



East Belfast
SureStart



EAST BELFAST SURE START OPERATIONAL HANDBOOK



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East Belfast Sure Start provides a holistic support for local families. We welcome all families with children 0-4 years.

We want to offer support to you on your parenting journey, helping you build strong bonds with your children, connecting you with other parents, providing rich play and learning opportunities to support your child's development and promote health and wellbeing.

Ward areas we work in include:

Ballymacarett

Island

The Mount

Woodstock

Bloomfield (SOA 1 and SAO 3)

Cregagh

Ballybeen Housing Estate

Tullycarnet

A family who lives in any of these ward areas and has a child 0-3 years old can avail of Sure Start services.

The package of services available include:

- Supporting the Perinatal journey including Baby Café/ Clubs, Breastfeeding Support Group, Baby Massage, Pregnancy Yoga.
- Family Team with Home visits
- Nurture Support – supporting neurodivergence and medical needs.
- Supporting Dads/ male carers
- Parenting Programmes and Support Groups – Peer support, Incredible Years etc.
- Stay and Plays/ Parent and Toddler Groups
- Child Development Sessions
- Programme for 2 Year Olds
- Supporting Speech, Language and Communication.

There is no charge for any Sure Start service.



East Belfast Sure Start Team



East Belfast Sure Start staff have a wide variety of training, knowledge and skills. We have a comprehensive internal training programme and will identify a range of external training opportunities to enhance knowledge in the field of early years.

All staff are Access NI checked. We aim to provide a learning facility for all our staff, to develop them socially and professionally and provide support supervision and regular staff appraisals.

Staff may be redeployed to different settings to ensure ratio within the room.

The staff team consists of:

Project Co-ordinator—Tracey Ripley McElvogue

Deputy Project Co-ordinator - Elizabeth Dalton

Early Years Lead - Lana Molly

Family Support Lead - Lisa Flynn

Nurture Lead -Ashlea Berryman

Perinatal Team - Christine McFarlane (Community Midwife) and Jenny Norton

Speech and Language Therapists - Rebecca Carey and Michelle Maguire

The Early Years Team

Family Team - Vicky Ferguson, Paula Montgomery, , Sadie Harper, Laura Dan

Project Support - Amanda Harris, Claire Hamilton

Administration and Finance Team - Cara McAreavey, Danielle McManus and Pamela Hilditch

Chairperson of Management Committee - Bridgeen McCormick

Above staff can be contacted on 02890735686 or 02890963399

- This handbook of all East Belfast Sure Start policies and procedures is available to all parents.
- All settings are registered with Environmental Health and inspected by the HSC Trust Early Years Team.
- Insurance is held for all settings through Towergate. Information on insurance is displayed in each setting.

Monitoring

The following policies are reviewed annually by management to ensure they remain fit for purpose.



East Belfast Sure Start is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children. It is the policy of the organisation to promote the best interests and welfare of children, this principle is enshrined in the Children Order (Northern Ireland) 1995 and underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. East Belfast Sure Start is dedicated to ensuring the full realisation of the rights of all children.

Everyone at East Belfast Sure Start who works alongside children and their families, has a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. Staff and volunteers will work with children, parents/carers and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

Key tenets of child protection

1. Parental Responsibility – East Belfast Sure Start recognises the parents of children and young people have a right to respect and consideration and should be involved in decisions concerning their children’s welfare.
2. Partnership – East Belfast Sure Start understands that in order to keep children safe all organisations must work together.
3. Prevention – East Belfast Sure Start understands that it must do as much as possible to ensure that children and young people are kept safe. This includes ensuring staff are appropriately checked, staff are regularly trained in relation to first aid and child protection, by ensuring that when disclosures are made that children are supported and the situation handled in a sensitive and appropriate manner.
4. Protection – East Belfast Sure Start must ensure that a balance is found between protecting the child and respecting the rights of the family.
5. Paramountcy – East Belfast Sure Start recognises that the welfare of the child is the prime concern. They have a right to be listened to, respected and consulted. The project will take into account, the age and developmental stage of the young person who has made the disclosure

and ensure that its actions do not further distress or harm the young person

In accordance with Trust Guidelines, Our Duty to Care and Social Services, East Belfast will endeavour to safeguard children by:

Safeguarding Children

East Belfast Sure Start is committed to building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

At East Belfast Sure Start, we endeavour to ensure that:

- All staff and parents/carers are made aware of our safeguarding policy and procedures
- East Belfast Sure Start provides adequate staffing to meet the needs of children
- East Belfast Sure Start will provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Ensure that Health and Safety procedure are adhered to
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out “enhanced disclosure” checks with the current up to date vetting procedures before posts can be confirmed – no person will be placed in a position (either paid or unpaid) which involves contact with children without being properly and effectively vetted
- The setting adheres to the Health and Social Care Trust requirements in respect of references and criminal record checks for staff/students/volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children
- Students/volunteers do not work unsupervised
- East Belfast Sure Start adheres to the relevant guidelines in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern
- East Belfast Sure Start has a procedure for recording details of visitors to the setting



- There are security steps in place to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children

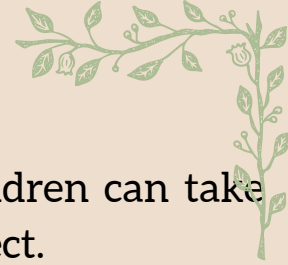
Dealing with a disclosure

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies.

