

Elswick House Nursery School

STAFFING POLICIES & PROCEDURES 2020

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The Handbook

This Handbook contains our current staffing policies and rules and has been designed to help you understand how Elswick House Nursery School is organised, what standards and procedures you are expected to follow and what you can expect from us in return. The staffing policies and procedures contained within this handbook are non-contractual. We hope this will help our new employees to feel part of the team more quickly, and be a gentle reminder to us all of the right way to work here.

Everyone is welcome

We are an equal opportunities employer and actively supports Human Rights, and all Equality legislation. Our ethos is to respect and value people's differences, to help everyone achieve more at work as well as in their personal lives so that they feel proud of the part they play in our success. Our Grievance Procedures ensure sympathetic handling, and hopefully satisfactory resolution, for all aspects of employees concerns or dissatisfaction.

We believe that all decisions about people at work should be based on the individual's abilities, skills, performance and behaviour and our Nursery requirements. Our policy must be strictly adhered to by all of our team. Discrimination, abuse or harassment will result in disciplinary action being taken including dismissal for serious cases.

Staffing, Recruitment and Induction Policy

Our staff are appropriately qualified. The Proprietors are both qualified Teachers. The Nursery Manager has an NVQ Level 3 in Children's Care, Learning & Development and the Deputy Manager has a BA Honours Degree in Child and Youth Studies. Two recently appointed members of staff also have degrees in child related studies, one member of staff has a Cache Level 2 Childcare Diploma and is working towards Level 3 and all other full-time staff hold Level 3 NVQ's, NNEB's or qualifications of similar worth and credibility. All members of staff have considerable experience in the care of children.

The following staff: child ratios are adhered to:-

0 - 18 months	= 1: 3	2 years to 3 years	= 1: 4
18 months to 2 years	= 1: 3	3 years +	= 1: 8

All members of staff have detailed job descriptions, which set out their roles and responsibilities in the Nursery.

Recruitment

When vacancies arise, posts are advertised and job descriptions are supplied. Applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria, and in line with our Equality & Diversity policy.

The requirements of candidates and employees who have a disability (as defined under the relevant legislation) will be reviewed to ensure that, wherever possible, reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter, or remain in, Elswick House's employment.

The vetting process is thorough. Applicants are required to supply proof of identity and address. They are asked for evidence of qualifications and are asked about their knowledge of important childcare matters generally and in relation to the vacant position. They are questioned about their employment history and may be asked to account for gaps. Applicants are required to provide the names and addresses of two referees, who are contacted for references.

The applicant who best fits the criteria is offered the post for a probationary period of three months, subject to satisfactory references and checks by the DBS, in accordance with Ofsted's requirements.

Induction

1. We provide Staff Induction Training for new members of staff, which lasts until the probationary period has been completed. In the first week of employment staff information sheets are completed and the role of the new member of staff made clear. They are given a written job specification. They are introduced to other members of staff and the children and familiarise themselves with the layout of the premises.
2. Every new member of staff is given a set of Policies and Procedures. The Nursery Manager and/or Proprietor goes through all the policies and procedures with the new member of staff. The Safeguarding Children Policy is explained in full and the reasons for it discussed. This includes security issues, such as what to do when a visitor comes to the door. Other related security Policies, such as the use of mobile phones, is covered too. The procedure to follow in the event of a fire is explained and the new member of staff is shown the location of fire extinguishers. The Health and Safety Policy is explained at length and particular attention is given to the administration of medication, accident procedures and the handling of food. The Nursery's view regarding Equality and Diversity is made clear and the Behaviour Policy is discussed in full. Where careful and accurate record keeping is required, this is pointed out and the reasons for it explained. Special mention is also made of the parent partnership and the importance that Elswick House attaches to it. The Nursery's expectations of all its employees with regard to uniforms, dress code and general conduct are made clear in the Professionalism Policy. The new member of staff is encouraged to ask questions.
3. All staff appointments are subject to a probationary period of three months as set out in their contract of employment which also confirms details regarding absence, holidays, dress code, conduct and confidentiality. Two identical contracts are signed - one is filed and the other is given to the new member of staff. During this time new members of staff are supervised and their progress monitored by their immediate superior. Subsequent line management is the Nursery Manager and the Proprietor. Staff members will not be left alone for long periods with individual children.
4. After the first month (or before, if deemed necessary) the Nursery Manager and/or the Proprietor may meet with the new member of staff to review the first four weeks. This provides an opportunity to commend good practice, where it is being shown, and to point out where improvement is possible. The new member of staff's knowledge of the Policies and Procedures may also be tested at this time. A similar review takes place after two months and again after three.
5. If the Nursery Manager and Proprietor feel that the new member of staff has failed to show the required standard, their contract will be terminated and the reasons for the decision made clear. Alternatively, the Nursery Manager and Proprietor may consider extending the probationary period for a further three months.
6. On satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the new member of staff is confirmed in post.

Disclosure & Barring Checks

Your initial employment is conditional upon the provision of a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”) Certificate of a level appropriate to your post as detailed in your contract of employment.

You have an obligation to inform the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager immediately of any change to the status of your DBS certificate, if you are arrested, charged or convicted of any offence, or if you receive a police caution, reprimand or warning. This also includes road traffic offences.

You are also required to inform the Nursery Manager if there is a formal child protection investigation of you or any member of your household.

If your employment is subject to a satisfactory completion of a DBS check as detailed in your contract, failure to disclose a criminal conviction or one gained during your employment may result in the termination of your employment.

You are required to hold a DBS certificate.

In the event that you don't hold a DBS, we would advise you to apply for one and then sign up to the DBS update service.

As part of your employment with us, you will be required to consent to and authorise Elswick House to carry out periodic adhoc checks of your DBS.

We keep a record of the date of issue of the disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the post for which the disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment (or other relevant) decision taken.

Childcare Disqualification Requirements

Elswick House complies with its Childcare Disqualification By Association responsibilities.

