

# Welcome to East Reading Children's Centres Parent Policies

## ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres has three Children's Centres across East Reading each serving different areas. Each centre is open to every family in that local community who have children aged 0- 5, whatever their gender, ethnic origin, language, culture or ability.

- All parents, carers and childminders are able to register with the centre. Once registered, you will receive updated information about sessions happening with your local area for families and children aged 0 – 5.
- Separate sessions for childminders are also run to support childminders in the East Reading area.
- Some sessions are by invitation only- this will clearly be stated on the most current timetable.
- All the sessions within the Children's Centres are built around local needs. Your thoughts and comments are very welcome.
- Up to date information regarding sessions for each centre is available on the East Reading Children's Centres website (see below), by joining us on Facebook or by phoning your local centre.

[www.eastreadingchildrenscentres.co.uk](http://www.eastreadingchildrenscentres.co.uk)

## BEHAVIOUR POLICY

By positively promoting good behaviour, valuing co-operation and having a caring attitude, East Reading Children's Centres support all children in developing as responsible members of society and all adults in acting as positive role models. We also aim to ensure that all adults and children treat each other with respect, dignity, equality and fairness and encourage self-discipline and consideration for each other, local surroundings and property.

- The person running the session is responsible for ensuring the smooth delivery of the session including the behaviour management of every one present, both adults and children.
- By praising children and adults and acknowledging their positive actions and attitudes, we will ensure that children see that we value and respect them.
- If a child displays inappropriate behaviour, staff will ensure that the parent/carer is supported to deal appropriately with the incident. How a particular type of behaviour is handled will depend on the child, their stage of development and circumstances.
- All adults, including staff, parents and carers are expected to act as positive role models. Discriminatory language and behaviour will not be accepted and will be challenged. Bullying and swearing are unacceptable and adults who continue with anti-social or abusive behaviour will be requested to stop such actions. If they persist, the manager or member of staff in charge of the session reserves the right to ask them to leave the centre.

- Physical punishment will not be considered acceptable under any circumstances and may result in further action.
- Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour either by a child or adult will be recorded. Information will include the child/adult's name; the time and location of the incident; the nature of the incident; who was involved; name(s) of witnesses; signed by member of staff, witnesses and Manager.

## BREASTFEEDING POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres will support those mothers who chose to breastfeed to ensure that it is a positive experience for both mother and child and to enable them to enjoy the proven health benefits.

The Children's Centres are aware of the potential problems some mothers face in breastfeeding their children. We aim to provide an environment where all mothers feel comfortable and supported when breastfeeding their children.

- Any mother, whether a member of the centre or not, is welcome to feed their baby in any centre.
- We believe that with the right information and good support, most mothers will be able to breastfeed comfortably and will produce all the milk her baby needs.
- Children's Centres staff will not discriminate against any woman in her chosen method of infant feeding and will fully support her when she has made that choice.
- To ensure that all mothers get the information and support they need to breastfeed their babies for as long as they wish, there is a range of specialist support services for breastfeeding mothers in Reading. This includes support from the health visitors and midwives.
- Staff are happy to answer any questions and offer advice, the Berkshire Breastfeeding Network are also on site at many of our sessions to offer support or contactable by phone calling or texting 07501466818.

For more information about breastfeeding, see [www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk](http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk)

## CHARGING POLICY

It is the aim of the Children's Centres to make sure that their services are open to everybody. However, some services that are delivered above the required core offer might incur a small charge or donation in order to ensure that they continue. However, the Manager will ensure that the services are available to all members of the community and has the right to waive the charge in exceptional circumstances.

### Admission

No charge will be made for admission into any Children's Centre, but donations are welcomed.

Charges for Children's Centre services The current charges for all services will be clearly displayed as relevant.

These charges will apply only to those sessions where substantial additional costs are incurred e.g. baby massage/yoga/first aid courses.

Any other sessions will either be completely free or donations will be asked for to cover refreshment costs.

Parents will never be obliged to attend a session for which a charge is levied.

All charges will be at the discretion of the Manager.

