

West Green Playgroup



West Green Playgroup Staff Code of Conduct

High standards of professional conduct are particularly important in schools and early years establishments and the image and ethos of the setting have a vital effect on the success of its activities. The duty of care towards children and students imposes demands on staff in schools and educational establishments to conduct themselves in a proper manner observing the health, safety and welfare of others at all times. It is therefore important that all employees observe the standards of conduct that pupils, parents, and the public are entitled to expect.

Any member of West Green Playgroup who breaches the Code described in this document will be liable to disciplinary action. The nature of action taken in any case will depend on: (a) the seriousness and nature of the breach; (b) the employee's previous record; (c) mitigating circumstances; (d) in some cases, the nature of the post. Some breaches of the Code will be treated as gross misconduct and in such cases dismissal (possibly without notice) may be the appropriate form of disciplinary action. It is difficult to define gross misconduct specifically, but basically, it is conduct or behaviour of such a nature that the Playgroup is justified in no longer tolerating the continued presence of the employee who commits such an offence. Gross misconduct can include acts committed outside working hours (if it has a direct and fundamental impact on the suitability of an employee to work in the Playgroup), as well as those committed at work.

The sorts of breaches of conduct which are likely to be deemed gross misconduct and lead to dismissal, without warnings having been given, are:

- (1) unauthorised removal or misuse of Playgroup property.
- (2) dishonesty or falsification of expenses/pay claims.
- (3) theft and/or fraud.
- (4) physical assault, including corporal punishment and child abuse.
- (5) sexual offences, including improper relationships with children.
- (6) improperly using one's position for personal gain.
- (7) drunkenness or drug abuse at work.
- (8) endangering the health and safety of staff or pupils.
- (9) unlawful discrimination or harassment.
- (10) bullying and harassment
- (11) breach of confidentiality
- (12) breaches of the ICT policy

This list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. Ignorance of the Code of Conduct will not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. General Conduct

1.1 You will be expected to comply with reasonable management instructions, and to observe and follow any operational regulations and standing orders of the Authority. This includes observing all procedural and statutory requirements, e.g., in the provision of advice

and information; in appointing staff; in complying with health and safety rules; in the use of public funds.

1.2 You will be expected to treat colleagues or members of the public with respect and not to misuse your authority.

1.3 You must not behave in a manner likely to cause offence to children, parents, staff, governors or members of the public or likely to offend decency.

1.4 You must not fight with or physically assault colleagues or managers or clients or members of the public. Nor must you mistreat persons in the care of the Playgroup/Authority. If you are physically assaulted by a member of the public, you are permitted only to defend yourself from the attack.

1.5 Under no circumstances should you make physical contact with a child which could be interpreted as corporal punishment, i.e. "any intentional application of force as punishment... this includes...forms of physical chastisement, e.g. slapping, throwing missiles and rough handling." (Education [No. 2] Act 1986 section 47[2]). Unnecessary use of force in dealing with a child/pupil, e.g. in restraining them, may also be unlawful and staff should follow the Authority's advice on handling of pupils.

1.6 In any context involving a member of staff and a child, with whom they are required to have a professional relationship, any kind of sexual contact or outside/intimate friendship is unacceptable and would be deemed to be gross misconduct (even if the pupil is aged over 16).

1.7 You should not drink alcohol during working hours. You should not present yourself at school or at work under the influence of alcohol or drugs such that your performance is diminished or otherwise unacceptable. This includes committing a drink or drug offence which could endanger anyone's safety or diminish confidence in your suitability for continued employment.

1.8 You must be honest in completion of all claim forms, expenses etc.

1.9 You must not knowingly place yourself under an obligation to anyone where to do so may compromise you (or might be seen by others to compromise you) in the correct performance of your duties.

1.10 Your off duty hours are your personal concern, but you should not put yourself in a position where duty and such private interests conflict, or undertake any private work which conflicts with or in any way weakens public confidence in the conduct of the Playgroups reputation. Where an employee is pursuing work for another organisation, e.g. OFSTED, in normal working hours, this must be with the approval of the Manager, or in the case of the Manager with the approval of the Management Committee and all income (excluding expenses) in respect of this employment shall be passed on to the Playgroup by the employee. Where there is any doubt as to the implications of any private work or additional employment, the matter should be discussed with the Manager/Management Committee and permission sought before commencing employment. If you decide to take up additional employment or any other business, no outside work of any sort should be undertaken in the workplace and use of facilities such as telephones, photocopiers etc for private use is not permitted.

2. Absences and timekeeping

2.1 You must attend work/Playgroup when required and not absent yourself without permission and knowledge of The Playgroup Manager.

