



Staff  
Handbook  
& Code of  
Conduct

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# Human Resources Standards & Procedures

## Brambles Overview on Sickness

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group supports employees who are genuinely sick and are unable to come to work and always acts reasonably in its dealing with employees. We encourage all our employees to attend work in line with their contractual agreement with the company.

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group expects that you attend to your health as a matter of priority and where possible ensure you are in a well and fit state for work at all times. Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group requires that you advise your Manager immediately should you not feel able to perform your duties or should there be any change to your short- or long-term wellness such as a change in your prescription drugs or attendance at any sort of physical or mental health therapy. It is important that you follow the sickness reporting procedure as set out in this document.

As part of the normal process for managing sickness absence Brambles has put in place a number of interventions including:

- Return to work interview and appropriate sickness absence meetings.
- Sickness reporting systems.
- We may request a fit note which confirms fitness to work following sickness absence in cases where the prognosis is unclear or where there has been a protracted or repeated period of sickness absence or in cases where your suitability to perform your duties may be brought into question.
- Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group reserves the right to speak with your GP or request medical information from your GP should there be a concern about your suitability to return to your normal duties.

## Sickness Absences

Procedure for employees who are sick:

- Notification of absence from work due to illness or any other cause should be made on the first day that you are absent from work to your line Manager before 7am.
- Your Manager will call you that morning to establish the reason for your absence, the anticipated length of absence, plus details of any work which needs to be covered.
- It is your responsibility to call your Manager at 3pm that day to provide an update on your sickness and a plan for your return or for your cover if you cannot return the following day.
- This process of checking in daily by phone should be done by you for each day that you are absent until you return or unless a plan for absence has been made and an agreement to speak in the days prior to your return has been made.
- If you are absent for more than seven consecutive days, you must provide a GP/doctors sick note to your line Manager, irrelevant of the reason for your sickness and if medical help is required or not.
- Should you be signed off work by your GP the paperwork relating to your absence should you sent to you Manager and the Business Manager immediately.
- Once signed off sick by your GP you should then expect a call in the first week of your absence from the Business Manager / Director to discuss the reasons for your sickness and a plan for your return.

## **Statutory Sickness Pay Policy**

You are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) only. You are only entitled to SSP if you earn over £120 per week. If the SSP is Covid-19 related then SSP is paid from day 1 and up to 2 weeks. If your illness is not related to COVID-19, you can get SSP from the fourth working day you are off work sick. SSP is £96.85 per week and is calculated on the number of days an employee is contracted to work. It is paid directly to the company from the government and then payment to is administered to you via payroll.

In order to qualify for SSP you must provide a GP/doctor's note or self-certification sick form. The latter of which can be obtained from the government website.

A DRs note should be provided to your Manager and the Business Manager as soon as it is received by you and a self-certification form should be completed upon your return to work unless your absence is longer than a week and in that case it should be sent to your Manager and the Business Manager / Director on the 5th day of sickness.

If you are away from work for more than 7 days or if you have been signed off by your GP, a return to work interview will take place on your first day back at work.

## **Managing Ongoing Sickness Absence**

Brambles manages sickness absences by keeping a record of your absences and by keep an ongoing record of your Bradford Factor. This allows us to keep a track of how often you are away from work and how that is impacting the business and, should we feel the need, gives us juncture at which to take action should your sickness absences become unmanageable.

The Bradford Factor is a simple formula that allows companies to apply a relative weighting to last minute unplanned absences by employees [sickness, Doctors appointments, emergency childcare, etc]. The Bradford Factor supports the principal that repeat absences have a greater operational impact than long term sickness. Please note it is important to remember this relates only to unplanned and emergency situations as this is where the biggest issues with staff come in that negatively affect the business.

Please see the following page for a useful diagram.



# The Bradford Factor

The **Bradford Factor** formula is based on the theory that **short, frequent, unplanned** absences are more disruptive to productivity than longer absences. The **Bradford Factor** or **Bradford Formula** is used in human resource management as a means of measuring **absenteeism**.