Some sessions require booking. In these circumstances, parents will be contacted by the necessary means and notified of booking dates and location; payment needs to be made at time of booking for such sessions.

#### Remissions

The Children's Centre does not wish to see any child disadvantaged by virtue of the fact that his/her parent(s) are unable to pay. The Manager therefore has the discretionary right to waive fees in exceptional circumstances.

#### Voluntary contributions

Voluntary contribution in cash or kind may be made for activities taking place. However no child is to be excluded because his/her parent(s)/carer(s) did not contribute.

#### Damage to property

The Advisory Board reserves the right to ask parents to contribute to the cost of repairs or of replacing defaced, damaged or lost property where this is a result of inappropriate behaviour.

## COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

### Compliments

- We hope that your experience of the Children's Centre has been a good one. We welcome feedback about our services and members of staff. If you want to compliment staff you can let us know. We will ensure your comments are passed on to the individual members of staff.
- You may wish to feedback or comment on the services you have received. We welcome any suggestions for improvements. We have feedback forms available at all our sessions, or you can speak to a member of staff.
- If you have had a particular enjoyable experience you can email us your story via the website and we may publish it on the website with your permission.

### Complaints

- If you are unhappy with any of the services you receive through the Children's Centres you have the right to complain.
- If you have a concern about anything we do you can tell us by telephone, in person or in writing. Most concerns or complaints will be sorted quickly by the member of staff involved who will either deal with your issue or pass you onto someone else who is more able to help.
- You will have the right to know what use will be made of personal information, and accordingly, personal information will only be shared between staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- The Children's Centre has a complaints procedure (see below) and this will be followed after a complaint has been made. Please follow this procedure to ensure that your complaint is dealt with as smoothly as possible.
- We hope and aim to settle any issues at the earliest opportunity. If this is not possible, the complaints procedure has four stages:

Stage 1 – "informal" complaint to a member of the Children's Centre team at the first point of contact. The member of staff will listen to what you have to say and try to settle the issue, but if it cannot be resolved then a formal complaint should be made (in writing if possible) as outlined in stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal complaint to the Centre Manager (or Children's Centre

Operations Manager if the complaint is against the centre manager), for investigation and response to you. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily then you should move to stage 3.

Stage 3 – Formal complaint to the Children’s Centre Manager or Head of East Children’s Action Team. Any complaint of a discriminatory nature goes straight to this stage. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily then you should move to stage 4.

Stage 4 – The Head of East Children’s Action Team will consider whether the complaint has been dealt with properly.

For further details please also refer to Reading Borough Council complaints procedure available on: [www.readingboroughcouncil.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.readingboroughcouncil.gov.uk/complaints)

## CONTACT DETAILS POLICY

East Reading Children’s Centres are committed to ensuring that the personal details of all children, families and staff are up to date. This will ensure that emergency contact details are current and that anonymised data can be used to confirm that the users of the centre reflect the local community.

Contact details for families/carers

Up to date details will be collected and recorded for each member (adult and child) of the Children’s Centre including name; address; telephone number; mobile number; email address; emergency contact numbers and ethnicity. This will be in line with current Data Protection and Confidentiality legislation.

Reminders will be included on publicity to encourage parents to update any changes in details and detail will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Publicity

All publicity will contain contact details of the Children’s Centres including telephone number; address; website and email address.

Registers

You will be asked to sign in when you attend any session run by the Children’s Centre.

Visitors

All external visitors will be asked to sign in on arrival at the centre and sign out when they leave.

## DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Domestic abuse can happen to anybody regardless of social group, race, culture, sexuality or ability. It can happen to staff or users of a children’s centre, female or male and occurs within all types of relationships. Domestic abuse is always unacceptable and requires a multi-agency approach in supporting those affected. If you talk to a member of staff and tell them that you have experienced domestic abuse, we will react according to the following guidelines:

- Priority will be given to ensuring your immediate safety and any children involved.
- Staff will recognise your need for a positive response and offer support.
- Staff will respect your wishes if you do not want to be contacted at all.
- Staff will give you information and phone numbers to take away with you.
- Staff will discuss the situation sensitively; exploring options open to you and inform you of other agencies that will offer help and advice.
- Staff may help you explore ways of maximising your safety.

