



Statement of Intent

Playhouse Pre-School recognises that meeting a child and their family in their home environment can support positive relationships between the child, their parents/carers and the child's Key Person.

A home visit may help practitioners gain a better understanding of the child's interests, routines, experiences, communication, care needs and individual circumstances before or during their transition into Playhouse Pre-School.

Home visits are not a statutory requirement and will only take place with the agreement of the parent/carer.

Playhouse Pre-School will ensure that home visits are carried out in a way that protects the safety, dignity and confidentiality of children, families and staff.

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding Children Policy, Lone Working Policy, Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy, Key Person Policy, Settling-In Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

Aims

The aims of a home visit are to:

- begin building a positive relationship with the child and their family;
- help the child become familiar with a member of the Playhouse team before starting at the setting;
- provide an opportunity for parents/carers to share information about their child;
- understand the child's routines, interests, communication and individual needs;
- gather information that will help support the child's settling-in period;
- support a smooth transition between home and Playhouse Pre-School;
- identify any information that may be relevant to the child's health, development, care or safeguarding;
- establish a positive two-way partnership with parents/carers; and
- ensure that information shared during the visit is handled appropriately and confidentially.

Parents/carers who do not wish to have a home visit will not be disadvantaged. Information can instead be gathered through a meeting at Playhouse Pre-School, telephone conversation, registration forms, the child's "All About Me" information and other appropriate communication.

Who May Attend a Home Visit

Where a home visit is arranged, two members of Playhouse Pre-School staff will normally attend.

Where reasonably practicable, one of the staff members will be the child's Key Person.

The Manager will decide which staff members attend, taking account of:

- the child's Key Person;
- staff availability;
- safeguarding considerations;
- the individual circumstances of the family; and
- staff safety.

Home Visit Policy

A member of staff will not normally undertake a home visit alone.

If there is a specific reason why two members of staff cannot attend, the Manager must consider whether the visit should instead take place at Playhouse Pre-School or another appropriate venue.

Arranging a Home Visit

Home visits will normally take place during Playhouse Pre-School working hours.

The date and approximate time of the visit will be agreed with the parent/carer in advance and confirmed appropriately.

The family will be informed of:

- who will attend;
- the purpose of the visit;
- the expected length of the visit; and
- how to contact Playhouse Pre-School if the visit needs to be cancelled or rearranged.

Home visits will normally last approximately 15–30 minutes, although this may be adjusted according to the child's and family's needs.

Staff should not make unplanned visits to a family's home.

Before Leaving Playhouse Pre-School

Before staff leave the setting for a home visit, the Manager or designated member of staff must know:

- the name of the child and family;
- the address being visited;
- the names of the staff attending;
- the planned time of the visit; and
- the expected return time.

Staff attending a home visit will:

- take a charged mobile phone;
- ensure they have appropriate contact details for the setting;
- ensure that the Manager or designated person knows when they have left and when they have returned;
- follow the setting's lone-working and safeguarding procedures; and
- take only the information and resources required for the visit.

Staff should not place themselves at unnecessary risk.

If staff have any concerns about attending a particular address or believe the circumstances have changed and the visit may no longer be safe, they must contact the Manager before proceeding.

The Manager may cancel, postpone or move the meeting to the setting or another suitable location where necessary.

Staff Safety

The safety of Playhouse staff is a priority.

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Staff must remain alert to their surroundings and should use their professional judgement throughout the visit.

Staff should not:

- enter an area of the home that is not necessary for the purpose of the visit;
- put themselves in a situation that makes them feel unsafe;
- accept inappropriate hospitality or gifts;
- engage in personal or social relationships with families outside their professional role; or
- remain at the property if they believe there is an immediate risk to their safety.

If a member of staff feels unsafe, they should leave the property when it is safe to do so and contact the Manager.

Any concern arising from a home visit should be reported to the Manager and recorded where appropriate.

Safeguarding

Home visits are part of Playhouse Pre-School's safeguarding arrangements and staff must remain professionally alert to concerns about a child's welfare.

A home visit must not be used as an investigation into a safeguarding concern.

If a member of staff becomes concerned about a child's welfare or safety during a home visit, they must follow the Playhouse Pre-School Safeguarding Children Policy.

Staff must not:

- investigate concerns themselves;
- make promises of confidentiality to a parent/carer;
- confront or challenge a parent/carer about a safeguarding concern;
- take photographs of the home or family without a clear, authorised reason; or
- discuss concerns with anyone who does not have a legitimate professional need to know.

Information must be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the setting's safeguarding procedures.

The DSL for Playhouse Pre-School is Claire Bransby. Deputy DSLs are Siouxsie Holloway and Zoe Munford.

If a member of staff believes that a child is at immediate risk of harm, they must follow the setting's safeguarding procedures and contact the appropriate emergency services where necessary.