A disclosure is when a child/young person tells a staff member that they are being harmed or abused. It is important that the child is supported having made the disclosure. In order to achieve this staff will practice the following guidelines:

- 1) Remain calm, try not to allow yourself to become shocked as this will add to the distress of the child;
- 2) Listen, try not to interrupt or you might put the child off;
- 3) Speak to the child in a quiet area of the setting which is visible to other staff;
- 4) Listen carefully to the child without investigating, acknowledging their feelings;
- 5) Assure the child that you will support them;
- 6) Record in writing what was said by the child, recording only the facts and not your feelings;
- 7) Report the alleged abuse to the Designated Officer directly, do not discuss with other colleagues;
- 8) Acknowledge your own feelings in supervision session. Counselling will be made available if required;
- 9) Always seek to discuss your concerns with the child as appropriate to their age and understanding and with their parents.





Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

- All those working with children are aware that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from abuse or neglect, it may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, this child's key worker/staff member makes a dated record of the details of the concern, and discusses what to do with the designated officer – the information is stored on the child's personal file.
- East Belfast Sure Start will refer concerns to the Gateway team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
- Those involved will take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- The Designated officer will use detailed procedures and reporting format when making a referral to Gateway.
- Where a child is already known to Social Services and has a social worker, we will contact them directly.

Recording Suspicions of Abuse

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure) or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour, deterioration in general wellbeing, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, a member of staff will:

- Listen to the child, offer reassurance and give assurance that he/she will take action.
- Not question the child.
- Make a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - The date and time of the observation or the disclosure.

- The exact words spoken by the child as far as possible.
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time.
- The names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed, dated and kept in the child's file, which is kept confidential.

Making a Referral to Gateway

- East Belfast Sure Start will follow any procedures that the Gateway team has in place.
- Where the child already has a Social Worker, East Belfast Sure Start will contact them directly.
- East Belfast Sure Start will retain a copy of any forms filled in for Gateway in the child's personal file.
- All staff are aware of the referral procedures for recording and reporting
- Contact details for Gateway Team: 028 9050 7000.

Informing Parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where guidance does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent/ parents are the likely abuser – in these cases the investigating officer will inform parents.

Liaison with Other Agencies

- East Belfast Sure Start will work with the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.
- All staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- East Belfast Sure Start will notify the Health and Social Care Trust of any incident and any changes in our arrangements.
- If a referral is to be made to the Gateway team, East Belfast Sure Start will follow the trusts guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.
- We will inform the early years team if a referral has been made to gateway.

Allegations against Staff

An allegation about a staff member occurs when a child/young person, parent or other staff member reports specific unacceptable behaviour where a child/young person has been harmed or abused in some way. This may include unacceptable behaviour, communication, favouritism, negligence.

To handle a concern or allegation regarding a member of staff the same steps as above will be used.

If the concern/allegation is against the Designated Officer, the report should be made to the Project Co-ordinator or Chairperson.

Project Co-ordinator – Tracey Ripley McElvogue – 02890735686

Chairperson – Bridgeen McCormick – 02890735686

East Belfast Sure Start ensures that all parents know the complaints policy if they have concerns regarding the behaviour or actions of staff/students/volunteers.

- East Belfast Sure Start will follow the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust when responding to any complaint that a parent/carer has put forward.
- East Belfast Sure Start will respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a staff member/student/ volunteer has taken place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- Management will refer any such complaint immediately to the Gateway team and the link social worker to investigate – East Belfast Sure Start is aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- The Management of East Belfast Sure Start will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the Gateway Team/Early Years Team.
- Where the management team and Health and Social Care Trust agree that it is appropriate in the circumstances, management will suspend/redeploy the staff member/ student for the duration of the

investigation – this is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as the children and families throughout the process.

- Where a staff member/student/volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children, management will notify Gateway/Early Years so that individuals who pose a threat to children can be identified and barred from working with children.

Promoting Awareness

East Belfast Sure Start is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout child protection training for staff. East Belfast Sure Start also committed to empowering young children, through our curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

- All staff undertake Child Protection training and renew this training every 3 years.
- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision – no child is left alone or out of sight with staff/volunteers/students in a one-to-one situation.
- East Belfast Sure Start introduces key elements of keeping children safe into our programme so that they may develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- East Belfast Sure Start creates a culture of value and respect for every individual within the setting.

Reporting Procedure

East Belfast Sure Start is aware of the referral system of Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCNI). The registering Social Worker and the Gateway Team will keep us informed of any changes and training available.

Allegations or suspicions of abuse should be reported to the Designated Officer immediately.



The named designated officers for East Belfast Sure Start

Project Co-ordinator:

Tracey Ripley McElvogue – 02890735686

Senior Designated Officer

Elizabeth Dalton – Deputy Co-ordinator – 028 90735686

Staff Members

Lana Molloy – Early Years Lead – 028 90963399

Lisa Flynn – Family Support Lead – 02890735686

The Designated Officer will review the situation and decide if a referral needs to be made to an outside agency. Parents should be informed if a referral is to be made unless you consider such a discussion would place the child at risk of significant harm.

If a referral is made a UNOCINI report will be forwarded to social services within 24 hours. It is important that all recordings are kept in a safe location, locked filing cabinet in Designated Officer's office. It may be necessary for you to attend subsequent case conferences to share information to ensure protection of the welfare of the child.