Equality and Diversity Policy

We believe that no person at Elswick House - parent/carer, child, member of staff or job applicant - should be discriminated against in any way, or on any grounds. Difference is accepted, irrespective of gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or disability. We believe that everyone attending* the nursery should be treated equally and fairly and have equal access to all aspects of the nursery from the day they first start at Elswick House to the day they leave. Testimony to this commitment can be seen in our daily routines and activities (displayed in the Toddler Room and Baby Room), in the resources we use, in the children's "My Story" folders, in our wall displays and on the Parents Area of our website. We involve parents in the life of the nursery at every opportunity and endeavour to build relationships with them based on mutual trust and respect, which ensures they feel valued and belong.

We operate a 'first come, first served' policy, open to all children within the required age range, dependent on space being available and on the ability of parents to pay the fees.

Elswick House has a designated member of staff (ENCO) with special responsibility for implementing our Equality and Diversity Policy. The Nursery's ENCO and senior staff are keenly aware of the importance of upholding our Equality and Diversity principles and constantly monitor the Nursery to ensure good practice and improvement. All members of staff are extremely professional and are encouraged to be very approachable and non-judgemental. They are expected to be well versed in all the Nursery's policies, including Equality and Diversity.

The children are recognised for their individuality and potential. They are encouraged to show mutual respect for each other and to be non-sexist in their choice of activities. Racial and sexist attitudes, or remarks, are challenged. All family compositions are respected. All lifestyles are depicted in a positive way.

Daily activities are carefully planned with appropriate resources and equipment to extend play and learning opportunities. If it is feasible, equipment and play activities may be adapted to encourage the participation of children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Strengthening and improving our stock of books, pictures, jigsaws, toys and equipment to further inclusivity is ongoing. Wherever possible resources are selected which encourage positive role models and avoid racial, or sexist stereotyping, or the depiction of derogatory images of any group of people. In so far as is reasonably possible, displays should exhibit positive imagery and promote diversity.

** Dependent on attendance. Also, in the case of swimming, dependent on staff judgement.*

Staff Professionalism

A high level of professionalism is essential and is expected from all members of staff. This is pointed out to all new members of staff. They are role models for the children and should act accordingly.

A genuine interest in, and enthusiasm for, child care is essential. Members of staff need to be well qualified and/or experienced and must be prepared to upgrade their skills regularly and keep abreast of developments within the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

Members of staff should have high expectations of all children and a commitment to helping them achieve their full potential. They must be able to establish trusting, supportive relationships with children in their care and be able to communicate sensitively and effectively with them. Good collaborative skills are important as they will be working as members of a team. Members of staff need endless patience and must take their responsibilities seriously. A sense of fun and a sense of humour can be great assets.

Members of staff must respect difference and understand the importance of treating all children equally and fairly. They must be seen as non-judgemental and approachable by parents. Members of staff need to be aware that an excellent working relationship with parents is a most desirable outcome and always in the best interest of the child.

Mobile phones must be turned off and should not be used in working hours. Under no circumstances should mobile phones belonging to members of staff be used to take photographs of the children whilst at nursery. (*See mobile phone policy*)

Members of staff are required to:-

- Conduct themselves responsibly at all times and show a high level of professionalism.
- Act as role models for the children and be sensitive to the concerns of parents.
- Be well qualified and/or experienced and must be prepared to regularly upgrade his/her skills.
- Have a thorough knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Have a thorough understanding of all the Nursery's Policies and Procedures (especially the Health and Safety, Safeguarding Children, Equality and Diversity and Staff Professionalism Policies) and must adhere to them.
- Be of smart appearance and conform to the Nursery's high standard of uniform.
- Fingernails must be kept clean and short. False nails and extensions must not be worn.
- Observe all rules and procedures, particularly those concerning smoking, mobile phones and fire safety.
- Act wholeheartedly in the interests of the Employer and the Nursery at all times.
- Report to the Employer and/or the Nursery Manager any issue or incident, which

they feel might be prejudicial to the best interests of the Nursery and/or the children in the Nursery; also to report other 'need-to-know' information, which might affect the children.

- Inform the Employer of any changes in his/her situation - physically, socially or medically - that might affect his/her work.
- Not remove any material or equipment from her place of work without prior permission.
- Not use the Employer's time, material or equipment for unauthorised work.

Professional Development Policy

Reviews, Supervisions & Appraisals

All members of staff have Job Descriptions, which set out their roles and responsibilities.

We have always aspired to be outstanding at Elswick House. Both the Proprietor and Nursery Manager at Elswick House are very 'hands on' and they set the standard. Being a small nursery, they are always well aware of what is happening in the nursery and ensure that standards are maintained from one day to the next.

An example of particularly good practice might be acknowledged with a few words of praise in passing; there might be suggestions as to how an idea might be developed further, or how a display might be improved; or something that is not quite right may be met with a quiet word, a suggestion or mild rebuke.

Beyond this very informal 'maintaining of standards', we have three levels of what may loosely be called 'performance management', each of which are seen as vehicles for recognition, encouragement, improvement and professional development.

Reviews

A review is a one-to-one meeting between the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager and the member of staff on a slightly more formal level than the day-to-day 'chats' in the garden, or over lunch, about how things are going. It is an opportunity for a member of staff to talk about how they feel about their job, to talk through any difficulties they may be having, or concerns they may have. It is especially a time for the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager to recognise and applaud the positives and to offer assistance or advice if it is needed.

Supervision

Supervision is a one-to-one meeting between the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager and the member of staff to support and motivate them and ensure they develop good practice. The frequency of the supervisions may depend on a number of factors, such as the experience of the member of staff, or their particular needs, and may be triggered by the changing circumstances of a member of staff, or a performance issue resulting from an observation.

The supervision is like a regular Progress Check in which:-

- The Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager can provide support and encouragement;
- The member of staff can raise issues or seek advice or guidance;
- The Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager can help the member of staff to prioritise individual tasks;

- The Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager identifies areas of work that need improving.