## How is it calculated?

$$B = S^2 \times D$$

**B**

is the **BRADFORD FACTOR**

**S**

is the **TOTAL NUMBER OF SPELLS** (instances) of absence of an individual over a set period

**D**

is the **TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS** of absence of that individual over the same set period\*

\*Typically a rolling **52-week** period



**Higher** scores indicate an employee's absence rate is having a more **negative** impact on the organisation.



### EXAMPLE ONE

1 absence of 5 days

$1^2 \times 5 =$  Bradford Factor score

**5**



### EXAMPLE TWO

5 individual day's absence

$5^2 \times 5 =$  Bradford Factor score

**125**

Person	Instances	x	Instances	x	Total Days	=	Bradford Score
A	1	x	1	x	10	=	10
B	3	x	3	x	10	=	90
C	7	x	7	x	10	=	490
D	10	x	10	x	10	=	1,000

Should your sickness absences become unmanageable we will begin the following process:

- Consult with you to discover why there are so many regular periods of absence.
- Obtain up to date medical advice should we deem this necessary.
- Advise you when your employment is at risk.
- Meet with you to discuss the options and consider your views on continuing your employment.
- Make reasonable adjustments to your current role should we be able to do so.
- Review with you whether there are any other jobs that you could do as an alternative to your current role to prevent you from taking so many sickness days.
- Having consulted with all parties involved Brambles Outdoor Group Management will advise you of any decisions made to dismiss you on grounds of long-term ill health.
- We allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss you on grounds of long-term ill health and if an appeal is requested, then an appeal meeting will be held.

### **Serious Illness**

In order to meet our obligations under food safety and health and safety legislation, it is very important to let your Manager know if you are suffering from or have been in contact with a carrier of any serious illness, if it is:

- Contagious.
- Infectious.
- Likely to cause food poisoning.

### **Medical Appointments**

We prefer you to make doctor, dentist, or hospital appointments outside of your working hours. Our Private Healthcare provision through AXA (available to you once you have passed your probation period) gives access to a DR 24/7. Please speak to your Manager if you are unsure how to use this. Where this is not possible, we ask that you agree a mutually convenient time with the Manager and give at least 48 hours' notice. Time taken during working hours to attend medical appointments will be deducted from your wages.

### **Employee Wellbeing**

It is expected that while at work you will take all necessary measures to ensure your own wellbeing. This may include but is not limited to wearing sun cream or a sun hat, drinking plenty of water, eating sufficient lunch or snacks, and maintaining basic hygiene by handwashing etc.

### **Stress at Work**

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group will take responsible steps to reduce health and safety risks from stress in the workplace to as low level as reasonably practicable. Causes of stress (stressors) will be identified and managed. A suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk of these stressors will be undertaken. Identifying risks will be reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable through safe systems of work, suitable equipment, and information training.

You are expected to:

- Manage your lifestyle effectively to reduce stress as much as possible.

- Inform your Manager if you are suffering from excessive pressure or stress at work.
- Follow appropriate systems for work laid down for your safety.
- Any reports of stress at work will be investigated and individuals will be provided with appropriate support.
- Please use the staff notice board as this signposts agencies that can help with stress and anxiety.

### **Wellness Days**

We award each staff member a wellness day each year. This is separate to your holiday entitlement and is part of our discretionary benefits package. It is designed to give you a day to relax and recoup. You are free to book this day off with your Manager at short notice and any time suitable to you and your setting's rota and we encourage you to use it for the purpose for which it is intended.

Please note this is not intended to be used for childcare.

### **Discretionary Benefit Package**

We offer a benefits package that we are proud of. This is subject to constant change and improvement but currently includes:

- Private Healthcare
- Pension Scheme
- Training & Career Development
- Continued Employment Holiday Day
- Christmas & Summer Staff Party
- Free Access to Cholderton Rare Breeds Farm
- Staff Childcare Discount
- Mental Health Support Package
- Lunch at some of our Settings

### **Benefit in Kind Tax Information**

Some benefits that you receive as part of your employment can be subject to tax once you start using them.

Receiving a perk from your employer on top of your regular salary can result in additional tax to pay depending upon the perk. Things like company cars, fuel, interest-free loans, private health cover, staff discount on childcare costs, etc can be liable to tax as they are classed as taxable benefits in kind. Each situation and person is different.

It is quite possible this does not affect you but if you have not already done so it is worth making yourself aware of any tax implications of claiming employment benefits. Please do this by consulting the gov website (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-company-benefits>) or by contacting HMRC.