Anyone can contact social services if they have a concern about a child at:

Gateway Service

110 Saintfield Road

BT8 6HD

Telephone: 028 9050 7000

Out of Hours: 028 9504 9999



Contact can also be made with:

Early Years Services

Everton Complex

585-587 Crumlin Road

BT14 7GB

Telephone: 028 9504 2811

The roles and responsibilities of the designated officers are:

- to ensure that all staff including volunteers and trustees are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that a child may be experiencing or has experienced abuse or neglect.
- to ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred to the appropriate authority.
- to follow up any referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed.
- consider any recommendations from the Safeguarding Children process.
- to reinforce the utmost need for confidentiality and to ensure that staff and volunteers are adhering to good practice regarding confidentiality and security. This is because it is around the time that a person starts to challenge abuse that the risks of increasing intensity of abuse are greatest.
- to ensure that staff and volunteers working directly with service users who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision.
- if appropriate staff or volunteers will be given support and afforded protection if necessary under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998: they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome.



Definitions

Types of Abuse- Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, staff may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between relevant agencies.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as;

masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation^[1] is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

[1] Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, staff should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be

categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM involved procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. FGM is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland.

When working with young people there may be indicators of abuse. It is important that all concerns are passed on to the Designated Officer no matter how insignificant they seem. A list of indicators is detailed below. This list of indicators should only be a guide. Staff should always speak to the designated officer if they have any concerns beyond these.

Indicators of abuse

The following non-exhaustive list are indicators of abuse and all staff must be diligent and perceptive in respect of same:

- 1) Sudden, unexplained changes in behaviour- problems with speech, erratic and out of character behaviour, outbursts of anger/ hysteria.
- 2) Signs of mutilation- bruises, scratches, bite marks. In the case of sexual abuse injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs.
- 3) Attention seeking behaviour, development of anorexia/bulimia, becoming a chronic runaway, wetting or soiling, recurring nightmares.
- 4) Failing to thrive, poor hair and/ or skin, lack of confidence, fear of new situations, poor relationships with peers.
- 5) Inappropriate sexual behaviour, perhaps with comments, being exaggeratedly seductive, sexually transmitted infections or unexplained pregnancy. Unusual stories or discussion of a sexual nature.

Bruising/ marks on pre mobile babies - a pre-mobile baby is a baby who is not yet crawling, bottom shuffling, pulling to stand, cruising or walking independently:

- 1) Bruising is the most common presenting feature of physical abuse in children.
- 2) Bruising should prompt suspicion of maltreatment and the facts surrounding the cause of the bruise must be robustly explored.
- 3) Bruising/suspicious mark on any pre-mobile baby should prompt an immediate referral to gateway.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

Recording and managing confidential information

East Belfast Sure Start is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around Safeguarding Children issues should be shared only with those who need to know. For further information, please see East Belfast Sure Start's confidentiality policy.

All allegations/concerns should be recorded as soon as possible. The information should be factual and not based on opinions, record what the person tells you, what you have seen and witnesses if appropriate.

The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with data protection.



This information will be secured in a locked filing cabinet in East Belfast Sure Start. Access to this information will be restricted to the Designated Named Persons.

EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEES

East Belfast Sure Start expects the following points to be observed by all employees:

- 1) Child safety observed at all times.
- 2) Respect for each child.
- 3) Observe confidentiality.
- 4) Every child must be signed in and out.
- 5) Listen to each child and respect their contribution.
- 6) Arrive on time and be flexible when there is a shortage of staff.
- 7) Dress appropriately.
- 8) Observe health & safety.
- 9) No foul language.
- 10) No attending work under the influence of substances.
- 11) Smoking is not allowed on the premises.
- 12) Mobile phones must not be used in rooms during work hours.
- 13) Treat children, co-workers and parents with respect.
- 14) Treating children with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- 15) Helping children to be safe, happy, and having as much fun as possible.
- 16) Never favouring one child or children over others.
- 17) Encouraging children to express feelings, fears, and experiences openly.
- 18) Giving written information about the organisation to children and their parents/carers.
- 19) Knowing about principles and practices of child protection, including legal duties.
- 20) Never engaging in sexually provocative games or make suggestive comments, even in fun.

- 21) Always respond to complaints or allegations.
- 22) Being sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs.
- 23) Never using physical punishment with children under any circumstances.

CODE OF ETHICS

1. To Children:

It is the responsibility of each member of staff and Management to:

- 1) Promote the welfare of each child.
- 2) Respect diversity.
- 3) Provide developmentally appropriate play.
- 4) Maintain confidentiality.
- 5) Listen to children.
- 6) Value and respect children and treat them with dignity.
- 7) Promote positive attitudes and self-esteem in all children.
- 8) Practice conflict resolution.

2. To Families:

It is the responsibility of each member of staff and management to:

- 1) Co-operate with families in meeting the needs of each child.
- 2) Respect diversity.
- 3) Communicate with families.
- 4) Share information with families where appropriate.
- 5) Maintain a professional relationship with families.
- 6) Maintain confidentiality.
- 7) Act as a support to families.

3. To the Community:

It is the responsibility of each member of staff and management to:

- 1) Serve as advocates for the needs to children.
- 2) Liaise with other professionals to work with children and their families.

4. To the Childcare Profession:

It is the responsibility of each member of staff and Management to:

- 1) Maintain a professional approach.
- 2) Continue to learn and train in the childcare profession.
- 3) Promote, develop and support early childhood care and communication.





Accidents/ Incidents - prevention, reporting, recording.