Appraisal

Appraisal is an annual meeting between the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager and the member of staff to look back over the past year and to assess how they have performed and then to consider the year ahead and their future professional development. The specific aims are to:-

- Identify what has gone well and what has not gone so well over the last year;
- Identify/Recognise professional strengths and weaknesses;
- Review the outcomes of supervisions during the past year, if applicable;
- Identify areas for improvement and set broad targets for the coming year;
- Identify how training needs will be met over the next 12 months.

Members of staff are given a self-evaluation sheet a few days prior to the appraisal, so that they can give some thought to the issues that may be raised.

A record of the Supervisions/Appraisals meeting should be kept on the appropriate Record Sheet. These will be confidential documents, which should be accessible to the Proprietor/Nursery Manager and the member of staff at any time.

Staff Training

Elswick House encourages all members of staff to undertake a wide range of training and professional development, though this may be limited by availability of courses, restrictions on numbers and training funds available. Discussion of training needs and related professional development may happen informally, or during staff meetings, or within the review, supervision and appraisal process. Every member of staff has the opportunity to choose training schemes according to their interests and professional development plans. All members of staff are particularly encouraged to attend Safeguarding Children Training, when available, and to update their Health and Hygiene and First Aid qualifications as and when necessary.

Holidays

Elswick House's holiday year runs from January to December. All full time employees are entitled to 5.6 weeks paid holiday per annum which includes Statutory Bank and Public Holidays. Part time employees are entitled to a pro rata equivalent.

We also normally shut down between Christmas and New Year, and this period tends to start when the schools close. We review this each year dependent on school closure dates and demands for our services, and if we do shut down, then any days of closure additional to the bank holidays will be granted as additional days' holiday. This is therefore purely discretionary year to year, and just because we do it for one year, this does not mean it will happen again.

To book a holiday you must gain approval in advance from your Nursery Manager. For a holiday of more than two days, at least four weeks' notice must be given. No more than two members of staff should be away on holiday at any one time to minimise disruption to work schedules. Irrespective of this, the Nursery Manager may refuse to authorise your request if it causes severe disruption to Nursery work schedules, other employees are absent for different reasons, or if other important considerations come into play. This is why no bookings should be made before approval is received. Your manager will explain any refusal.

Elswick House expects employees to take all their holiday entitlement within the year it is accrued. Any holiday not taken during this time will be lost.

Should you be incapacitated for work during any period of pre-booked holiday (whether in whole or in part) Elswick House will, subject to the correct notification and certification, pay statutory sick pay. You must follow the absence reporting procedure and provide Elswick House with a relevant medical certificate covering the period of incapacity.

Holiday Pay on Termination

On termination of employment, employees shall be entitled to receive a payment representing holiday accrued but as yet untaken. If you have taken more than your holiday entitlement when you leave, a sum representing the amount of additional holiday will be deducted from your final salary.

Bank and Public Holidays

Employees are not normally required to work Bank Holidays and will be paid their normal salary as part of their holiday entitlement.

Sickness & Absence Rules

As a Nursery we need to measure and record sickness absence, and to know when and why we need to do something about it. This is why we record and keep all records relating to absence. As an employee, you need to know that you work for someone who cares about your health and welfare.

The following absence policy has been drawn up to meet these needs and must be followed at all times.

Disability

Where any employee has, or develops, a condition that would be classified as a disability, they have a duty to inform Elswick House. Any information will be treated in the strictest confidence but will allow Elswick House to support and make any reasonable adjustments necessary.

Reporting

All unauthorised absence must be reported to your manager by 7.00am on the first day of absence. Contact should be made directly by you, not text message, and only in exceptional circumstances should partners, parents or friends ring on your behalf.

You will be asked to give the reason for your absence and an indication of when you may return.

If your absence continues for more than 1 day you must keep us informed.

If the absence is due to sickness and continues for 7 days or less (Saturday and Sunday included) you must complete a self-certification form and give it to the Nursery Manager.

If absence continues for more than 7 days (Saturday and Sunday included) a medical certificate signed by your doctor must be sent immediately to the Nursery Manager and thereafter at weekly intervals for as long as the absence continues.

During all periods of absence you must maintain contact with the Nursery Manager.

If you are absent for more than 4 weeks you may be considered long-term sick. Elswick House may at any time require you to have a medical examination at our expense or under the government 'fit for work' scheme. In cases of persistent repetition of, or prolonged absence due to sickness or injury, Elswick House reserves the right to terminate your employment.

During periods of long-term absence, holiday will accrue in line with the statutory allowance.

Medical Certification

Medical certificates are now referred to as “Fit Notes”. Where a medical certificate indicates that you may be partially fit for work, the doctor may have suggested ways of helping you get back to work. These could include:

- a phased return to work,
- altered hours,
- amended duties
- workplace adaptations.

The Nursery Manager will discuss the advice on the doctor’s certificate with you and will consider any comments made by the doctor, any of the return to work tick boxes and any other action that could help you return to work despite your illness. If you return to reduced hours your pay would reflect this. If Elswick House is not able to make any adaptations or adjustments to help you return to work, the Nursery Manager will explain the reasons to you and will set a date for review. You may then use the doctor’s certificate as if the doctor had advised ‘not fit for work’.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

SSP will be paid in accordance with legislation in force at the time of absence. SSP is currently paid after three days absence and for a maximum of 28 weeks.

Elswick House may at any time require you to have a medical examination at Elswick House’s expense. In cases of persistent repetition of, or prolonged, absence due to sickness or injury, Elswick House reserves the right to terminate your employment.

Behaviour whilst Absent

Employees are expected to attend work unless sickness, or injury, prevents them performing their duties.

Whilst an employee is absent, they must adhere to the policy and do nothing to aggravate or delay recovery, such as working for another employer or taking part in inappropriate social or sporting activities.

