

Parent Partnership Policy

The Ark is committed to a genuine and meaningful partnership with the parents/carers of children in our care, and recognises that working in partnership with parents is of major importance in enabling The Ark to provide a caring and stable environment for the children. We aim to form a good relationship with parents so that information regarding their children (be it developmental, social or health related) can be exchanged easily and comfortably by The Ark staff and parents. Information about a child and his or her family is kept confidential within The Ark. We adhere to the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) when collecting and processing information about you and your child. We explain how your data is processed, collected, kept up-to-date in our Privacy Notice which is given to you at the point of registration. We provide you with a privacy notice that details how and why we process your personal information. We will never share your data with any organisation to use for their own purposes.

The exception to this is where there is cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where there are concerns regarding child's development that need to be shared with another agency. Moreover, this partnership policy reflects the duty on The Ark and its staff to protect the rights and promote the interests of those who use The Ark. This is manifested in different ways: .

The Management and Running of The Ark:

- The Ark is a company limited by guarantee, managed by a voluntary Management Committee/Board of Directors, and is run by staff with support from the Management Committee/Board of Directors. The Ark is also a registered charity. Alongside the staff who play a vital role, the Management Committee/Board of Directors has overall responsibility for everything The Ark does and is drawn from parents/grandparents who are entitled and encouraged to put themselves forward for election to the Management Committee/ Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting.
- The AGM takes place annually. Directors/members of the Management Committee are elected at this meeting (although vacancies may be filled throughout the year). Committee meetings take place throughout the year. The Ark circulates several newsletters each year to all parents/carers, with a minimum of one per term.

Understanding of, and Involvement in, Life at The Ark

To familiarise children with the setting before they start, we hold an induction/familiarisation visit for each child to meet staff and children.

Offering Places, Settling In and Welcoming Families

- A welcome pack is circulated to all parents/carers before their child starts. It includes a number of forms (including a Parental Agreement Form) and policies to enable families to become familiar with The Ark's practices and procedures
- Information provided by parents about their children will be kept confidential and treated on a strict need to know basis. Parents are requested to inform staff of any changes to personal circumstances which may have an effect upon a child, emotional or otherwise e.g. bereavement, separation or illness in the family, change of address
- Parents/carers are welcome to stay with their child until he/she has settled at The Ark
- If there are any concerns about a child's well-being during the day every effort will be made to contact parents or their emergency contact

The Ark Activities, Parental Involvement and Your Child

- A member of staff is always available, either informally or by appointment, to discuss any concerns or queries you may have
- We hold a Parent Consultation each year at which you can discuss your child's progress with staff
- The plans for each of the nursery rooms are displayed on their respective doors
- The Ark issues regular newsletters (at least one a term) to keep you informed of curricular themes and activities in The Ark. Activity/topic plans will be on show in The Ark for parents to view/read. Information regarding children's activities throughout the day is always available to parents on a daily basis either verbally or in writing in the child's own book. We also have our own website at www.thearkchildokeford.co.uk on which all our term dates and special events are displayed and from which you can download our prospectus and policies.
- Parental visits are greatly encouraged at The Ark. Parents are invited to come in and participate in, or observe, any session their child attends. This is to build closer home-nursery links; if The Ark's practice and routines can be observed, it gives parents a better idea of their child's experience. Whilst we do not have a parent rota, we very much welcome parents/carers who wish to come in and help on an occasional, voluntary basis. We have a volunteer policy which states that occasional volunteers will not be put in sole charge of any children, nor can they take children out of the sight of a member of staff (this includes to the toilet or to a separate room)
- Annual social events - the Christmas Nativity and fundraising events - are a further opportunity for home-nursery links to be forged.

Record Keeping and Assessment

- Every child is unique, has different interests and develops at different rates. Each child is assigned a key worker who regularly observes, makes notes, and takes photographs and occasionally videos. The observations are used to plan learning experiences to enable each child to develop their potential
- Records are kept of the children's development; each child has their own file, in which examples of their drawings, paintings and other achievements recorded by photographs are kept. The children are able to look at these whenever they like and parents are also welcome to look at any time and stored securely on the online Tapestry journal.
- If a child attends another setting or a child minder, we will arrange for his/her key worker to visit. This begins the process of information sharing about children's development

Policies and Procedures and Paperwork

- We have a number of policies to which we would especially like to draw to your attention: this Partnership with Parents Policy; the Behaviour Management Policy; the Safeguarding Children Policy; the Complaints Policy. These will be included in the Welcome Pack or circulated to parents whenever a policy changes.
- Parents/carers have the opportunity to complete formal Parental Questionnaires once per year. Questionnaire comments will be considered in forward-planning for The Ark. However, we welcome parent comment and suggestions all year round.

The Wider Community

- As a community nursery, we place great importance on a sense of community involvement. To this end, we organise local visits, build relationships with other local establishments (especially St. Nicholas CEVA Primary School) and through this, help the children to develop a sense of their place in a wider context.

Private Childcare Arrangements between Ark Staff and Parents

- If parents employ staff to care for their children outside staff's working hours, away from The Ark, then this is strictly a private arrangement for which The Ark bears no responsibility.