### **Dependants Emergency Leave**

You have the right to take a reasonable period off to deal with an emergency involving a dependent, and not to be dismissed or victimised for doing so.

Circumstances where you can take time off include:

- When the dependant is unexpectedly ill (including mental illness), gives birth or is injured or assaulted.
- When a dependant dies.
- To make arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- When their school or nursery is unexpectedly closed.
- When care arrangements are unexpectedly withdrawn.

A dependant is a person (adult or child), who regularly and continuously relies on the carer to provide the sole or principal care required.

Dependency leave cannot be granted where an employee normally provides care on an ad hoc basis. Dependency leave cannot be granted where it would be reasonable to expect the carer to have made appropriate arrangements to cover the situation that has arisen. It must be sufficiently serious to require care as an essential necessity, not as a preference.

Dependency leave will not be granted where:

- The childminder is on holiday or is not available for any reason.
- Where advance notice would be expected to be provided.
- The school or nursery is closed for the holidays.
- Appointments with hospital, doctor or dentist are known in advance.

NB: Please note that unplanned absences due to emergency childcare where your child is away from school or nursery due to last minute sickness for a period of less than 5 days is not considered to be Dependants Emergency Leave and will be recorded as part of your Bradford Factor.

### **Maternity & Paternity Leave**

An employee who becomes pregnant is entitled to time off with pay for attendance at antenatal appointments, subject to certain rules. Statutory maternity entitlement will apply as appropriate. Eligible employees are entitled to paternity leave. You will need to satisfy certain conditions in order to qualify for paternity leave. Statutory paternity entitlements will apply. Please see PLA handbook for the most up to date information.

### **Adoption & Parental Leave**

Parents and individuals who have acquired formal responsibility for a child (e.g. guardians) may be entitled to parental and adoption leave subject to fulfilling certain criteria. Statutory entitlements will apply. Please see PLA handbook for the most up to date information.

### **Shared Parental Leave**

Shared Parental Leave is designed to give parents more flexibility around caring for their child in the first year following birth or adoption. For further information, please contact the Manager or please consult the PLA handbook.

### **Probation Period**

The normal probation period for new starters will be six months.

During the probationary period, including any extension periods, employment may be terminated by either the employer or you giving one week's notice in writing. If your probationary period is extended and you fail to make sufficient progress either during or by the end of your extended probationary period, this is likely to result in your dismissal.

The probation period exists for many reasons but most notably for the proper induction of new employees into the company. Brambles seek to ensure the effective integration of new employees into the organisation for the benefit of both new employees and the setting.

Your induction programme will normally consist of physical and organisational orientation, health and safety information, an explanation of the terms and conditions of employment and a clear outline of the role and its requirements. You will also be given sufficient time to acquaint yourself with all Brambles policies and procedures.

Some of the objectives during this period will be to:

- Set and assess performance standards and targets.
- Discuss future objectives, priorities, and targets.
- Determine training needs.
- Ensure that you are capable of and willing to fulfil the requirements of the role.

During the first week of employment, at the three-month mark and at the six months mark a probation meeting will take place to assess your performance and any adjustments that need to be made. The Probation Review document will be completed by you and your Manager at each juncture and signed by you both, so you are aware of what is required to move forward with your employment.

Probation periods can be extended. Regular performance reviews will continue during the extended period.

If your contract of employment has been terminated as a result of the probationary process, then you will have a right of appeal.

Once you have passed your probation period you will receive a letter confirming this and setting out the benefits you receive as a fully-fledged member of the team.

## **Performance Review**

Should you be asked to attend a performance review meeting this will take place due to yours or your Manager raising concerns about your performance. Performance review meetings are a two-way discussion between staff member and Manager. For these meetings to be effective, each person must take equal responsibility, for ensuring effective communication and co- operation, and recognition of the value of the performance review.

Performance review meetings seek to ensure that you are clear about what your job involves, what the setting wants you to do, and for you to be supported to do your job well. The meetings are there to set and communicate standards and to ensure that you understand the standards that have been set and how you are expected to meet them. You are expected to produce work to the expected standards and strive for continuous development.