East Belfast Sure Start are committed to ensuring our children and families are as safe as necessary when accessing our services. However, we have to acknowledge that there are elements of riskier play in 0-3 year olds that provide opportunity for growth and development. (See play policy) We are also mindful of the age/ stage of our children and that our aim is to support children to learn to self-regulate their behaviour and begin to understand their own and others' feelings and build emotional resilience. (See nurturing feelings and emotions policy)

An *accident* is an unfortunate event or occurrence that happens unexpectedly and unintentionally, typically resulting in an injury, for example tripping over and hurting your knee.

An *incident* is an event or occurrence that is related to another person, typically resulting in an injury, for example being pushed over and hurting your knee.

- Annual risk assessments are carried out by Health and Safety Professionals. Any actions are followed through promptly and signed off by Project Co-ordinator.
- Daily checklists are carried out by practitioners for both indoor and outdoor areas and individual risk assessments are carried out for any individual activities/ events.
- A first aid trained member of staff is on duty at the premises at all times. It is East Belfast Sure Starts policy to ensure that all early years and family support staff are trained in first aid on a 3 yearly cycle.
- Health and Safety training is provided by Health and Safety Professionals.
- When necessary, accidents/incidents are reported to lead/ co-ordinators to establish the root cause of the accident and to implement appropriate control measures to minimize the risk of reoccurrence.

Reporting, Recording and Notification.

All accidents/ incidents are recorded on an East Belfast Sure Start accident/ incident form. These forms are photocopied with a copy being kept in a central setting file and the other being put in the child's individual file.

Parents/ Carers are informed of an accident/ incident and a signature is required in the relevant section of the form to acknowledge the accident and any action taken by the setting and its staff.

The Early Years Team and Health and Safety Executive will be notified by the Project Co-ordinator/ Deputy Co-ordinator if the accident is of a reportable nature.

In the event that a child, or member of staff, visitor or volunteer becoming injured at East Belfast Sure Start the following steps will be taken:

1. The first aider will assess the injury and act decisively to either treat or call for medical help and will quickly ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children and other persons is maintained.
2. If an injury is sustained but it is deemed relatively minor and readily treatable a first aid trained member of staff will administer treatment as appropriate.
3. If an injury has been sustained that is more serious and requires medical help the first aider will call first for medical help and then, if a child has sustained the injury, will call the parents of the child.
4. Staff will ensure that the children in the setting continue to be cared for and will if necessary call for additional staff to help.
5. The first aider will ensure that the injured person is kept comfortable as dictated by medical advice until the emergency services arrive.
6. Should an injured child be taken to hospital a member of staff will accompany the child if the parents have not yet arrived at the setting.

Our first aid kit:

- complies with the minimum standards;
- is regularly checked by a designated member of staff and re-stocked as necessary and a monthly checklist is completed.
- is easily accessible to adults and kept in a specified area with signage.
- is kept out of the reach of children.



Neurodiversity is the diversity of human brains and minds, the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species. Neurodiversity includes autism, ADHD, dyslexia, epilepsy, tourettes as well as acquired neurodivergence. Neurodiversity is an essential form of human diversity. There is no one “normal” or “healthy” type of body or mind.

Neurodivergent refers to those children whose development diverges from typical developmental expectations.

We recognise that everyone has a diverse set of strengths, differences and needs and we respect neurodiversity. Different developmental pathways and different ways of communicating are all appreciated. We value all individuals and recognise their qualities, attributes and unique ways of being.

We aim to support neurodivergent children, parents and staff and have a neurodiversity affirming approach to our practice. We use a celebratory approach to describe children - focusing on their interests, strengths, traits, differences and needs.

We have regard for the UNCRC (1989), NI Children’s Order (1995), Disability Discrimination Act (2016), Special Educational Needs, and Disability (NI) Order (2005). Our policy and practice reflects the values and approach outlined in these pieces of legislation.

East Belfast Sure Start is committed to providing a nurturing and supportive experience for families and staff, in which they can learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of East Belfast Sure Start and the wider community.

We support neurodivergence by our ethos and approach, skilled staff who engage in regular training and learning opportunities, support programmes, working in partnership with parents and professionals and adapting our environments.

Environment

We recognise that each child is an individual with different skills, strengths and needs. We believe that all children can and do learn, in their own time. To support children to flourish we aim to create environments and programmes of support that celebrate the uniqueness of each child and nurture their development. We recognise that there is no one right way to play, move or communicate so we ensure children can benefit from a wide range of opportunities to help them grow and learn.

We aim to ensure all children have full access to the early year's environment in which they are supported to reach their full potential.

We are responsive to children's individual needs and abilities and make adaptations as appropriate. We make children feel valued and give them a sense of belonging.

Our environments are carefully created and are low arousal, with calming, neutral colours, soft lighting and soft, cosy furnishings. Our resources include natural materials, real items, loose parts and items to encourage curiosity and stimulate the senses. We provide sensory resources to meet children's sensory needs and support regulation.

Our sensory room located on Albertbridge Road provides a calming sensory experience for the children and families. There are various sensory resources available for children to use and explore, including ball pool, bubble tube, colour changing light table, projector and calming rainforest sounds, light up resources, UV lights and UV reactive resources and heuristic play items.

Many of our settings have outdoor play facilities with some physical equipment and stimulating play opportunities that helps children to calm and regulate themselves, experience different sensations and textures and develop their gross motor skills and spatial awareness.