- Staff may need to report what you have told them depending on the circumstances, but they will always discuss this with you.

The above procedures would apply to both women and men. See below for details of organisations who can offer support.

Organisation

Description of Services

Telephone Number

Social and health care

Children's Services

Benefits

Family information Service Shelter Citizens Advice Bureau

0808 800 4444 0844 499 4107

Police

Police Domestic Violence Unit Police

999 emergency 08458 505 505 non emergency

Victim support and outreach

Victim Support Berkshire Women's Aid National Domestic Violence Helpline

0118 950 4003 0808 2000 247

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres are committed to providing quality of opportunity for all children and families. Anti-discriminatory practice will be followed by all staff.

The Children's Centres are open to all members of the community caring for a child under the age of five years.

To ensure that as many people as possible use the services of the Children's Centres:

- The services are advertised widely through public media, community groups, venues and professionals working with families and carers.
- Publicity and promotional materials will reflect the diversity of the local community.
- Information will be presented in clear, concise language. Centres will try to identify members of the community who aren't able to access the centre easily and they will be given help to attend services or will be visited in their own homes.  
When working with families and children, the Children's Centre will:
  - Make children and adults feel valued and good about themselves and enable carers to do the same.
- Ensure all children and adults have equality of access to the facilities and activities.
- Reflect the widest possible range of backgrounds in the choice of resources.
- Avoid stereotypical or insulting images in displays, resources or materials.
- Create an environment of mutual respect.
- Accept no discriminatory behaviour or remarks from any users of the centres (see Behaviour Policy).
- Support children, families and carers who have English as an additional language.
- Ensure children, families and carers who have additional needs and/or disabilities are fully included in the centres.

- The Children's Centres will endeavour to meet medical, cultural and dietary needs when providing food.
- Meetings will be arranged to ensure those users who wish to contribute to the running of the Children's Centres are able to attend (i.e. through parents' forums). Reasonable expenses will be offered to enable all users to attend such meetings. Information about these meetings will be communicated verbally and through writing.

There will be on-going monitoring and evaluation of centre activities and those families who access them to ensure that the needs of the local community are met.

To ensure that equality of opportunity is applied to recruitment of staff, Reading Borough Council's recruitment process and Equal Opportunities Policy are adhered to.

The First Aid box will be easily accessible but not within children's reach. Notices stating the location of the First Aid box and names of staff competent to act as first aiders will be clearly displayed.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres will take all reasonable steps to create a safe environment and ensure safe working practices.

Parents/carers are responsible for their children at all times when attending the Children's Centre's services unless the children are in a crèche or groups otherwise stated by the centre. Children will then be cared for by suitable staff.

Users and staff will be kept safe through the following methods:

- Environment All toys and equipment will be clean and safe.
- Outside play equipment will be stored appropriately and checked before use.
- Craft materials must be appropriate. Small or sharp objects that could be swallowed will be avoided where babies or toddler are present.
- Staff and users should not cause hazards e.g. do not leave cupboards or doors open, litter on the floor or trailing leads etc. □All exit gates will be securely closed during sessions.
- Parents/carers and children will be encouraged to be aware of safe behaviour. Notices will be displayed during family sessions to remind adults of their responsibilities regarding the supervision of their children, hot drinks etc.
- Barriers will be in place as necessary to prevent access to unsafe areas and will be securely fixed and properly used.
- All cleaning materials will be stored in a lockable cupboard. Risk Assessments are in place for each venue and reviewed on a yearly basis, or if circumstances change.

### Health and Hygiene

- Smoking is not permitted in the Children's Centre building or outside
- Parents/carers are requested not to bring children into the centre if they are unwell. (See Sickness Policy)
- Toilets and washbasins will be cleaned daily and more frequently if

required.

- If nappy disposal facilities are not provided, parents will be requested to take dirty nappies home for disposal.