## **Annual Appraisal**

The appraisal meeting is a process of looking backwards to analyse past performance and looking forward with a view to improving future performance. Each employee will be subject to a formal yearly appraisal meeting with the Business Manager, your line Manager or a Director, usually in September. The overall objective of the appraisal process is to help employees to maximise their job performance for the joint benefit of the appraisee and the setting. Regular meetings will be held throughout the year to review the objectives set and progress made against them.

## **Working Hours**

We expect you to work your full contractual hours each week. You are expected to make any appointments out of these hours, any time off must be approved by the Manager. If you do not perform your full contractual hours, your salary payment will be adjusted accordingly.

## **Overtime**

From time to time you may be asked by your Manager to be available to work overtime in excess of your normal working hours, although we do not guarantee that overtime will be available to you. The request to work overtime may be for the setting at which you normally work or at any other setting within the Group. Should this request equate to less than 2 hours in any working week then it is absolutely fine for this agreement to be made between you and your Manager. Should the time requested exceed 2 hours over your normal contracted hours in any working week then approval must be sought in advance from one of the Directors.

If you have accumulated overtime hours you are required to complete an overtime form and ensure your Manager signs this off. The form should be completed and added to the payroll file immediately to ensure it can be accounted for in the next payroll run.

Managers and Deputy Managers are not entitled to overtime as their salary and contract accounts for the odd additional hour they may be required to work from time to time for the proper running of the setting. It is important to note that Managers and Deputy Managers are also not expected to work more than 2 hours additional time in any working week without prior consent from one of the Directors. This is to ensure each person holding the position is not working excessive overtime and that the duties they are performing are realistic for the role they carry out and for the hours and salary they have agreed to. Staff meetings and events during the week after opening hours do not count towards these additional 2 hours.

The exception to the above is that Managers and Deputy Managers are able to claim overtime for training and events that take places over weekends, and they should claim overtime in the same way as other staff above. Overtime will be charged at their normal hourly rate worked out from their salary.

## **Change of Personal Details**

If you change your address, contact details, emergency contact details, next of kin details or bank account, you are required to immediately inform us so that our records are up to date and to keep your Family profile up to date. If you change your name by marriage or deed poll, then original relevant legal documents must be presented to us for review e.g. marriage certificate.

## **Notice Periods**

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group sets out each employee's period of notice in the terms and conditions of employment.

If you are a term time only member of staff who works 39 weeks per year, your notice period must be given within working weeks and not during holiday time. Should you give your notice period at the end of a term the relevant number of weeks counting towards your notice period outstanding will be taken from the following term and your employment will not end until the full notice is complete.

## **Resignation**

When resigning it is important that your resignation is in writing to avoid any confusion about your resignation date. Your required notice period is set out in your statement of terms and conditions of employment. As part of this process, we will ask you for feedback on your decision to resign, this is to improve retention practices, where appropriate.

## **Redundancy**

We aim to manage our business in such a way that redundancies are unlikely to become necessary. However, in the unlikely event that our circumstances change, and fewer employees are required, some redundancies may be necessary. In this case, we will take appropriate steps to keep the number of redundancies to a minimum, whilst considering the needs of the business.

Where it becomes necessary for us to consider redundancies, a genuine and thorough Consultation Process will take place.

The objectives of consultation will be to:

- Reach agreement with employees or their representatives on the above issues.
- Avoid the need for redundancies wherever possible.
- Reduce the number of employees who are to be made redundant to a minimum.
- Determine the criteria to be used to select employees for redundancy.
- Lessen the consequences of any dismissal.

An employee who is made redundant will be eligible for a statutory redundancy payment if he or she has at least two years' continuous service.

## **Retirement**

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group does not operate a compulsory retirement age for its employees.

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group is committed to equality and diversity and recognizes the contributions of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older employees. It believes that employees should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so. Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group operates a flexible retirement policy and employees may voluntarily retire at a time of their choosing.

## Dress Code

If you work directly with the children, you are required to dress appropriately for your role when in the setting. This includes:

What to wear - Brambles polo top long black trousers that cover the ankle (no shorts/skirts), suitable outdoor shoes. You will also be issued with waterproof clothing for when the weather dictates it necessary.

