



Playhouse Pre-school

Conflict of Interest in the Workplace Policy

Statement of intent

All adults working with children at Playhouse Pre-School have a responsibility to maintain professional standards and public confidence in their ability to safeguard and promote the welfare and best interests of children.

Staff are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children, parents/carers, colleagues and other members of the Playhouse community.

A conflict of interest does not necessarily mean that a member of staff has done anything wrong. However, actual, potential or perceived conflicts must be declared so that they can be considered and managed appropriately.

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual's personal, financial, professional or other interests could conflict, or could appear to conflict, with their responsibilities to Playhouse Pre-School.

A conflict may arise where an individual has competing responsibilities or loyalties or where a personal relationship could affect, or appear to affect, their professional judgement.

Examples may include:

- a member of staff is related to a child attending the setting;
- a member of staff has a close personal relationship or friendship with a child attending the setting or their family;
- a member of staff has a personal or business relationship with the owner, manager or another member of staff which could create a conflict of interest;
- a member of staff provides babysitting or childcare for a family whose child attends Playhouse;
- a member of staff has another job or business interest which could conflict with their responsibilities at Playhouse;
- a member of staff has a close social connection with a family through social media or outside the setting; or
- a member of staff has another responsibility or relationship that could affect their professional judgement or ability to carry out their role objectively.

A close personal relationship may include a family relationship, partner, civil partner, spouse, close friendship, guardianship or business relationship.

Principles for professional practice

- Staff must ensure that their personal activities and relationships do not interfere with their responsibilities at Playhouse Pre-School.

- Staff must not allow personal interests, relationships or financial interests to influence their professional decisions.
- Staff must not use their position at Playhouse, their access to children or families, or information obtained through their employment to further their own private interests.
- Staff must not use confidential information about children or families to obtain private work, including babysitting or childcare arrangements.
- Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children and families both within and outside the setting.
- Staff must not enter into inappropriate personal or financial relationships with families of children attending the setting.
- Staff must follow the setting's Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures.
- Staff must comply with the setting's Confidentiality Policy and data-protection requirements, including the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Staff must not discuss confidential information about children, families, colleagues or the setting outside the appropriate professional context.
- Staff must not use social media to communicate inappropriately with children or to share confidential information about children, families, colleagues or the setting.

Declaring a conflict of interest

Staff have a responsibility to inform the owner or manager as soon as they become aware of an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

This includes situations involving:

- family members;
- close friends;
- personal relationships;
- private childcare or babysitting;
- second employment or business interests;
- financial interests; or
- other circumstances that could affect, or appear to affect, their professional responsibilities.

The owner or manager will consider the circumstances and decide whether any action is necessary to manage the conflict.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- changing a staff member's responsibilities;
- ensuring another member of staff is involved in decisions;
- changing reporting or supervision arrangements;
- ensuring a staff member does not have sole responsibility for a particular child;
- redeploying staff where appropriate;
- agreeing boundaries around private contact with families; or
- taking other reasonable steps to protect children, staff and the setting.

Any decision will take account of the circumstances and the best interests of the children.

Relationships with families outside the setting

We recognise that staff may have existing relationships with families before their child attends Playhouse or may develop social connections outside the setting.

Staff must inform the owner or manager where an outside relationship could create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

Staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and must not use their position at Playhouse to obtain private work or personal benefit from families.

Babysitting and private childcare

Staff may choose to enter into private babysitting or childcare arrangements with families outside their employment at Playhouse. Such arrangements are private agreements between the staff member and the family.

However:

- staff must inform the owner or manager if they are babysitting or providing private childcare for a child who attends Playhouse;
- private arrangements must not interfere with the staff member's responsibilities, attendance or performance at Playhouse;
- staff must continue to maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- staff must not share confidential information obtained through their employment at Playhouse during private arrangements;
- Playhouse is not responsible for private arrangements between staff and families outside the setting;
- staff must not represent themselves as acting on behalf of Playhouse when undertaking private childcare;
- staff should ensure that they have appropriate insurance and arrangements for any private childcare work; and
- any safeguarding concern arising from a private arrangement must be reported in accordance with the setting's Safeguarding Policy.

Playhouse's insurance does not automatically provide cover for private babysitting or childcare arrangements undertaken outside the staff member's employment. Staff should not assume that they are covered by the setting's insurance for such arrangements.

Second employment and outside activities

Staff must inform the owner or manager if they have another job, business or regular outside activity which could affect their work at Playhouse.

Outside employment must not:

- interfere with the staff member's attendance, responsibilities or performance at Playhouse;

- create a conflict of interest;
- compromise confidentiality;
- create an inappropriate relationship with a child or family; or
- bring the setting into disrepute.

The setting may discuss reasonable steps with the staff member where an outside activity creates an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

Safeguarding

The safety and welfare of children remains the priority in all situations.

If a member of staff becomes aware of a safeguarding concern involving a child through a personal relationship, private childcare arrangement or any other situation connected with their work, they must report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the setting's Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must not attempt to deal with safeguarding concerns themselves or withhold information because it relates to a private arrangement.

Managing conflicts fairly

The owner and manager will consider declared conflicts of interest fairly and proportionately.

A conflict of interest will not automatically result in disciplinary action. The purpose of declaring a conflict is to ensure that appropriate steps can be taken to protect children, families, staff and the setting.

Where a conflict is not declared and this results in a breach of professional boundaries, confidentiality, safeguarding responsibilities or other setting policies, the matter may be dealt with under the setting's disciplinary procedures.

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

Adopted on 26th March 2015 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 23rd September 2026 by Z. Munford