure for Raising a Concern

* If appropriate, raise the matter with the Manager. If this is not appropriate, the concern should be raised with the Management and/or Committee.
* The concern should be in writing, detailing the background and history of the concern, dates and places of possible, and the reason for the concern. If a verbal allegation is made, the person taking the details must make a written record of the meeting, and ensure both parties agree and sign the report.
* The complainant will be expected o prove the truth about the allegation, and required to demonstrate there are sufficient grounds for the concern.

The Complainant should NOT

* Investigate the matter themselves;
* Alert those suspected of being involved;
* Approach or accuse individuals;
* Tell anyone other than the designated persons.

Within a week of the concern being made, a written acknowledgement will be issued, together with a copy of any statements given.

The Management and/or Committee will investigate the concern and report back within two weeks about the action being taken and progress being made, as well as any outcomes. If the complainant is not satisfied, the matter should be raised with Birth to Five Service, Ofsted, Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board or the police as appropriate.