



Burgh Wood Montessori Nursery School

Disciplinary Policy (and procedures)



1. Introduction

Burgh Wood Montessori Nursery School (hereafter “the Nursery School”) requires good standards of discipline from its employees, together with satisfactory standards of work. The purpose of the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure is to ensure that any concerns over employees’ conduct or performance are handled in a fair, consistent and timely manner, with the intention of bringing about an improvement, and to protect the proper operation of the Nursery Schools and the health and safety of its employees.

This Policy may be reviewed and updated from time to time. Any amendments will be notified to employees in writing, following consultation and/or notice where appropriate. Where time limits are specified in this Policy, they may be varied by agreement between the Nursery School and the employee.

During the probationary period, the full disciplinary and grievance procedure will not apply. The Disciplinary Policy does not form part of the contract of employment.

2. Rules and Application

2.1 Examples of conduct/performance subject to the disciplinary policy and procedure:

The following are examples of conduct/performance that will normally be addressed through implementation of the Disciplinary Policy:

- 2.1.1 Unsatisfactory work performance
- 2.1.2 Breaches of Nursery School policies and procedures
- 2.1.3 Inappropriate behaviour (e.g., aggressive behaviour, dishonest behaviour)
- 2.1.4 Bullying, harassment or victimisation
- 2.1.5 Discrimination on any of equality and diversity grounds (e.g., race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, gender reassignment, marital status or ethnic origin)
- 2.1.6 Persistent lateness or poor timekeeping
- 2.1.7 Unacceptable levels of absence, especially when unauthorised
- 2.1.8 Serious or repeated failure to follow reasonable requests or instructions
- 2.1.9 Abuse, misuse or neglect of property or facilities
- 2.1.10 Bribery offences under the Bribery Act 2010
- 2.1.11 Use of facilities and equipment for personal reasons during work time (e.g., email, telephones and internet access)

2.2 Confidentiality:

- 2.2.1 Disciplinary matters will be handled with as high a degree of confidentiality as is practicable, particularly when the issue is of a sensitive nature.
- 2.2.2 Confidential records of disciplinary matters will be kept in the employee’s personnel file in accordance with Data Protection legislation. Copies of meeting notes will be provided to the employee, although the Nursery Schools reserve the right to withhold certain information (e.g., to protect a witness).

2.3 Investigation:

- 2.3.1 The employee’s manager will promptly and thoroughly investigate any matter that is reasonably believed to be a disciplinary matter. The employee concerned will be informed of the investigation as soon as possible and when it has been concluded.



Burgh Wood Montessori Nursery School
Disciplinary Policy (and procedures)



- 2.3.2 The employee may be asked to attend an investigatory, fact finding, interview. If such an interview is held prior to a disciplinary meeting, the employee will be advised from the start that the interview is an investigatory interview.
- 2.3.3 The Nursery Schools reserves the right to omit the investigatory interview stage and move straight to a formal disciplinary meeting.

2.4 Suspension:

- 2.4.1 The Nursery School reserves the right to suspend an employee from work, normally for no more than ten working days, while a disciplinary offence is being investigated. Employees will be advised if the suspension is likely to last longer than ten working days.
- 2.4.2 Suspension is not regarded by the Nursery School as disciplinary action. The Nursery School shall inform the employee of the reason for the suspension.
- 2.4.3 Employees may be suspended without pay or on reduced pay but only if this is allowed by their employment contract and the Nursery Schools are acting reasonably.

2.5 Monitoring and search rights:

- 2.5.1 The Nursery School reserves the right to monitor employees' activities including telephone calls, email messages and internet use at any time, whether as part of a disciplinary investigation or otherwise. Employees should therefore not consider such activities and methods of communication to be confidential when conducted at work.
- 2.5.2 The Nursery School reserves the right to search an employee's desk, bags, pockets, vehicle or other property or personal possessions where such action is considered necessary and reasonable. A search will only be carried out by an appropriate person in the presence of a witness and employees may request the presence of a work colleague.