Should any employee wish to take holiday whilst absent, this must be approved by their G.P.

Returning to Work

On occasions, you may feel ready to return to work but if you are on any form of medication that could affect your ability to carry out your normal duties you must inform the Nursery Manager.

To ensure Elswick House does all it can to understand the causes of absence, a return to work interview may be held.

Termination of Employment

Whilst Elswick House will endeavour to support employees throughout periods of prolonged sickness, a heavy burden is thrown onto colleagues and Elswick House is unable to plan work effectively. It may therefore be necessary to terminate employment so that a replacement may be recruited.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Appointments should be made where possible outside working hours. Where this is not possible, they should be made at the start or end of the day. You must inform the Nursery Manager of any such appointments in advance and at the manager's discretion you may be asked to make the time up.

Compassionate Leave

Paid leave of one day will be granted in cases of bereavement involving immediate family. The same for funerals, religious services etc. Any further time taken will be regarded as unpaid leave.

Jury Service

If you have to attend Court for jury service or as a witness, please let us know as soon as possible and provide a copy of the court summons to support your request for time off work. There will be no payment of salary during this period; it will be regarded as unpaid leave. You will be able to claim an amount for loss of earnings.

If you attend court and are told your services are not required that day, you must telephone us immediately and then return to work.

Time off for Dependant Emergencies

We recognise the right of all employees to reasonable amounts of unpaid leave to deal with incidents involving a dependant. This is defined as any person who reasonably relies on you to make provision of care. The type of situations when this leave may be taken would be when a dependant:

- Is ill, injured, gives birth or is assaulted
- When care arrangements unexpectedly break down
- When a dependant dies
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving a child at school.

Employees wishing to take leave to deal with any of the above must telephone the Nursery Manager personally prior to the start of their working day giving the reason for the absence and the expected duration of the absence.

Falsifying Claims

In the event of an employee taking time off fraudulently under any of the above sickness and absence policies we will investigate and disciplinary action may be taken.

Severe Weather and Disruptions to Travel

Elswick House acknowledges that employees may occasionally have problems travelling to and from work due to either severe weather conditions or major disruptions to public transport (for example accidents on the roads). Whilst we understand and are committed to protecting the health and safety of all our employees, we must also ensure that the business and our clients are not unduly disrupted by external factors.

Reporting for work

We expect you to report for work regardless of the situation. You should therefore make every effort to attend work in all circumstances. When severe weather conditions occur or where there are major disruptions to public transport, you should take steps to obtain advice on the position from the appropriate external agencies. You should allow extra time for your journey, making alternative travel arrangements where appropriate. You will still be expected to attend work on time.

Unjustified or unacceptable absence or lateness may give rise to disciplinary action under Elswick House's disciplinary procedure.

Accepted absence or lateness

If you are unable to attend work or are going to be delayed by the weather conditions or public transport disruptions, you should contact the Nursery Manager as soon as possible to discuss the position. If the Nursery Manager is unavailable, you should speak to the Deputy Manager or the Proprietor.

Where Elswick House accepts that you have used your best endeavours to attend work but you are unable to do so, or you are late because of the severe weather conditions or the major disruptions to public transport, the Nursery Manager will discuss the various options potentially available. At Elswick House's discretion, you may be required or permitted to:

- Make up the time at a later date
- Take any absence from work as part of your annual leave entitlement
- Take any absence from work as unpaid leave

Elswick House will base its decision on your individual circumstances. For example: your distance from home to work, your mode of transport and the needs of Elswick House.

Leaving work early

If severe weather conditions or major disruptions to public transport occur during the working day which will cause problems for you in travelling home, the Nursery Manager will decide whether to allow you to leave work early (and to make up the time at a later date if necessary). Elswick House will again base its decision on your individual circumstances.

Health and safety

Elswick House is committed to protecting the health and safety of all its employees. This includes during severe weather conditions and where there are major disruptions to public transport and therefore a reasonable approach will be taken to the situation. You also have a duty to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions. This includes taking extra care when travelling to and from work in severe weather conditions and allowing more time for your journey, including making alternative travel arrangements where appropriate.

Confidentiality Policy

Parents, children and families.

It is the intention of all members of staff at Elswick House to respect the privacy of children and their parents and families, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. We have record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; the means that we use to store and share that information takes place within the framework of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

- Most of the information we hold about families is confidential.
- Members of staff may discuss children's general progress and wellbeing together in meetings and personal information given by parents may be referred to when planning for the child's needs, but more sensitive information is restricted to the Nursery Manager and/or Proprietor and the child's key carer, and is shared with other staff on a need to know basis.
- In exceptional circumstances information is shared with other professionals, or possibly Social Services, or the police. Information shared with other agencies is done in line with our Information Sharing Policy and is set out in our Privacy Notice to parents. Parental permission is sought if information about a child is to be passed on to other agencies. Also, where information is to be passed on to other settings.
- In the event of a child protection matter, which should be reported to the local Safeguarding Children's Board (SCB), the SCB and Ofsted must be informed even where confidentiality with a third person might be compromised. The best interests of the child are always paramount. (See also Safeguarding Children Policy)
- We ensure that staff from other agencies do not have unsupervised access to the child they are visiting in the setting and do not have access to any other child(ren) during their visit.
- Parents have access to the records of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Personal information about children and families is kept in a secure place, whilst remaining as accessible as possible.

Members of staff.