Programmes

Neurodivergent children are valued in all our Sure Start services. We have some programmes to provide targeted support.

Our **Little Learners** programme provides support to children with developmental, communication, social, play and sensory differences. We currently work in partnership with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Child Development Speech and Language Therapy Service and Occupational Therapy team. Little Learners provides a communication rich play environment with highly skilled staff. There is a ratio of 1 adult to 2 children

Our **Little Explorers** programme for 2 to 3 year olds provides support to children who would benefit from a small supportive group.

Both programmes provide monthly stay and play sessions and these are a valuable way to connect with parents and provide opportunities for staff to share what they do in the sessions with the children, show them resources used and model interaction strategies. We work closely with parents to explore and exchange ideas to support the children's development. Parent workshops are an integral part of the programmes, giving parents information, advice and a chance to connect with each other through peer support.

The **Play and Discover** programme provides 5 weekly play sessions for parents and their children where the children have social communication differences. The programme aims to develop parent confidence in supporting their child's communication development and to develop parent skills using adult-child interaction strategies. Each week there is a 'top tip' such as 'follow your child's lead' that is a focus point for conversations and coaching in the sessions. There are also links to pre-recorded videos sent out to parents each week before the session which link in with the weekly 'top tip'. The programme allows for detailed and child-focused conversations with practical modelling from those running the sessions.



Valuing parents

Parental involvement is at the heart of our work at Sure Start and parents are consulted and involved in all decisions that affect their children's care and education. We recognise that parents are often experts on their own children and we work closely with parents – exploring and exchanging ideas to support children's development at home and in our settings. We are committed to collaborating with and connecting with parents, forming respectful and meaningful relationships. Parents are champions for their children and we are advocates for our children and families – supporting their rights and needs.

The **Parent Support Group** creates a space for parents to meet each other, build connections and get support for their children's development. The group also aims to support parents' own wellbeing by creating an atmosphere of emotional and peer support and facilitating sessions on relaxation and mental and physical wellbeing. Topics that the group can provide sessions on include statutory assessment of special educational needs and statementing, supporting communication, development, play skills and sensory differences, eating, sleeping, toilet training, preschool applications and supporting transitions to nursery.

Respecting the voice of the child

We keep the child as the focus of our work and have a child-centred approach to practice with value placed on the child's voice and their needs. We tune in to children, observe them and notice how they respond to activities and situations. We facilitate ways for them to express themselves and to make choices. We recognise each child's individuality and its strengths. We follow their interests, accept, and value them for who they are. We have a desire to support their needs and believe in their potential. We aim to provide them with quality play and learning experiences and nurture their individual characters and skills.

Multi-agency working

We work with a variety of community organisations, agencies, therapists and other care providers to ensure we fully support the children's needs. We develop close links with other professionals working with children and access additional resources, equipment and advice as needed.

Training

We embrace learning and are passionate about developing our skills and knowledge to fully support the children and families. We are keen to keep up-to-date with developments in the field of early years and committed to continually building our services. Staff have regular training to ensure that they have the skills and understanding to meet children's developmental needs. We have in-house training, including sessions to help support children's communication, sensory, play and learning needs. We also partnership with other organisations to avail of specialist training sessions.

Staff

Our staff are highly skilled and dedicated. We work holistically together to support children with developmental differences and medical conditions.

We have designated members of staff to support with children's developmental differences and needs.

Our **Nurture Lead** provides support to children and parents throughout our Sure Start programme and community partners.

Our **Speech and Language Therapist** shares information and tips about how to support your child's brain development and Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) in all our groups (from as early as pregnancy) and social media platforms. Our staff all complete training in how to support children's SLC and they work closely with our Speech and Language Therapist regarding the children's needs. The Speech and Language Therapist also support Surestart programmes and services that are tailored to children with specific SLC needs.

We also want to ensure children receive specialist support if it is needed and our team will work more closely with parents when onward referral to other services may be helpful.





East Belfast Sure Start is committed to delivering a high standard of service and welcomes feedback on our service delivery from all sources including children, parents, staff, funders and other key stakeholders. Feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work.

As an organisation we will use a mixture of Microsoft Forms/ Paper Evaluation and WhatsApp groups to gather feedback from parents. This will then be used to inform our future planning.

The objectives of East Belfast Sure Start complaints and compliments policy are to:

- Ensure that all staff view this policy in a positive light. East Belfast Sure Start recognises that we can't get it right all the time, but using feedback can help to improve service delivery on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure everyone knows how to provide feedback and how a complaint will be handled.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively and within clear time frames.
- Provide individuals with a fair and effective way to complain about our work.
- Ensure that compliments and complaints are monitored and used to improve our services.
- Ensure that individual members of staff who receive compliments are aware of this feedback.

How East Belfast Sure Start will handle complaints.

East Belfast Sure Start will:

- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible.
- Record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with our Data Protection and Information Security Policy.
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame.

- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal.
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence.
- Report, on a quarterly basis, the number of complaints received, the outcomes of investigations and any actions taken.

Complaint procedure

East Belfast Sure Start aims to resolve all complaints as quickly as possible. We recognise a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction. The vast majority of complaints may be resolved by way of an apology, ensuring that the customer receives the service they expect or by providing a suitable explanation for why something has happened. East Belfast Sure Start encourages all staff to interact with complainants in a positive and receptive manner.