3. Disciplinary Procedure

3.1 Informal Discussion:

- 3.1.1 The Nursery Schools will initially try to resolve disciplinary issues informally by way of an informal discussion with the employee concerned. This is a two-way discussion where the manager will be able to inform the employee of their shortcomings in conduct or performance and at the same time provide the employee with the opportunity to provide an explanation.
- 3.1.2 The main purpose of the informal talk is to find a solution to the problem that is beneficial for both the Nursery Schools and the employee.
- 3.1.3 Generally, cases of minor misconduct and/or unsatisfactory performance are dealt with informally. In the event of poor performance, disciplinary meetings will usually only be undertaken where counselling the employee and further training (if required) has failed to produce a satisfactory improvement to performance. However, if the informal action does not provide a solution to the problem or if the disciplinary issue is too serious to be dealt with informally, then the formal disciplinary procedure will be followed.

3.2 Written Notice of Intended Disciplinary Meeting:

- 3.2.1 If it is decided that there is a disciplinary case to answer, the Nursery School will write to the employee, giving them a minimum of two full days' notice of the meeting and advising the employee of their right to be accompanied to the meeting. At the same time, the



Burgh Wood Montessori Nursery School
Disciplinary Policy (and procedures)



Nursery School will provide the employee with written notice informing them that this constitutes the start of the formal disciplinary procedure and as such outline:

- the alleged misconduct or poor performance and any possible consequences of these;
- the improvement that is required, any timescale for achieving this improvement and any support available (if appropriate);
- details as to the time and venue of the disciplinary meeting; and,
- notice of the employee's statutory right to be accompanied if the meeting could result in a formal warning, the confirmation of a warning or the taking of some other disciplinary action (this statutory right can be exercised once the employee has made a reasonable request to be accompanied).

3.2.2 The employee's chosen companion will be able to address the meeting to put or sum up the employee's case as well as confer with the employee during the meeting. They may not, however, answer questions on the employee's behalf, address the meeting if the employee does not wish them to do so or prevent the Nursery School from explaining their case. The companion can be a fellow employee, trade union representative or official employed by a trade union.

3.2.3 The meeting will be scheduled in order to give the employee reasonable time to prepare for the meeting.

3.2.4 The manager will establish the facts before the meeting by collecting documents, identifying any relevant people to interview and taking statements before memories start to fade. Any requests for anonymity and confidentiality should be taken seriously. At least two days before the meeting, the employee should be provided with all relevant information, including statements, upon which the Nursery School intends to rely.

3.2.5 Where the Nursery School or an employee intends to call relevant witnesses, they should give advance notice to the other party that they intend to do this. It may also be appropriate to provide copies of written evidence including any witness statements.

3.2.6 If the employee is unable to attend the disciplinary meeting at the agreed time, the Nursery School shall offer an alternative reasonable time and date. The Nursery School shall give at least two days' notice of any rearranged meeting. If the employee fails to attend the rearranged meeting, the Nursery School taking into consideration any reasons and concluding that such failure is without good cause, is free to decide upon the matter using the evidence available. In these circumstances, the employee will be allowed to make written submissions.

3.3 Disciplinary meeting:

3.3.1 A disciplinary meeting will normally be conducted by the employee's manager, and a second senior team member (e.g., Director, Manager, Deputy Manager).

3.3.2 The Nursery School will explain the complaint against the employee and go through any relevant evidence.

3.3.3 The employee will then be given the opportunity to present their own evidence, answer any allegations, ask questions and call relevant witnesses.

3.3.4 Where possible, a manager who did not carry out the investigation will attend the meeting.

3.4 Outcome of meeting:

3.4.1 As soon as possible after the conclusion of the disciplinary meeting, the employee's manager will inform the employee what disciplinary action, if any, will be taken.



Burgh Wood Montessori Nursery School
Disciplinary Policy (and procedures)