Further clarification of what is and is not suitable can be found below:

- Suitable outdoor walking boots or wellies are required. No trainers or other soft shoes are permitted.
- Please remove all earrings, nose, and lip rings (apart from small studs) prior to commencing work. Any unsecured jewellery such as necklaces should also be removed.
- Please ensure that you have no loose fastenings or buttons prior to commencing work.
- Uniform is to be worn and kept in good order.
- Make up and nail varnish should be kept to a minimum and be muted or nude colours. No excess nail lengths.
- Hair that is longer than shoulder length or long enough to be tied up should be neatly tied up to prevent, amongst other things, any risk of a fire hazard around the open fire pits.

Exception: from 1<sup>st</sup> December each year in celebration of the festive period staff may choose any nail colour they wish. However, nails must still be kept tidy, short, free from adornments and non-pointy. You will be asked to remove any unsuitable length or style. Colour must be removed upon return to work in January and return back to the usual nude.

This is not an exhaustive list, please see our policy section on the Staff Portal for more information.

## Drugs & Alcohol at Work

We aim to promote the general well-being of all our employees, to avoid unnecessary illness, absence and accidents, to improve work performance and to provide a working environment which ensures, as far as possible, the health and safety of all employees.

If you suffer from an alcohol or drug addiction, then you are expected to notify the Manager. It is a disciplinary offence to attend work where the use of either alcohol or drug impairs the safe and efficient running of the setting, or health of our employees and service users.

Any member of staff taking prescription drugs should advise their Manager of the prescription and readvise when any dosage or drug changes are made.

## Capability Procedure

Our capability procedure is designed to ensure that cases of unsatisfactory performance are dealt with similarly and fairly, with the prime objective of improving an employee's performance to the required level. The procedure seeks to establish whether a concern about work performance is a misconduct or capability issue. Performance concerns due to lack of knowledge or skills are normally addressed through the early years setting's capability procedure. For example, if you are incapable of working to required standards through no fault of your own, then the setting's capability procedure will come into effect. Concerns about work performance due to carelessness, neglect or lack of effort are dealt with through the disciplinary procedure as misconduct.

## **Other Work**

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group understand that sometimes employees have other work or volunteer commitments outside of their employment with the company. It is our policy to request that you advise us of and seek permission for the continuance of any other work, paid or voluntary, that you undertake outside your commitment with the company and that you also advise us of the hours and days upon which this commitment takes place. Permission for such work will not be unreasonably withheld. You will be provided with a document to complete upon starting employment that requires you to outline what other work commitments you have.

Brambles Outdoor Group expects that any 'other work' that you undertake will in no way compete with your role within the company or take business away from the company.

## **Dignity & Respect at Work**

We are committed to ensuring that you are treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in the workplace.

Our procedures provide a fair, effective and consistent method of dealing with matters relating to bullying and harassment. Examples of what we deem to be unacceptable behaviour include:

- Unwanted physical contact.
- Spreading offensive or malicious rumours or insulting someone particularly on the grounds of gender, age or religion, disability, sexual orientation/marriage or civil partnership/pregnancy or maternity/gender reassignment.
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone, setting them up to fail.
- Insulting behaviour or gestures.
- Deliberate exclusion from conversation or social activities.
- Unfair treatment.
- Misuse of power or position.
- Unwelcome sexual advances e.g. touching, displays of offensive materials or jokes.
- Offensive or suggestive literature or remarks.
- Embarrassing, threatening, humiliating, patronising, or intimidating remarks.
- Deliberate undermining of a competent learner.
- Preventing individuals from progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.
- Using electronic means or social media networks to bully, harass, demean, or offend someone.
- Physical assault.
- Damage to property.

If you feel you have been treated in a way you find unacceptable, please speak to your Manager or the directors in the first instance.

Anyone found behaving in a way that constitutes any of the above behaviours towards another staff member will be dealt with by way of the disciplinary procedure and this behaviour could result in the termination of your contract.

## **Teamwork**

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group considers teamwork to be essential if it is to achieve its goals. We consider that the more effective the team, the greater the benefit to the organisation. For this reason, you are required to always consider how you can support and give your best to your settings team and the wider company. We do not tolerate

gossiping, colleague alliances or any negative behaviour or actions that could jeopardise the happiness of your fellow team members and effect their work.

Please consider friendships or fallings out with colleagues carefully and the impact they could have on your role.

Anyone found behaving in a way that could threaten the positive teamwork within the company will be dealt with by way of the disciplinary procedure and this could result in the termination of your contract.