Members of staff at Elswick House can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes within the Nursery. We have record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; the means that we use to store and share that information takes place within the framework of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

- Personal information is provided voluntarily by members of staff to enable the smooth running of the Nursery. Under the Data Protection Act members of staff can request to access, amend, correct or have deleted the personal data we hold about them.
- Personal information about members of staff is kept in a secure place, whilst remaining as accessible as possible. Most of the information is confidential.
- Some personal data of employees is posted in the Nursery to introduce them as new members of staff to parents when their employment at Elswick House commences. Similar information is put on the Nursery's website.
- Personal data of staff may be required by OFSTED during an inspection.
- Issues to do with employment of staff remain confidential to the people directly involved with making employment decisions. Personal information might be shared with prospective employers should references be requested for staff, who have left or are in the process of leaving.
- Staff pay is a private matter and should not be discussed with anyone else in the nursery other than the Proprietor. It is confidential to the people directly involved with paying staff wages. Financial data is stored, processed and shared with HMRC to permit the payment of staff wages.
- Members of staff are representatives of the Nursery at all times, including when they are outside of work and also when they are using Social Networking sites. They must never disclose on such sites the name of the Nursery, nor provide any information relating to the Nursery, or the children or parents connected with it. In addition to this, the Employee should not make any disparaging comments or references to the Nursery or the people that they work with. Due to the nature of their work, the Nursery discourages employees from being "friends" with parents of Nursery Children on these sites.

IT Security Policy

At EHNS, we recognise that the interconnected digital world of everyday life presents a multitude of concerns and threats to our personal data. We employ the services of an external IT consultant to assess the risks to our computing and technical equipment and to advise about how to defend against them. We are committed to taking every reasonable step to protect the information that our staff, parents, and children provide to us, and welcome suggestions for further improvements.

Elswick House's IT hardware comprises Richard's PC in the study, the Nursery Manager's laptop (normally located in the study), Linden's laptop in the sitting room and five Acer tablets, based in the Nursery and stored each evening in the study. These devices may be referred to as 'facilities' in the text below.

- Richard's PC is used for administration purposes and for researching/locating images/data at the request of members of staff.
- Emma's laptop is used for administration purposes too, and also for the implementation and operation of the 2Simple Learning Journal programme.
- Linden's laptop is used for the fingerprint recognition device for gaining entry to the Nursery.
- The five tablets are used by the staff for gathering and recording observations of the children for the 2Simple Learning Journal programme.

The Proprietor, Nursery Manager and Deputy Manager are the only people who have access to the internet on Elswick House premises. Other members of staff will have access to the Nursery's tablets, but do not have authorisation to access the internet.

Regulations for the use of computer facilities offered

The following regulations apply to the use of all onsite facilities provided by Elswick House. Please note that breaches of this policy will be considered as a disciplinary issue resulting in sanctions up to and including dismissal for Gross Misconduct.

The facilities may be used only in connection with employees' work for Elswick House. They must not be used for work of undeclared financial benefit to employees, or the transmission of unsolicited commercial material without the express permission, in writing, of the Proprietor.

You must not interfere with the work of others or the system itself. The facilities must be used in a responsible manner – in particular, you must not:

- attempt to access the internet unless you are authorised to do so
- access, store or distribute material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience, needless anxiety or offence
- access, store or distribute obscene or indecent material, pornography, etc

- access, store or distribute defamatory material
- access, store or distribute material such that the copyright of another person is infringed
- use computing equipment for playing games, other than children's games
- use computer equipment for gambling
- use computer equipment for any kind of personal gain (e.g. advertising goods or services)
- gain deliberate unauthorised access to facilities or services accessible via local or national networks or access, store or distribute programmes designed to facilitate such access
- engage in activities which waste resources (your own or other people's time, networks or computers) or which are liable to cause a disruption or denial of service to other users. This includes the following: introduction of viruses into computer systems; use of Internet Relay Chat facilities; use of peer-to-peer networking products; use of internet TV, radio or similar streamed media services; use of social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Twitter etc
- engaging in any lobbying or political activity
- engage in any activity that brings Elswick House into disrepute, breach confidentiality or is in any way discriminatory
- use Elswick House's IT systems to keep a personal "blog"
- engage in activities which are illegal, or which might contribute to the commission of an illegal act
- engage in any transaction purporting to be representing Elswick House when not authorised
- enter into any contract or subscription on the internet on behalf Elswick House, without specific permission from the Proprietor.

No personal or private usage of the Internet including Social Media sites is allowed.

Elswick House's IT and communication resources are valuable and expensive business resources and must be treated with care and respect, you must not:

- Modify or attempt to fix any of Elswick House's IT and communication resources. Any fault should be reported immediately to the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager.
- Download or install any programme, software or screensaver onto Elswick House's IT equipment.
- Copy, modify, transfer or remove any of Elswick House's software, data or resources.

We are guardians of considerable amounts of sensitive data, and it is vital for our business integrity that care is taken to safeguard both the information and the database systems themselves.

Computer and Password Rules and Management

You must not gain unauthorised access to or violate the privacy of other people's files, corrupt or destroy other people's data or disrupt the work of other people.

Richard's PC, the Nursery Manager's laptop and the five tablets are all password protected. The Nursery Manager and the Deputy can log on to the Nursery area of Richard's PC and to the Nursery Manager's laptop. All other members of staff are only privy to the log on password for the tablets.

It is your responsibility to prevent inappropriate access to your files. Your password must be kept safe and not be disclosed to anyone.

Email Policy

The e-mail software on Richard's PC and the Nursery Manager's laptop is used for Elswick House's business and domestic purposes. For that reason, e-mails should be viewed only by the Proprietor and the Nursery Manager. A small number of e-mails are likely to be for the attention of the Nursery Manager; the majority will not, and some may be confidential and/or private. For that reason the Nursery Manager will be trusted to use her discretion when viewing e-mails.

It is absolutely essential that e-mails or attachments from non-trusted sources are left un-opened, to reduce the likelihood of viruses entering the network. If there is any doubt about the source or content of an email, do not open it.

Content and Style of Emails

Emails tend to be treated more informally than other written correspondence. However, emails form a permanent record of any correspondence and nothing should be put in an email which you would not be prepared to put on an internal memorandum or on Company headed notepaper. Review each email carefully before sending it.

Emails must never contain anything unprofessional or that could damage Elswick House's reputation. You should not refer to anyone (either internally or externally) in an email in a way that you would not want them to read.