#### Recording of Accidents, Incidents and Violence

- All accidents/incidents will be recorded in the Accident Book which is held in the centre office.

#### First Aid

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- First aid boxes are taken to outreach venues.
- Fire Safety and Emergency Procedure
- Fire alarms are tested weekly.
- Fire and Emergency evacuation drills must be carried out at least once a year and will be supervised and monitored by the centre manager. Fire notices with concise details of emergency procedures will be prominently displayed. Emergency evacuation procedures will be explained to all users of centre and to every new member of staff as part of their induction.
- All fire equipment is checked annually by a competent contractor.

## HEALTHY EATING POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres wish to promote healthy lifestyles for children and adults through the provision of appropriate snacks and advice. Families will have the opportunity to prepare healthy food.

- Families will be encouraged to eat a healthy balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables. This will be through advice given within the centre. Healthy eating posters will also be prominently displayed within the centre.

The staff will support parents/carers and their children to:

- Snacks provided for children follow NHS guidelines on healthy eating i.e. they are free from teeth damaging sugars and low in salt. Highly processed foods and those with artificial additives are also avoided. Snacks are usually fresh fruit, vegetables or bread sticks.
- To ensure the safety of all users with allergies and to support healthy eating, parents/carers will not be permitted to bring in personal food or drink unless agreed beforehand by the centre staff.
- During the sessions only milk and water will be on offer to children. Drinks for children over the age of one will be provided in cups or in cups with health visitor approved lids.
- All healthy dietary requirements will be catered for where possible, regardless of whether they are for health/allergy reasons, cultural/religious reasons or personal beliefs.

## INTIMATE AND PERSONAL CARE POLICY

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure (such as cleaning up after a child who has soiled or wet themselves) to intimate personal areas. This also includes taking a child to the toilet.

Children's Centre staff would not normally be required to undertake such tasks as parents are responsible for their children whilst visiting the centre.

However, if a parent has more than one child with them and one needs intimate personal care or needs to use the toilet, Children's Centre staff may offer support

to the parent. In this case the parent or carer should take responsibility for the intimate care or toileting and staff should supervise the other child/children. All Children's Centre staff will have enhanced CRB checks.

## OUTINGS AND TRIPS POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres wish to provide safe opportunities for parents/carers and their children to visit both local and national places of interest with the Children's Centre team.

To ensure this happens safely, the following will apply:

- As with all Children's Centre activities, parents are responsible for their children at all times.
- Parents and carers will be provided with safety information and fact sheet at point of booking onto trips.
- Parents who attend the trip should not drink alcohol or take non- medical drugs. Should a parent appear to be unable to care for their child/ren or be perceived to be a danger to other people on the trip, the manager will have the discretion to take appropriate action.
- A risk assessment will be carried out by the staff prior to the visit and reviewed before any subsequent visit, even if it is to the same place.
- A designated and qualified first aider will always be in attendance.
- A nominated member of staff will be the outings lead officer. They will be responsible for ensuring registers and emergency contact details for all staff and families are taken on the outing.
- Only appropriate transport with the correct insurance, seat belts, booster seats and infant car seats etc. will be required for all children under the height of 1.5m on any outing or trip.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres believe that children thrive and achieve their potential when all partners (parents and professionals) work together. We believe parental involvement leads to better outcomes for children and young people.

- Information for parents/carers about the activities available within the centre will be available in a range of different formats and be accessible to all. Staff will take responsibility for ensuring alternative methods of communication are available to support parents who may not understand the written format.
- Parents/carers will be supported in addressing any issues that they might have and be signposted to other professionals where appropriate.
- Regular consultation events and the recording of informal feedback will inform the development of new services and the evaluation and review of existing ones.
- Parent representation on the Advisory Boards for each centre is actively encouraged.
- Parents will be supported if they wish to volunteer and opportunities for further training are available as a volunteer.
- Details of the centres' Compliments and Complaints Procedure are available in each centre and at outreach sessions.
- Full policies and procedures are available in each centre.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND USE OF IMAGES POLICY



East Reading Children's Centres has a policy of no photography within the Centres as we cannot guarantee where those images will be used. Therefore: Parents will be asked not to take photographs (either on cameras or mobile phones) during centre sessions.