Staff will make it as easy as possible to provide feedback. Complaints may be:

- Made in writing by letter, email or by filling out a complaints and compliments form.
- Made verbally to any member of staff who will then record the details on the complaints and compliments form.

Any complaint received will be acknowledged in writing where possible.

Complaints will be recorded and investigated even if made anonymously.

Complaints will be investigated using the following process:

- Stage one – an investigation will be conducted by line manager supervisor. The investigation will include discussions with the complainant and any relevant members of staff. A written report will be produced by the investigator within 10 days, and the complainant will be notified of the outcome. The investigator will make any relevant recommendations regarding changes to operating procedures as a result of the complaint.

- Stage two – if the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the complaint they may appeal the decision. East Belfast Sure Start will appoint a more senior officer to investigate, produce a report and reply to the complainant within 10 days. This could be the Project Coordinator or a member of the Board of Directors
- Stage three – if the complainant is still unhappy with the outcome of the complaint, it will be referred to the Chairperson. The Chairperson will have the final say in relation to the response to the complaint.

Any parents can at any time submit a complaint to the Belfast Trust about any aspect of registered childcare provision. They will consider and investigate all complaints received that are in breach of the relevant statutory requirements.

**Early Years Services
Early Years Team
Everton Complex
585-587 Crumlin Road
Belfast
BT14 7GB**

Tel :- 02895042811

A complaint flowchart is displayed in all our settings.





It is the priority of East Belfast Sure Start to protect all parents/ carers and children attending our service and all persons working in our service from the transmission of infections. The health and well-being of all children, staff and visitors to our service is paramount and our aim is to prevent and manage any infection, which may be present in the service.

Infections can spread easily in early years settings where large numbers of children, who are vulnerable to infection because their immunity may not be fully developed, come into close contact. Information for this policy has been taken from the Public Health Agency's best practice advice for nurseries and childcare settings. Reference should also be made to East Belfast Sure Start Health and Safety Professionals file. Infection prevention and control in East Belfast Sure Start is a matter of great importance for:

- **Children** - who have the right to be healthy and safe in all Sure Start settings
- **Parents** - who want to be assured that the care their children are receiving is provided in a clean, safe environment
- **Staff** - looking after children- who may themselves be exposed to greater risk of infection

Procedures

Our premises

- Our buildings are totally pest proof.
- Suitably located hand wash basins are provided in areas and supplied with running warm water and cold water, soap and disposable hand towels.
- There is suitable lighting and ventilation.
- Facilities are provided for the storage of cleaning equipment and chemicals.
- Suitable arrangements are in place for the storage and disposal of waste.
- External waste storage areas are kept clean and tidy and all waste receptacles have a tight fitting lid.

- Surfaces are kept dry and spills are cleaned up immediately when they occur using appropriate cleaning materials.
- Cleaning of bodily fluid and blood. All spillages of blood, faeces, saliva, vomit, nasal and eye discharges should be cleaned immediately. PPE should be worn and mops should not be used but rather disposable paper towels with a product that contains a disinfectant and a detergent.
- Laundry – Soiled linen should be washed separately on a hot wash.
- All East Belfast Sure Start settings follow a written cleaning schedule in adherence to good practice guidelines. In certain settings, a contract is held with a professional cleaning company.
- All premises are risk assessed annually by Health and Safety Professionals and on a daily basis by practitioners.
- East Belfast Sure Start do not permit animals in any of our settings.

Training

- All members of staff have a clear understanding of their role in preventing the spread of infection; staff receive appropriate training and supervision and are familiar with the policies and procedures.

Hand Hygiene

The importance of correct hand washing is taught and reinforced to all staff, parents and children

- Children are encouraged to wash their hands especially before eating and after visiting the toilet. Sinks, soap dispensers and paper towels are placed at a suitable height for children.
- Hands are washed using warm water and liquid soap and dried using a disposable paper towel.
- The seven step technique of hand washing is displayed at all sinks.



To facilitate effective hand hygiene while working in Sure Start staff do the following:

- Wear sleeves above the elbow. If wearing long sleeves, these are rolled up to the elbows.
- Remove any hand or wrist jewellery with the exception of one plain band.
- Keep nails short and clean, false nails and nail varnish should not be worn.
- Keep cuts and abrasions covered with a waterproof dressing.
- Do not use nail brushes. If we must use a bowl of water to wash children's hands, we put fresh water in the bowl for each child.

At East Belfast Sure Start's staff hands are washed when:

- Staff arrive at work.
- Whenever they are visibly dirty.
- After using the toilet.
- Before preparing, serving and eating food (gloves also to be worn)
- After touching any potentially contaminated surfaces.
- After sneezing and blowing your nose.
- After handling pets.
- Before and after messy play.
- After handling soiled clothing (gloves also to be worn)
- After dealing with waste.
- After handling any body fluids (gloves also to be worn)
- Before and after nappy changing (gloves also to be worn)
- At the end of the working day.
- At any other appropriate time of the day.

Exclusion of staff and children will open happen if there is a risk of infection. The decision for exclusion will be in line with advice from the PHA. Staff and children with chronic conditions **will not be excluded.**



Toys and play equipment

- All toys and play equipment are cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. Soft items are washed at the highest possible temperature, as per manufacturer's instructions. Hand held steamers are also used.
- Water trays are emptied after every use, cleaned with warm soapy water, disinfected and thoroughly dried.
- Sand pit are covered when not in use, cleaned regularly and replaced as necessary. Sand that spills onto the floor will be discarded.