During the Home Visit

Staff will:

- introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the visit;
- maintain a professional and respectful manner;
- listen to parents/carers and value their knowledge of their child;
- discuss the child's interests, routines, communication and experiences;
- discuss any relevant health, dietary, care or developmental information;
- discuss the child's settling-in arrangements;
- check that required registration and "All About Me" information has been completed where appropriate;
- explain how parents/carers can communicate with their Key Person and the setting;

Home Visit Policy

- explain relevant information about Playhouse Pre-School;
- signpost parents/carers to the setting's policies and procedures; and
- answer questions within the limits of their role and professional knowledge.

Staff must not provide medical, legal, financial or other specialist advice outside their professional role.

Where a question cannot be answered, staff should explain that they will refer the question to the Manager or appropriate professional and provide an answer later where appropriate.

Information About the Child

The home visit provides an opportunity for parents/carers to share information that will help Playhouse understand and support their child.

This may include information about:

- the child's interests and favourite activities;
- communication and language;
- home language or languages;
- routines;
- eating and drinking;
- toileting and personal care;
- sleep and rest;
- comforters or familiar objects;
- sensory preferences;
- allergies or medical needs;
- developmental information;
- additional needs or SEND;
- family circumstances that may affect the child's wellbeing or settling-in; and
- any other information that parents/carers consider important.

Staff should record relevant information in accordance with the setting's normal recording procedures.

Not all information shared by a family needs to be formally recorded. Staff should use professional judgement and only record information that is relevant and necessary.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information shared by families during a home visit will be treated confidentially.

Staff must follow Playhouse Pre-School's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy and UK data protection requirements.⁴

Confidential information must only be shared with people who have a legitimate professional need to know.

Information must be shared without consent where there is a safeguarding, legal or other statutory reason to do so.

Staff must not discuss information obtained during a home visit with friends, family members or other parents/carers.

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Paperwork containing personal information must be kept secure and must not be left unattended in a vehicle.

Where information is taken to or from a home visit, staff are responsible for ensuring that it is kept secure at all times and returned to the setting as soon as practicable.

The current EYFS requires confidential information and records relating to children and staff to be held securely and only made accessible to those with a right or professional need to see them.

Resources Taken to a Home Visit

Resources taken to a home visit will be limited to those necessary for the visit.

These may include:

- information about Playhouse Pre-School;
- a photograph book or appropriate photographs of the setting;
- Charlie Bear, where appropriate;
- registration information;
- "All About Me" information; and
- other relevant resources agreed by the Manager.

Staff must take care to ensure that confidential information relating to other children or families is not taken to a home visit.

Photographs and Recording

Staff must not take photographs or videos of a child's home, family members or personal belongings during a home visit unless there is a specific, authorised reason and the appropriate consent and safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Personal mobile phones must not be used to photograph children or families.

Any photographs taken on behalf of Playhouse must follow the setting's Photographic Images Policy.

Gifts and Hospitality

Staff should not accept gifts, money or hospitality from families during a home visit where this could create a conflict of interest or affect professional boundaries.

Small, low-value tokens of appreciation may be accepted where this is consistent with the setting's Conflict of Interest and Gifts and Hospitality arrangements.

Staff should inform the Manager of any unusual or significant offer of a gift.

After the Home Visit

On returning to Playhouse Pre-School, staff must inform the Manager or designated member of staff that they have returned.

Any relevant information from the visit should be shared with the appropriate members of the team.

Where necessary, information will be:

- added to the child's records;

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- shared with the child's Key Person;
- discussed with the DSL;
- used to inform settling-in arrangements;
- incorporated into the child's care or support arrangements; or
- shared with another professional where there is an appropriate legal or safeguarding basis for doing so.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately in accordance with the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Staff must not retain confidential paperwork in their personal belongings or vehicle.

Home Visits and Professional Boundaries

Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries throughout the visit.

The purpose of the visit is to support the child and family and to develop the professional relationship between the family and Playhouse Pre-School.

Staff should not:

- use a home visit to discuss personal matters unrelated to the child;
- provide childcare during the visit;
- babysit for families attending Playhouse;
- accept requests to provide private services;
- give out personal contact details unless authorised by the Manager;
- connect with families through personal social media accounts; or
- become involved in family disputes or personal matters.

Any concern about professional boundaries should be discussed with the Manager.

Families Who Do Not Want a Home Visit

A home visit is voluntary.

If a parent/carer does not want a member of staff to visit their home, this will be respected.

Alternative arrangements will be offered, such as:

- meeting at Playhouse Pre-School;
- a telephone conversation;
- communication through eyLog;
- completing the child's "All About Me" information;
- a meeting with the child's Key Person; or
- another suitable arrangement agreed with the family.

A family's decision not to have a home visit will not affect the child's place at Playhouse Pre-School or the support they receive.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-School Broadwater.

Adopted on 12th May 2016 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 29th September 2026 by Z. Munford