- If it is known in advance that any official photographer will be present at a centre session, parents/carers will be notified.
- Photographs taken with parental permission might be used to publicise the Children's Centres and published in a variety of media including flyers and posters.

## PROCEDURE FOR LOST OR ABANDONED CHILDREN

East Reading Children's Centres will take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are kept safe and will ensure that all parents are aware of their responsibilities to their children when attending a Children's Centre. Parents/carers are responsible for their children at all times unless the children are in a crèche provided by the Centre. Children will then be cared for by suitable staff.

If a child is abandoned at a Children's Centre session i.e. the parent/carer leaves the premises, the following procedure will be followed:

- The telephone numbers on the registration form will be called if the child is known to the Children's Centre
- If the child is not known to the Children's Centre Children's Social Care team will be contacted along with the police.
- If after 30 minutes contact has not been made with any responsible adult, the Children's Social Care will be contacted and asked for advice which may involve ringing the Police.
- If a parent returns within 30 minutes, the reason for their absence will need to be discussed with the Centre manager.
- Any safeguarding concerns will be referred to Children's Social Care. If a child is found to be lost, the following procedure will be implemented:
- An immediate search will be made whilst maintaining a staff presence.
- The police, Local Authority (Head of Early Years) and school (where appropriate) will be informed.
- Advice will be taken from the Police.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN (Part\*) POLICY

All organisations that work with children share a responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young people.

The relevant procedures according to the East Reading Children's Centre Safeguarding Policy are to be followed if any form of abuse is suspected. Referrals must be made to Children's Social Care if there are signs that a child under the age of 18 years, or an unborn baby:

- Is suffering or has suffered abuse and/or neglect.
- Is likely to suffer abuse and/or neglect. (With agreement of a person with parental responsibility) would be likely to benefit from family support services. The following principles are key for all staff and parents:

The interests of the child are more important than anything else.

- In case of suspected child abuse all staff have a responsibility to take action in the ways set out in the agreed procedures.
- Immediate action, to refer or consult, is required where there is suspicion of abuse.
- Investigation is the responsibility of the Children's Social Care Department and the Police. These agencies have to balance the necessity for action to protect the child with the potential difficult effects of an investigation on the family and/or others.
- Record keeping is essential at each stage and all documents will be kept to the standards outlined in the agency's recording procedures.
- This procedure also covers disclosures made in electronic communications (e-mail or text messaging).

What to do if you have any concerns If an adult (staff or user of a centre) has any concerns about the behaviour of another adult towards children or young people, the following procedures will apply:

- You should not ignore the situation.
- Talk to the Centre Manger about your concerns.
- Action will be taken according to the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures.

Allegations against any employee or volunteer working for the Children's Centre: If an allegation is made, or a concern arises, about a member of staff or volunteer, actions will be taken following the detailed guidance in the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures.

What to do if an adult tells you that they are involved in the abuse of a child or young person:

If someone not employed by the Children's Centre discloses that they are involved in the abuse of a child or young person, **YOU MUST TAKE ACTION:**

- Take the allegation seriously.
- Record details of what you have been told as soon as possible.
- Tell a senior member of the Children's Centre staff.
- If for any reason you cannot do this, then you must directly contact either Children's Social Care or the Police.

Staff Conduct

- Staff will act as role models at all times and maintain appropriate professional relationships with child or vulnerable adult.

Training

- All staff will ensure that they attend child protection training in accordance with the requirements and standards of their agency.

Recruitment and Selection

- Advertisement of posts and application packs will make reference to the commitment of the organisation to Safeguarding, including the intention to seek enhances CRB disclosures.

Social media

- Staff are forbidden to become "friends" or contact parents through social media.

E-Safety

- Children and young people can be vulnerable to exploitation or abuse through the medium of Information Technology. Staff will support parents/carers in accessing relevant information to enable them to protect

their children appropriately.

\*The full policy is available on request.