You must not send electronic mail which is irresponsible, or likely to cause offence, or use network messaging without authority. "Irresponsible" use includes unsolicited postings to large numbers of people or indiscriminate postings.

Internet Policy

Any member of staff with access to the internet whilst on Elswick House premises is strictly prohibited from accessing, downloading or viewing any site which may:

- contain pornographic, obscene or offensive material
- contain discriminatory, religious or political material
- promote criminal or unlawful activities
- be threatening, abusive, libellous or defamatory
- encourages conduct that would constitute a criminal offence, give rise to civil liability, otherwise violate any local, national or international law
- infringe copyright and/or other intellectual property rights of people or companies, including, but not limited to software programs protected by copyright or material produced by someone else.

You must not download any software from the Internet without the authorisation of the Proprietor and/or Nursey Manager.

Never use the Internet to transmit confidential personal or business sensitive information.

The organisation reserves the right to monitor employees' internet and IT usage, whenever you use Elswick House's resources and systems, you give Elswick House consent to monitor your activities.

Social Media

Employees are reminded that the confidentiality clause contained in their contract of employment extends to the use of the internet, social networking sites, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and blogs. Should members of staff choose to use any of these, or similar, sites in their own time, they are also reminded of their responsibility to act appropriately and professionally at all times when visiting them. They must never disclose on such sites the name of the Nursery, nor provide any information relating to the Nursery, or the children or parents connected with it. They must not become involved online in any dialogue relating to the Nursery, the Proprietor, the children, parents, families, employees, associates or freelancers.

If an employee discovers that this code of online conduct has been breached, the matter must be reported immediately to the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager.

Due to the nature of their work, the Nursery discourages employees from being "friends" with parents of Nursery children on these sites.

Due to the nature of their work, the employee is strongly advised NOT to say that he/she is a Nursery Nurse.

You are responsible for your online behaviour and for what you post. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal for Gross Misconduct.

Monitoring

Elswick House reserves the right to examine the contents of email or files belonging to computer users to maintain the functionality of the system. Or where Elswick House has reason to suspect that these regulations are being breached. Users are therefore advised that such monitoring can and may occur. Please note email messages, even when they have been deleted from Elswick House's email system, can be traced, and retrieved. The person or persons involved in creating or forwarding any offending email can be identified. Emails are admissible in a court of law.

Elswick House will hold individual employees personally liable if they or their customers suffer any loss or damage to reputation as a result of any breach of these conditions.

Elswick House may create an archive version of your email account and file server data, and may retain this after you have left Elswick House. Elswick House reserves the right to inspect the contents of your email account and also any files stored on the file server.

General

Elswick House will hold individual employees personally liable if they or their associates, business partners or customers, suffer any loss or damage to reputation as a result of any breach of these conditions.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against you, up to and including dismissal for Gross Misconduct.

Mobile Phone Policy

We recognise that staff may need to have their mobile phones with them when they come to work. Also that parents and other visitors to the Nursery are likely to be carrying their mobile phones with them. However, there have been a number of issues raised within the local authority and nationally regarding the use of mobile phones and other devices in educational settings.

We have considered the advice of OFSTED and the messages coming back to us from Staff Training courses; we have also heeded the comments on the subject of our QL Officer and have taken note of the policies adopted by some other nurseries.

We also have to take into account that, due to the physical limitations of the Nursery, we do not have a staff room, nor is there space for individual staff lockers.

As a result this is our policy with regard to mobile phones:-

- Phones must be turned off prior to entering the Nursery premises and on no account should they be turned on while on the Nursery premises.
- If members of staff bring their mobile phones to Nursery, they must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device and they must be put immediately into the middle cupboard of the pine dresser in the sitting room where they will be securely stored during the working day.
- Under no circumstances may members of staff use their mobile phones on Nursery premises.
- If members of staff wish to use their mobile phones at break times or lunch times they must go off the premises to do so.
- If members of staff have a personal emergency, they are free to make or receive calls on the Nursery landline phone, which can be removed to a quiet corner if necessary for privacy. No charge will be made for such calls provided they are in the UK.
- All visitors must be requested to switch off their phones before entering the Nursery and not to use them whilst on Nursery premises.

The best interests of the children, their parents and the Nursery are paramount here. If members of staff fail to follow this guidance, disciplinary action may be taken.

Resolving Problems

We believe that clear, open and fair procedures for the resolution of staff problems are necessary both for the success of Elswick House Nursery School and for the fair treatment of all our team.

General

Any grievance or complaint can be discussed informally, or through the formal grievance procedure. Often raising issues promptly at the time in a sensible way helps to solve them and prevent further difficulties.

Investigations

It is not always necessary to hold an investigatory meeting but where it is, everyone is required to co-operate fully with the investigation relating to disciplinary or grievance procedure. The Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager will investigate any complaint.

Suspension

Elswick House may suspend you on appropriate contractual pay. Suspension is not a disciplinary penalty and carries no implication of guilt. Whilst on suspension you must be available for work or meetings as required during normal working hours.

The right to be accompanied at hearings

You can be accompanied at any disciplinary or grievance hearing by:

- A work colleague
- A full time official employed by a trade union
- A lay official, so long as they have been certified in writing by their union as having received training in acting as a workers' companion at disciplinary and grievance hearings.

Your representative has the right to explain or sum up your case, and to respond to any views expressed at the hearing. The representative may not answer on your behalf. If the representative cannot attend on the date set for the interview, we will always postpone the interview for up to 5 days or, at our discretion, longer.

Notes for colleagues

We are pleased for colleagues to support each other through these proceedings but you are not obliged to do so. Having a colleague present helps to ensure that matters are dealt with fairly and we appreciate your assistance. However, you should be aware that this may lead to some conflict of loyalties for them. You are asked to respect the confidentiality of these proceedings.

Grievance Procedure

Stage 1

Where there is an issue at work we would ask that you raise it promptly and with the relevant person.