### **Gifts, Rewards & Favouritism**

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group staff can accept gifts and gestures from parents, or staff. Staff must be mindful, however of how gifts can be constructed as bribery, favouritism, or unfairness.

### **Anti-Bribery**

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group requires all staff to comply with the Bribery Act 2010. Please see PLA handbook in the office for more information.

# Health & Safety Procedures

## Brambles Health & Safety Overview

Your health and safety are of prime importance to us, therefore:

- We will ensure as far as reasonably practicable, health, and safety and welfare at work of all employees.
- We aim to conduct our work in such a way that children, carers and employees are not exposed to risk to their health and safety.
- We will communicate with you on health and safety matters. We also expect you to:
- Work safely and efficiently in accordance with our instructions.
- Know the rules relating to health and safety and follow these.
- Report and record any accidents as soon as possible after they happen.
- Take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions.
- Know the fire and evacuation procedures.
- Co-operate with the Manager to ensure that the highest standards of safety are always maintained.

## Accidents

If an accident or injury happens to you as an employee, you must:

- Let your Manager know.
- Let a first aider know in case treatment is required.
- Make sure the accident has been recorded in the accident record book.

## Risk Assessment for New & Expectant Mothers

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group is concerned to protect the health and safety of all its employees. Employees who are pregnant or breastfeeding or have recently given birth must be protected against risk to their health or safety that might occur because of their job duties or working environments. For this reason, in the event of us receiving written notification from you that you are pregnant, have given birth within the previous six months, or are breastfeeding, we will carry out a specific risk assessment. If you fall into one of these categories, you are expected to request a meeting and agree a date with the Manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss the risk assessments.

## Smoking

Smoking is banned within any Brambles setting and its outdoor spaces and public walkways. Employees are not to smoke whilst wearing Brambles uniform or during working hours and for one hour prior to starting their shift. This policy includes the smoking of cigarettes, cigars, and the use of vapes and e-cigarettes. If you breach these rules, you are likely to face disciplinary action through the company's disciplinary procedures.

## Fire

Make sure you know the procedure for evacuating the building, this procedure will be explained to you in your induction. Familiarise yourself with the fire exits and alarm call points. Your Manager will advise you what the procedures are in your areas.

Please ensure that you:

- Never block the fire exits or the routes leading to them.
- Raise the alarm by blowing the nearest alarm whistle/ shout - FIRE, FIRE, FIRE
- Leave by the nearest exit if you have heard the alarm.
- Only fight a fire if it is safe to do so and with the right fire extinguisher.

### **Food Handling**

We need to make sure that we maintain the highest standards of hygiene. During your induction, you will have been introduced to our hygiene procedures and, if necessary, you will receive further training.

### **Lifting & Manual Handling**

Lifting and handling equipment is common activity in the early years setting. If it is done incorrectly it can lead to problems. Guidance will be given and training when necessary.

## **Policies**

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Our disciplinary procedure is designed to encourage all employees to achieve high standards of conduct, attendance, and work performance. The procedure provides fair, effective and consistent methods of dealing with disciplinary matters. You are expected to know the standard of conduct or work performance expected of you. You will be allowed to respond to any alleged fault or failing. You are always entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or recognised trade union representative.

For minor or isolated infringements of rules or expected behaviour, the setting may give you informal advice, coaching, and guidance.

If your conduct or performance fails to improve as a result of this advice, coaching or counselling, or where the offence is more serious, then the disciplinary procedure will be applied.

We consider the following issues to constitute gross misconduct:

- Theft or fraud.
- Ill-treatment of children.
- Assault.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Insubordination.
- Failure to comply with policies, procedures and legal requirements that safeguard children.
- Bringing the setting into disrepute.
- Malicious damage.
- Gross carelessness which threatens the health and safety of others.
- Deliberate damage to property.
- Being unfit through use of drugs or alcohol.
- Serious breach of the settings statutory policies.
- Bribery.

This is not an exhaustive list.

For further explanation on how this process works please consult the Disciplinary Procedure, a copy of which is handed to you for signature on your first day of employment and added to your file. This policy can also be found on the staff portal.

### **Safeguarding**

The health, safety and welfare of all children is of paramount importance. Children in our care have the right to protection regardless of age, gender, race, culture, background or disability. They have a right to be safe in our setting. Our policies represent the agreed principles for safeguarding children at the setting.