## SICKNESS POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres will promote good practices to minimise any potential spread of infection amongst users and staff of the centres.

- Should a child appear to be unwell, the manager will have to consider the needs of other users of the centre and may request the parent/carer to care for their child at home.
- Staff will support parents/carers and children who become ill whilst attending the centre and will respond appropriately to the individual circumstances.
- Emergency contact details for all users of the Centres will be kept up to date in case a user of the Centre or a member of staff is taken ill during a session (see also Contact Details Policy).
- Relevant posters will be displayed in each centre.
- There will always be a qualified First Aider present during every session.

## SMOKING, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY

East Reading Children's Centres are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and environment for all children and families and will support parents/carers who wish to give up smoking, alcohol or drugs by signposting them to the appropriate services.

### Smoking

The Children's Centres and associated outreach sessions are no smoking environments and signs are displayed to this effect. Any adults (including staff) who wish to smoke must leave the premises. Parents who leave the premises in order to smoke must ensure that their child/ren are safe and secure in the charge of another adult and understand that Children's Centre staff cannot be responsible for the child/ren's care at this time.

Anybody who attempts to smoke in a Children's Centre or outreach venue will be asked to leave the premises as it is illegal to smoke in an enclosed public area.

### Alcohol

The consumption of alcohol is not permitted on children's centre sites and associated outreach venues. The only exception to this rule is for specific occasions when children will not be present e.g. a social function. However, the rules and regulations of co-located sites will be respected.

### Drugs

The consumption of illegal drugs is not permitted on Children's Centre sites and associated outreach venues at any time.

Any parent/carer who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be supported in caring for their child. However, if it is considered that the child/ren are at risk then safeguarding procedures will be followed and Children's Social Care will be contacted.

If a parent/carer chooses to drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs, staff will advise them that it is unwise to do so and that the Police will be contacted to ensure the safety of any children and other members of the public.

If any illegal drugs and/or drug taking equipment are found on Children's Centre

premises or outreach venues, the area will be made safe and the Police will be contacted.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

### POLICY Statement:

East Reading Children's Centres will comply with national and local statutory requirements regarding the storage and sharing of information.

### Aim:

Children's Centres aim to be a safe environment for the children and families that use them. In pursuit of this, users will be encouraged to maintain an ethos of confidentiality and respect for one another's privacy. Staff will maintain strict confidentiality at all times and will only share information about families as detailed below.

### Fair Processing Notice

East Reading Children's Centres will hold personal data about the families and children that access its services and is a 'data controller' in respect of the Data Protection Act 1998. They will process the data for the following reasons:

- To monitor and evaluate the impact of the centres.
- To ensure that users' strengths and needs are adequately supported through Children's Centre services.
- Information Sharing
- Information may be shared between professionals providing services through the Children's Centres when this will be of benefit to the users and informed consent to do so has been obtained. We will make every effort to ensure that we have explained why we want to share information with who and for what purpose when we ask you informed consent to share information. Information may also be shared between staff and their line managers in a supervision setting where this is required to ensure adequate support for staff.

The following exceptions will apply:

- If information needs to be shared without consent i.e. in the event of a Child Protection concern; to access emergency medical treatment; if there is suspicion of criminal activity or a crime has been committed; if a Court orders information has to be shared.
- If the information has been made anonymous. The Data Protection Act places no restrictions on the disclosure of information that does not identify individuals and depersonalised data can be used for information sharing.
- Where case studies are used, details will be changed to protect the identities of the people involved. However, permission will be sought wherever possible.
- In the case of young children parental or legal guardians' consent will be obtained. Any limitation to consent will be clearly noted and respected and consent agreement will be periodically reviewed to check that there have been no changes.
- Information will be kept in a secure place. In the case of paper documentation this will be held in lockable storage, Electronic information e.g. the Estart system, will be held on password protected computers/servers.
- Users will have access to the information held about them as per the Data Protection Act. They will not have access to information about any other

users of the Centre.

- Consent to share information can be withdrawn at any time, but this may limit the support that can be offered.

East Reading Children's Centres policies updated October 2014. To be reviewed annually.