If this fails or you feel the matter is more serious, then you can go to the formal procedure.

Stage 2

To make a formal grievance, set out your complaint in writing, giving as full an account of the situation as possible. This should be given to the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager together with any relevant documents. We will invite you to a meeting to discuss the grievance and ask how you think it can be resolved. It may be necessary for us to make further enquiries and hold a second meeting.

After the meeting we will write to you with the outcome of the grievance. The letter will remind you of your right to appeal if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

In serious cases or cases where the Manager is the cause of the grievance another Manager, or an independent consultant will be asked to investigate the complaint.

Whilst an employee has an outstanding grievance or has been dismissed from Elswick House it is policy that all passwords to sensitive Company equipment be changed and not re-issued to you until the grievance is resolved or the appeal process complete.

Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary process has been designed to help and encourage you to achieve and maintain good standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. On occasions people may fall short of the expected standards of behaviour or performance. In these circumstances disciplinary action may be taken.

At all stages of the formal disciplinary procedure you will:

- Be given a right of reply to all and any allegations made against you BEFORE any decision or disciplinary action is taken

- Be advised of the nature of any disciplinary action taken against you and the consequences of such action
- Be advised of any improvement in conduct or performance required and over what time frame
- Have the opportunity to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative to any disciplinary hearing as described above.

Disciplinary hearings will usually be conducted by the Proprietor and/or Nursery Manager.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. Where you are unable to attend more than one meeting the Nursery may, in certain circumstances, hold the meeting in your absence and make their decision based on the evidence available to them at the time.

At the meeting you will be given the opportunity to respond and to put forward any defence or arguments you want. You may ask questions, present evidence and call witnesses.

Depending on the severity of the offence and taking into account all the circumstances the disciplinary action may take any one of the following forms:

Stage 1

Informal counselling to give you an opportunity to rectify the situation.

Stage 2

A verbal warning will be issued if improvement does not result following informal counselling or for more serious breaches. You will be told of steps you must take to improve your conduct and if appropriate the time limit for improvement. This will be confirmed in writing and recorded on your file for a period of time, normally 6 months.

Stage 3

For more serious matters or where you have failed to meet the required standards after having been given a verbal warning, you may be given a written warning.

This will state the nature of the complaint, the required standards that must be met and where appropriate a time limit for improvement. It will also state that further disciplinary action will be followed if the required standards are not met. One copy will be retained by you, and one placed on your file normally for a maximum of 12 months.

Stage 4

For serious matters, or where you have failed to reach the required standards after being warned, you may be given a final written warning. This will state the nature of the complaint, the required standards to be met and where appropriate a time limit for improvement. It will also state that you will be dismissed if the standards are not met or if there is further misconduct. One copy will be retained by you, and one placed on your file normally for a maximum of 12 months.

Stage 5

Where there has been Gross Misconduct (in which case the first 4 stages may be omitted) or where you have failed to meet the required standards after due warnings have been given to you, you may be dismissed. In extenuating circumstances, we may apply another sanction such as disciplinary transfer, disciplinary suspension without pay, or where you are in a supervisory or management role demotion to a lower grade. This will be confirmed in writing. In case of gross misconduct, the dismissal will normally be without notice (or pay in lieu of notice).

Appeals

You have the right of appeal against any disciplinary decision taken against you. Your appeal should be in writing and sent to the nominated individual within five working days of the decision, and state the reasons for your appeal. You will receive a reply within a further five working days setting a date for an appeal hearing. The decision from the appeal hearing will be final.

The following are examples of Misconduct and Gross Misconduct. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

Misconduct

- Poor time keeping
- Unauthorised and unreasonable absence from work
- Failure to meet the adequate standard of job performance
- Failure to comply with procedures
- Failure to answer a question during a properly constituted investigation
- Minor violation of safety practices
- Minor breaches of Nursery regulations
- Improper use of business funds or property
- Inappropriate standards of dress
- Contravention of minor safety regulations
- Disruptive behaviour.

Gross Misconduct

The following acts are examples of gross misconduct and as such are considered so serious that the employee may be liable to instant dismissal.

- Theft, wilful damage of, or negligence which leads to loss of, property or goods belonging to Elswick House, its customers or suppliers, or other employees
- Unreasonably refusing to Elswick House searching your bags or vehicle
- Unauthorised disclosure or use of confidential information from Elswick House, or about any of its customers
- Conduct likely to damage the reputation of Elswick House
- Drunkenness, or being under the influence of legal or illegal drugs
- Discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation or harassment or bullying of colleagues or customers
- Accepting bribes or offering bribes
- Fraud, dishonesty or any other offence which would be a breach of the law of the land
- Indecent, violent or offensive behaviour, assault or attempted assault of other employees, customers, associates or members of the public
- Failure to carry out a reasonable order given by a manager during working hours or serious disregard of duties
- Serious insubordination
- Serious breaches of the IT Security policy
- Slandorous or defamatory statements made regarding Elswick House, its employees, clients or associates either verbally, in writing (electronically or hard copy) or posted on social networking sites
- Serious breaches of the Health and Safety policy

We retain discretion to take account of the length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have short amount of service, you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal, but you will retain the right to a hearing and you will have the right of appeal.

Bullying and Harassment at Work

Elswick House encourages an environment in which everyone is entitled to work without harassment, victimisation and bullying.

Harassment may be described broadly as "unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women". Where a particular form of conduct has the effect of making a person feel humiliated, threatened or that their privacy is being invaded, then that conduct will constitute harassment and should cease immediately.

We will not condone harassment and the procedure for dealing with complaints is set out below.

The policy applies to employee's conduct in, or out of work.

All employees have a responsibility for complying with this policy and treating all colleagues with dignity and respect. If you believe that you have been subject to, or witnessed harassment, victimisation or bullying, you must inform the Nursery Manager and/or Proprietor so that we can keep our workplace free from unacceptable behaviour.