If there is a suspected outbreak of infection at East Belfast Sure Start contact will be made with the health protection duty room at the PHA. (see unwell child policy)





Partnership in the Parenting Journey

'It takes a village to raise a child!'

East Belfast Sure Start are privileged to be part of that village and recognise that every adult in a child's life plays a fundamental role in their development and well-being.

This working in partnership with parents/ carers is throughout all of our sure start services starting from pregnancy and beyond.

Successful relationships become partnerships when there is two-way communication, and parents and practitioners really listen to each other and value each other's views. This will achieve the best outcomes for each child. Working together in partnership can have long-lasting and beneficial effects and East Belfast Sure Start staff and services ensure that we implement this holistic approach in everything that we offer to our families.

Procedure

Once a family has been referred or has filled in a request for service form, a family worker will be allocated to that family and make contact to arrange a home visit. This visit will allow the support worker to share information on all the sure start services available and discuss with the parent/ carer what best suits their needs. This family worker will remain in contact with the family throughout the duration of their sure start journey.

At East Belfast Sure Start, we aim to encourage parental involvement through:

- Supporting the family from the earliest point possible e.g. from pregnancy
- Promoting specific programmes/ groups to meet targeted needs e.g. peer support/ young mum groups, Cook It courses, Incredible Years etc.

- Home support – use of Family Outcome Star in conjunction with parents to allow parents to be part and direct their own sure start journey.
- Parental involvement in all early years' services, e.g. stay and play sessions attached to child development sessions.
- Parent and Child together sessions and courses e.g. baby massage, rolling programmes, baby swim, parent and toddler groups etc.
- Operating an open door policy where parents/carers are welcomed daily within the setting at drop off and collection time and have the opportunity to share information at any time with staff.
- Representation of parents on our Board of Directors
- Generate confidence and encourage parents to trust their own instincts and judgement regarding their own child.
- Ensure any documentation and communications can be easily adapted to a format to suit individual parent's needs, e.g. multi-lingual, electronic communications.
- Create opportunities for parents to talk to other adults in a secure and supportive environment through such activities as open days, parents play and stay sessions, workshops etc.
- Sharing our website and Facebook page to link parents with all our services and programmes allowing them to register interest.
- Parents' noticeboards displayed in each setting.
- Encourage parents to participate in our WhatsApp Groups. These groups allow both the sharing of key information and messages and allow us to share their children's journey in sure start.

- Review of the child's development through transition reports.
- Meetings with the parents/carers; considering how we can work best together on areas for development.
- Key Worker system in place where possible to promote relationship building with parents.
- Policies and procedures shared with parents when introduced to service.
- Annual events e.g. summer activity scheme – these allow parents, children and staff to spend quality time together.
- Evaluation of our services throughout the year by parents. This will enable us to further develop and implement changes to ensure that our setting continues to deliver a quality provision.





Intimate and Personal Care

At East Belfast Sure Start, we believe that all children need contact with familiar, consistent carers to ensure they can grow and develop socially and emotionally. At times children need to be cuddled, encouraged, held and offered physical reassurance.

Intimate and personal care routines are essential throughout the day to meet children's basic needs. This may include nappy changing, supporting children with toileting, changing clothes, and giving first aid treatment and specialist medical support, where required.

In order to maintain the child's privacy, we will carry out the majority of these actions on a one-to-one basis, wherever possible, by the child's key person.

We wish to ensure the safety and welfare of children during intimate care routines and safeguard them against any potential harm as well as ensuring the staff member involved is fully supported and able to perform their duties safely and confidently.

We aim to support all parties through the following actions:

- Promoting consistent and caring relationships through the key person system in the setting and ensuring all parents understand how this works.
- Ensuring all staff undertaking intimate/ personal care routines have suitable enhanced checks.
- Training all staff in the appropriate methods for intimate care routines and arranging specialist training where required, i.e. first aid training, specialist medical support.
- Conducting thorough inductions for all new staff to ensure they are fully aware of all procedures relating to intimate care routines.
- Following up procedures through supervision meetings and appraisals to identify any areas for development or further training.
- Working closely with parents on all aspects of the child's care. This is essential for intimate care routines, which require specialist training or support. If a child requires specific support the staff will arrange a meeting with the parent to discover all the relevant information relating to this to enable the staff to care for the child fully and meet their individual needs.

- Ensuring all staff have an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding/child protection and how to protect children from harm. This will include identifying signs and symptoms of abuse and how to raise these concerns as set out in the safeguarding/child protection policy.
- Operating a whistleblowing policy to help staff raise any concerns about their peers or managers; and helping staff develop confidence in raising worries as they arise in order to safeguard the children in the sure start.
- Using this one-to-one time as a key opportunity to talk to children and help them learn, e.g. through singing and saying rhymes during the change (changing time is chatting time)
- Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children, taking neurodiversity into account.

There is careful communication with each child who needs help with intimate care, in line with their preferred means of communication (verbal, symbolic, etc.) to discuss the child's needs and preferences. The child is aware of each procedure that is carried out and the reasons for it.

As a basic principle, children will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible, given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can.

Nappy Changing & Toileting

All settings have a designated children toilet area with age appropriate resources that are inviting and encourage autonomy when possible.