Aims:

- We provide an environment that allows children to gain self-confidence, self-esteem, and independence through child lead activities and encouragement from caring staff.
- We allow children to explore the world around them learning how to manage their own risks and experiment using

their ideas.

- We support children to understand boundaries, work together to create an atmosphere of cooperation and respect. Understanding children's individual needs.

#### Staffing:

Children at the setting are never left unsupervised. There is a minimum of two members of staff on the premises at any one time and we operate according to the EYFS standards on adult to child ratios. Volunteers are never left to work unsupervised and are asked to sign a volunteer agreement. All staff have a responsibility to report concerns they have about a child. Beverley Budd is our Safeguarding Coordinator for Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads at each setting are:

Bramble Figheldean	Grace Bayliss
Brambles Cholderton	Louise Robinson
Brambles Hindon	Nikki Guest
Brambles Wilton	Sally Hutchings

The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are:

Bramble Figheldean	Jo Bowden-Jones
Brambles Cholderton	Jutta Morford
Brambles Hindon	Kay Roberts
Brambles Wilton	Natalie Blowes

For additional support and guidance, you are always welcome to contact Bev Budd who is Safeguarding Coordinator.

## **Whistleblowing**

Brambles is committed to providing childcare of the highest standard in a safe, secure and diverse environment with equality of opportunity for all.

In line with this commitment, we expect employees and others that we deal with to recognise a duty of care to the organisation and its learners. If employees suspect that there is something wrong with the behaviour of one of their colleagues, their loyalty to that colleague or to the company may prevent them from reporting their suspicions. They may also fear harassment or victimisation and thus ignore their concerns rather than report them. By adopting and implementing a whistle blowing policy Brambles will ensure all staff have the opportunity to report any concerns in an open and transparent manner.

Brambles is fully committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, we expect employees, who have concerns about any aspect of work and practices, to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. Any person, who has a concern, is able to raise disclosures about wrongdoing under this policy, in order that problems can be identified and resolved quickly. Employees raising a concern in good faith will be protected from possible victimisation under this policy as well as being protected by law.

Legal protection is afforded only to employees who raise genuine concerns and not those making false or vexatious allegations.

For further explanation on how this process works please consult the Whistle blowing Procedure, a copy of which is handed to you for signature on your first day of employment and added to your file. This policy can also be found on the staff portal.

## **Reporting Concerns**

You have an obligation to report any concerns relating to the health, safety, or welfare of children within the setting. The Safeguarding Coordinator is Bev Budd, each setting has a nominated designated safeguarding lead and deputy. If you have any concerns these should be communicated using the line management or whistle blowing arrangements.

## **Police Investigation, Caution or Charge**

You have an obligation to report any incident which you are subject to, which leads to police investigation, caution, or charge, which is related to your employment (e.g. a child related offence). If you are uncertain as to whether to report being subject to a police investigation, caution or charge you must speak to your Manager.

## **Other Investigations**

You have an obligation to report any incident, which you are subject to, which leads to investigation, which is related to your employment.

If you are uncertain as to whether to report being subject to an investigation, be government department or statutory body, you must speak to your Manager.

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group works with children, if you are dismissed because you have harmed a child, or you would have done so if you had not left, then your name and relevant information will be given to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

## **Promoting Inclusion and Equality, & Valuing Diversity**

We actively promote inclusion, equality of opportunity and value diversity. All early years setting have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Those in receipt of public funding also have public equality duties to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, foster good relations with individuals and groups with protected characteristics namely disability, race (ethnicity), religion and belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Settings also have obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

For further explanation on this policy and to read it in full please consult the staff portal.

## **Data Protection**

The data protection Act 1998 is intended to protect people's privacy by controlling the use of personal information held on computer and filing systems. Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group holds and processes the data it collects about you during your employment only for the following purposes:

Administration and management of employees.  
Our business.  
Compliance with relevant procedures and laws.

All data is treated with absolute confidentiality and security measures. If you are dealing with data relating to the setting or its users you must take adequate precautions to ensure confidentiality, and to protect Brambles Outdoor

Nursery Group and its employees from any liabilities.

We expect all employees to observe the Data Protection Act 1998 when collecting, processing, and storing the settings data.