2.2 You should notify the Manager or the Deputy Manager of any unplanned absence from work and reason for absence in good time before the start of the working day on the first day of absence, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so.

2.3 You must not display poor or bad timekeeping, including lateness for sessions.

2.4 You should comply with the Playgroup's leave of absence and sickness reporting procedures.

3. Misuse of Playgroup materials/equipment/property/resources

3.1 You must not steal, misuse, or misappropriate Playgroup materials or equipment or property of pupils or staff.

3.2 You must not maliciously damage Playgroup property or cause waste or loss of or damage to property through neglect.

3.3 You must not use any Playgroup facilities for private purposes without the express consent of the Manager/Management Committee.

3.4 Private telephone calls outside the London area may not be made at the Playgroup's expense. Reasonable use of the telephone for urgent local personal calls is permitted but this should be kept to an absolute minimum.

3.5 Misuse of the internet to look at websites containing illegal or unsuitable material. Refer to the Use of ICT Policy for further guidance.

4. Neglect of duty/unprofessional conduct

4.1 You are required to comply with all obligations in accordance with a statute or your contract of employment, including observing standards and requirements for pupil examinations and testing.

4.2 You must not be negligent or wilfully produce inadequate standards of work.

4.3 You must maintain the accepted standards of the profession.

4.4 Your conduct outside work must not conflict with your official conduct at work.

4.5 You must always comply with the Playgroup's financial regulations.

4.6 You must not defraud the Playgroup in any way, e.g., fraudulent claims for income support or housing benefits (whether these lead to a court prosecution.)

5. Misuse/falsification of information

5.1 You must not supply false or inaccurate information in support of an application for a post with the Playgroup and you must disclose any known relationship with the Management Committee.

5.2 You are required not to make false and/or misleading statements, whether orally or in writing, in respect of official business.

5.3 You must not disclose official business to the press or media unless authorised to do so.

5.4 You must report any matter where you are required to do so.

5.5 You must not destroy, remove, or wilfully damage any document that is still required by the Playgroup.

5.6 You must not disclose confidential information and/or documents relating to the business of the Playgroup, its employees or any member of the public with whom it has dealings, unless authorised to do so. The only exception to this rule would be in situations where there was suspected malpractice and individuals should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy for guidance.

5.7 You should observe confidentiality in respect of any discussions with other staff about their professional problems and difficulties and not misuse confidential information about pupils or families. (Staff must use their professional judgement regarding the confidentiality of information, bearing in mind the requirements of the law and the best interests of children).

5.8 Adverse criticism of colleagues (including comments about the conduct, competence, or efficiency of other teachers) in the presence of third parties, including children, is unacceptable except in the context of agreed procedures.

5.9 Improper use of an official position for private gain or the private gain of some other person. Accepting gifts, gratuities, or bribes, which may compromise you or the Playgroup in any way.

6. Discrimination

6.1 Failure to comply or act in accordance with the Playgroup's equal opportunities policy is unacceptable, which means you must not discriminate against or show unfairness, bias, or prejudice towards any person because of their race, culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, age, marital status, or disability.

6.2 Discrimination against an employee of the Playgroup or a client/member of the public on grounds of sex, sexuality, age, disability, race, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic origin, or religion is unlawful and any employee who is found to have discriminated unlawfully will be liable to disciplinary action.

7. Criminal conduct

7.1 You must not commit a criminal offence at work.

7.2 If you commit a criminal offence outside working hours, this may have an impact on your work. The Governing Body/Authority will consider the nature of the offence, the duties of your post and damage to the reputation and integrity of the Playgroup/Council.

7.3 You must disclose all police cautions or convictions for a criminal offence (unless under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 the conviction is 'spent') and your post is not exempt from these provisions. This includes any cautions or convictions you acquire whilst working for the Playgroup which you must report immediately to your manager.

8. Health and safety

8.1 At all times you must conduct yourself in such a way that you do not create a potential risk or injury or danger to yourself or anyone else.

8.2 You must comply with the procedure for reporting an accident. If you are uncertain about what to do, you should seek the advice of your manager or the Playgroup Health and Safety Advisers.

8.3 Where there are specific health and safety rules made known to you, you must always comply with them, including fire regulations and any restrictions on smoking in the workplace or during working hours.

8.4 You must maintain general hygiene standards.

8.5 Where safety clothing or equipment is necessary to carry out a particular task, you must always use this in carrying out this task.

8.6 You must comply with any local regulations regarding smoking in the workplace.

8.7 You must only carry out activities which have a potential risk to health if you are competent and authorised to

West Green Playgroup
21a Apple Tree Road Tottenham London N17 6PJ
T. 020 8885 5445 E. westgreenplaygroup@outlook.com
Registered Charity No: 1032801