- 3.4.2 If the manager finds there has been no misconduct/poor performance, the employee will be informed of this in writing.
- 3.4.3 Oral Warning: Where a minor offence has been committed, a recorded oral warning may be given. The warning will state that any further misconduct will render the employee liable to further, more severe, disciplinary action. The employee shall be informed of the time period in which the warning will remain 'live'.
- 3.4.4 First Written Warning: If more serious misconduct/poor performance or further minor offences are confirmed, the Nursery School will issue a written warning setting out the complaint and stating that further misconduct or a failure to improve performance may result in further disciplinary action. This letter will include details as to the improvement required, time-scales for such improvement and details of any help that will be made available. The employee shall be informed of the time period in which the warning will remain 'live' and advised of their right to appeal against the warning.
- 3.4.5 Final Written Warning: If the misconduct/poor performance is sufficiently serious or there has been further misconduct or a failure to improve since a previous written warning, the Nursery School may issue a final written warning. This will give details of the complaint and nature of the misconduct/poor performance, the improvement required, the time-scale for such improvement and details of any help available. It will also warn that failure to improve may lead to dismissal or some other contractual penalty. The employee shall be informed of the time period in which the warning will remain 'live' and advised of their right to appeal against the warning.
- 3.4.6 Dismissal / Other Penalty: If there has been further misconduct or failure to improve performance since a final written warning the Nursery School may dismiss the employee or take some other action short of dismissal such as demotion or disciplinary suspension. The employee will be provided with a written statement of the reasons for dismissal/or other action, the date on which the employment will terminate (if dismissed), and their right to appeal, as soon as reasonably practicable. The dismissal decision should only be taken by a manager who has the authority to do so.
- 3.4.7 Dismissal without Notice: If the Nursery School establishes that there has been gross misconduct the employee may be summarily dismissed (i.e., dismissed without notice). The Nursery School will follow a fair disciplinary procedure before taking any decision to dismiss without notice and this will be confirmed in writing (see 'Gross Misconduct' section below).

3.5 Appeal:

- 3.5.1 Employees have the right to appeal against any formal disciplinary action. An appeal cannot be made against an informal oral warning. The appeal should be made in writing within five working days of the disciplinary decision.
- 3.5.2 The employee must inform the Nursery School as to the grounds for appeal in writing and may be accompanied to the appeal meeting. In making an appeal, the employee should state if they are appealing against the finding that they committed the alleged acts of misconduct and/or against the level of sanction imposed.
- 3.5.3 The Nursery School will hear the appeal without unreasonable delay and where possible the appeal will be dealt with by a manager, preferably more senior, not previously involved in the case. Where this is not practicable, the same manager may handle both the disciplinary and the appeal meetings and he/she will act as impartially as possible.
- 3.5.4 The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing within ten working days of the meeting. Decisions made at this stage will be final and there is no further right of internal appeal.



4. Special Cases

An employee being charged or convicted with a criminal offence is not in itself a reason for disciplinary action. The Nursery School will consider whether the offence or alleged offence is one that makes the employee unsuitable for their type of work. Therefore, the Nursery School will establish the facts of the case and consider whether the facts warrant starting the disciplinary procedure.

Similarly, an employee cannot be dismissed solely because they were absent from work as a result of being remanded in custody.

5. Gross Misconduct

5.1.1 Examples of gross conduct subject to the disciplinary policy and procedure:

In the event that an employee commits an act of gross misconduct, the Nursery School is entitled to summarily terminate the employee's contract of employment without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

The following non-exhaustive list gives examples of offences that the Nursery Schools will normally regard as gross misconduct:

- 5.1.1 Theft, fraud, dishonesty or deliberate falsification of records
- 5.1.2 Fighting, assault or other violent behaviour
- 5.1.3 Deliberate damage to, or misuse of Nursery School property
- 5.1.4 Deliberate use of internet and/or email to access or distribute material of a pornographic, offensive, obscene or inappropriate nature
- 5.1.5 Incapability at work due to the effect of alcohol or drugs
- 5.1.6 Possession, custody or control of illegal drugs on Nursery School premises
- 5.1.7 Serious breach of the Nursery Schools rules, policies and procedures
- 5.1.8 Serious negligence which causes loss, damage or injury
- 5.1.9 Conviction of a criminal offence that is relevant to the employee's employment with the Nursery Schools and renders them unsuitable for their work
- 5.1.10 Conduct likely to bring the Nursery School's name into disrepute
- 5.1.11 Bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination
- 5.1.12 Accepting bribes
- 5.1.13 Serious breaches of the Nursery School's anti-bribery policy
- 5.1.14 Gross negligence
- 5.1.15 Drunkenness or being under the influence of illegal drugs at work
- 5.1.16 Possession or control of illegal drugs on the Nursery School's premises
- 5.1.17 Serious acts of insubordination.

If the Nursery School decides to summarily terminate the employee's contract of employment without notice or pay in lieu of notice the Nursery School must be acting fairly and reasonably to take this action rather than following the procedure set out in Clause 3 above.

6. Data Protection

The Nursery School shall process personal data collected during the investigation process and any subsequent disciplinary action in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. Data collected during the investigation process and subsequent disciplinary action will be held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the disciplinary procedure.