## **Electronic Communication**

### **Mobile Phones, Cameras, Videos and Smart Watches**

You must ensure that you do not have in your possession a personal mobile phone during working hours. Personal mobile phones must be kept securely in the staff room during working hours. You may give the setting telephone number as an emergency contact.

During walking bus and trips outside the setting, the Manager or deputy will carry a personal mobile if the setting phone is unavailable. Personal Mobile phones may not be used at work to take video or photos especially of the children.

Bluetooth and Wi-Fi should be turned off during your time in the setting. Notifications on these devices should not be accessible during working hours.

No smart watches are allowed to be used whilst you are at work. This includes if they are turned off. Only step counters that are not internet, wifi or Bluetooth enabled are allowed.

Employees found in breach of this policy will be subject to an investigation, which could lead to disciplinary action. Employees who breach this policy could also face criminal prosecution under various laws.

The setting will make appropriate arrangements for photographs to be taken when necessary, which ensures that permission is obtained from parent/carer to ensure compliance with Data Protection Act.

### **Email & Internet Use**

We encourage employees to use email and the internet at work where it can save time and expense, however, we require that you ensure that your communication is well structured and professional, just as if a letter was being sent. If you are unsure about whether something you propose to do might breach this email and internet guidance, then you should seek advice from your Manager.

### **Family Online Journal**

We use a form of online journal for recording observations of children. Staff are given a confidential pin code. We expect staff to use a professional approach when writing observations and uploading pictures and to ensure permission has been sought for all children involved.

### **WhatsApp Groups**

Our staff WhatsApp group is for use to share ideas and work-related topics. If you have questions or concerns, please speak directly to your Manager in the first instance. Questions can be written on the staff white board and will be answered as soon as possible.

### **Social Networking**

It is important that staff ensure proper practice when using the internet including social networking sites. This is

to protect the children, parents and other staff in the nursery and to safeguard the setting.

Staff members are allowed to use any social networking site as long as they follow these guidelines regarding the impact on the setting.

The guidelines include but are not limited to:

- Staff must not publicly mention any of the children from the nursery on their online profiles;
- Staff must avoid writing indirect suggestive comments about the nursery on their social networking sites e.g. "I've had a bad day at work";
- Staff must not publish photos of the children on their online profiles;
- Staff must not publicly write anything about other staff members on their social networking sites;
- Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photos whilst at the setting.
- Social Networking sites should only be accessed during break times and in the staff areas only.
- In order to maintain professional boundaries staff should not accept personal invitations to be friends from parents or carers that use the setting unless they know them previously in a personal capacity and never answer personal messages.

Staff members are advised to set their online profiles as private so that only friends are able to see their information.

This can help to prevent any accidental breaches of this policy.

Please be aware that serious breach of the Social Networking policy could result in disciplinary action.

## **Cyber Bullying**

We are committed to ensuring that our employees are treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in the workplace. We provide clear guidance on how bullying and harassment can be recognised. Cyber bullying methods could include using text messages, mobile phone calls, instant messenger services, by circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on websites, blogs or in chat rooms. Personal blogs that refer to colleagues without their consent are also unacceptable.

Employees who cyber bully a colleague could also face criminal prosecution under various laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

## **Monitoring**

Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group reserves the right, but not the duty, to monitor any aspects of its electronic resources. This includes data from emails, voicemail boxes and other employer provided electronic storage systems. We reserve the right, for business and security purposes, to audit and monitor the information on all systems or media, without advance notice. We also reserve the right to retrieve the contents of any employee in these systems. This process is in place to maintain the integrity of Brambles Outdoor Nursery Group's electronic systems, the rights of other users, and to ensure compliance with the setting policies and obligations.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Guidance for Safer Working practice for adults who work with children and young people (Government Offices— Jan 16).
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage— September 2014.
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015.
- Information Sharing 2015.
- WSCB Social Networking Policy 2015.
- WSCB Website—[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscb](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscb).
- Staff Portal Link - [www.bramblesoutdoorgroup.co.uk/staffportal](http://www.bramblesoutdoorgroup.co.uk/staffportal) (password: Pshedge01)
- Parental Portal Link - [www.bramblesoutdoorgroup.co.uk/parentportal](http://www.bramblesoutdoorgroup.co.uk/parentportal) (password: PA45en5sD)