The procedure for dealing with cases of harassment is set out below:

If you believe you are being subjected to any harassment then, in the first instance you should ask the offender to stop or make it clear that such attention is unwelcome. If necessary, ask a friend or colleague to help you do this.

Such an informal approach may be all that is needed, but you should make a note of the details and keep them.

If your request is ignored and the harassment continues, or you feel unable to make the informal approach, please contact the Nursery Manager and/or Proprietor immediately. Details will be taken and should be confirmed in writing by the victim, this constitutes a formal complaint.

The Nursery Manager and/or Proprietor will investigate the complaint. Allegations will be dealt with seriously and confidentially and there will be no victimisation of any employee making or being involved in a complaint.

In cases of serious alleged harassment, any employee directly involved may be suspended on full pay pending investigation.

If the harassment has taken place then the accused will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

It is hoped that the implementation of this policy will ensure that all our employees work in an atmosphere of mutual trust, dignity and respect.

Dealing with Poor Performance

The success of the Nursery depends on all employees working together to achieve the best possible standards of performance. We aim to provide support and training to enable all employees to fulfil their potential and deal with any changes that the Nursery may require.

However sometimes people perform below the standard that the job requires, although they are not doing anything deliberately wrong.

In these cases, we believe that it is best to deal with these problems openly and fairly and to provide clarity and practical support to improve performance.

Monitoring performance

We monitor performance formally and informally through regular discussions that the Nursery Manager and/or Proprietor will have with you about your job, at review meetings, supervisions and through the appraisal process.

Dealing with poor performance

Initially the Nursery Manager will discuss any concerns about your performance informally with you. Often raising issues promptly helps to solve them by identifying acceptable standards and any support that may be needed.

If your performance continues to fall short of that required the Nursery Manager will arrange a formal meeting to discuss this with you. You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative.

At this meeting your Manager will explain specific areas of your performance that aren't acceptable and you will have the chance to give reasons for this. You and the Nursery Manager will agree a plan covering ways in which you can be supported to achieve acceptable standards, a date for review and a clear indication of what will happen if there is no improvement e.g. transfers, dismissal.

The time-scale for improvement, with formal reviews, will vary depending on the nature of the problem and the role that the employee has within the Nursery.

At the final review overall performance will be assessed and in most cases this will be the end of the matter, as performance will have improved as agreed.

If sufficient improvements have not been made, consideration should be given to whether you should be transferred to another role better suited to your skills set, or as a last resort, dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

If you are given a formal sanction or dismissed because you are not capable of performing your job to an acceptable standard, you have the right of appeal against this decision. Your appeal should be in writing and sent to the Nursery Manager and/or Proprietor within five working days of the decision and state the reasons for your appeal. The decision from the appeal hearing will be final.

We retain discretion to take account of the length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have short amount of service you may not be in

receipt of any warnings before dismissal but you will retain the right to a hearing and you will have the right of appeal.

Whistle Blowing Policy

We encourage an open culture in all our dealings with employees, managers and all the people with whom we come into contact. Effective and honest communication is essential if malpractice is to be effectively dealt with. The procedure below provides guidelines to all our employees, casual, temporary agency staff, freelancers, trainees, home workers and contractors, who feel they need to raise certain issues, in confidence.

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998* (commonly known as the 'Whistle Blowing Act') protects workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters from, being dismissed by Elswick House or being subjected to detrimental treatment or victimised by either Elswick House or colleagues as a result, provided certain criteria are met. Certain kinds of disclosures qualify for protection and these are set out below. These are disclosures of information which a worker reasonably believes are made in the public interest. They tend to show one or more of the following relevant failures is either happening now, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future:

- A criminal offence has been committed including offences such as theft, fraud or acts of bribery
- A person has failed, is failing, or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation which they are subject to
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above five matters.

The procedure is not a substitute for the Disciplinary and Grievance Policy and is not a channel for employees to raise matters in relation to their terms and conditions of employment. The procedure allows individuals to have their concerns treated in confidence.

Your protection

If you raise a genuine concern, you will not be at risk of damaging your position as a result. Provided you are acting in the public interest it does not matter whether or not your concern proves to be well founded. You must however make your complaint to the right person and in the right way as detailed in this policy. Elswick House does not of course extend this assurance to someone who acts from an improper motive and raises a matter they know to be untrue.

Your confidence

Elswick House will not tolerate the victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern and anyone responsible for such conduct will be subject to disciplinary

action. You may decide that you want to raise a concern in confidence. Therefore, if you ask for your identity to be protected, it will not be disclosed without your consent. If a situation arises where it is not possible to deal with the concern without revealing your identity (for instance because your evidence is needed in court or a disciplinary hearing), there will be a discussion as to whether and how we can proceed. This policy does not cover the situation where information about malpractice is received anonymously; however discretion will be used in the investigation of such information.

How to raise your concern

Stage 1: Internal Line Management

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your line manager. This should be done in writing. It will help if you state the facts of the matter clearly. You can outline how you would like it to be investigated. If you have a direct or personal interest in the matter, you should also tell us at this stage.

Stage 2: Alternative Contacts

If you feel unable to raise the matter with someone in your line management, for whatever reason, please speak to the Nursery Manager / Proprietor.

If you want to raise the matter in confidence we will not disclose your identity without your consent, unless we are required to do so by law.

Once you have reported your concern, Elswick House will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken. If your concern falls more appropriately within other policies we will tell you. The Nursery Manager and/or Proprietor will carry out the investigation.

The disclosure will be treated seriously and promptly investigated and as part of the process the worker will be interviewed and asked to provide a written statement.

Once Elswick House has finalised the investigation any necessary action will be taken.

While the purpose of this policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe a duty of confidentiality owed by us to someone else.

If you are dissatisfied

If you are unhappy with Elswick House's response, the worker may then go to the proper authority. However we do ask that matters are reported to Elswick House in the first instance. While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, the matter will be handled fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.