We will use appropriate designated facilities for nappy changing which meet the following criteria:

- Facilities are separate to food preparation and serving areas and children's play areas.
- Changing mats have a sealed plastic covering and are frequently checked for cracks or tears. If cracks or tears are found, the mat is discarded.
- Clean nappies are stored in a clean dry place; soiled nappies are placed in a 'nappy sack' or plastic bag before being placed in the nappy bin. Each child should have their own creams and lotions for any non-prescription cream for skin conditions e.g. Sudocrem. These are supplied by the parent/guardian and must be clearly labelled with the child's name. Prior written permission is obtained from the parent.

- Ensuring that no child is ever left unattended during the nappy changing time. This included a child NOT being left on a changing table. Staff must ensure that everything they need for the nappy changing process is at hand.

If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process, in order to reach a resolution. The child's needs will remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary.

Staff changing nappies will:

Use a new disposable apron and pair of gloves for each nappy change and always wash hands before and after using gloves

Clean disinfect and dry mats thoroughly after each nappy change; disposable towels/roll must be discarded after each nappy change

Ensure they have all the equipment they need and access to fresh water before each nappy change.

Changing Time is Chatting Time!

changing time is chatting time

Smile When you smile, I smile too. I feel calm, safe, loved and ready to chat

Talk When you talk, I love to listen. Then it's your turn to listen when I talk to you

L laugh When we laugh together our bond gets stronger. That bond of love will last a lifetime and will help me grow and flourish

Sing When we sing together I hang on your every word. I'm learning sounds and the words they make - my brain is getting ready for talking and reading

Smile **T**alk **L** laugh **S**ing
Your words work wonders

SureStart Department of Education



Play is a vital part of the growth and development process and is an essential part of every child's life. It is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children determine and control the content and intent of their play by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons. Through play, a child develops self-confidence, self-image and learns to express feelings, make decisions and cope with real life situations. Children have an inbuilt need to learn about the world around them through discovering, experiencing and exploring.

The play opportunities that East Belfast Sure Start provides will:

- encourage children to initiate their own play ideas, play at their own pace and most importantly have fun.
- involve the children in the planning of activities and be suitable to meet the individual needs of each child.
- provide a creative, stimulating, home from home environment where the children can make choices from a variety of experiences and invitations.
- offer a rich environment of natural, man-made and bought materials which ensures that the play and needs of all individual children are met.
- displaying the children's art/ creative work/ photographs etc. on notice boards, through documentation, scrap books etc. encouraging children to recall and reflect on their experiences and share these with parents.
- encourage children to build on their own natural curiosity, use their imagination, express their own ideas and develop their own ideas.
- support spontaneous play opportunities.

During your child's journey, staff will be observing and recording your child's development and using a variety of tools to do so. We do this, as every child is unique! The best way to know what is special about each child is to make purposeful observations during everyday practice and to document what we see.

This will help parents, carers and staff understand what the child has learned, is

to learn now and will be ready to learn soon. This information is translated into a learning path and allows staff to adjust the learning opportunities on offer to meet individual children's needs

Risky Play

Risky play is an invaluable part of childhood. Research shows that not only does it increase children's physical and motor skills but also teaches them about their own limits, and how to deal with risks in the future. It is important that we provide children with an environment where they can engage in risky play that is as safe as necessary rather than as safe as possible. Occasionally, as with any play experience, accidents may happen. We absolutely understand that any fall or accident with a child can be distressing for both the child and their parents however; our aim is to support children to grow into independent, resilient adults and to balance any risks with benefits.

With care, we can raise children who will actually be safer, more self-aware, and more confident as they face any number of challenges in life. The more children are free to engage in risky play the better they will be at managing risks, judging what they are capable of, and keeping themselves safe. The role of sure start is to provide a challenging and risky learning environment that will support all children as they become more motivated, curious, able, and adventurous.

At East Belfast Sure Start, our early year's environments are created to feel like an extension of home. They are spaces where children should feel loved, nurtured and secure. The approach draws ideas from other philosophies of early education including Reggio Emilia, Montessori, Pikler and Steiner. It aims to create children who are thinkers and doers instead of passive learners who simply follow the direction of adults.





East Belfast Sure Start has a commitment to the children, families, staff who are in our care/involved in our settings to ensure that safety is of utmost priority.

The primary responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to ensuring the security of the setting are shared among:

- Board members
- Staff with delegated authority.
- All staff and students have an obligation to ensure that all security measures are adhered to at all times and ensure that access to the setting is only granted to authorised persons.

To ensure the safety of all at East Belfast Sure Start we adhere to the following:

East Belfast Sure Start will not allow access to the building to anyone who is unknown to the staff in the setting. The setting will use a doorbell/speaker system to have control over this.

If the setting has pre-arranged visitors, all staff will be made aware of their attendance at the setting. The visitors will be asked to sign in and out using the log book/sign in – out sheet provided at reception.

Children's personal files will specifically detail parent/carer and emergency contact details.

If there is a special circumstance where someone is not on the register, but is collecting a child, parental consent must be provided.

At all times external doors, exits and gates are locked and can only be opened from the inside by an adult during session times.

Garden security

Staff will follow the risk assessment procedure and ensure that all maintenance issues are followed up as they occur to ensure security at all times, e.g. if the latch on the front gate is broken and this gate leads to the main road from the outdoor play area.

Building security

East Belfast Sure Start has assigned responsibility for building security to the leader in charge/manager and key-holders of the building.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that at the beginning and end of each day staff should check that all doors and windows are closed and locked as appropriate and record this on the appropriate form.

All staff must adhere to the beginning and end of day procedures.

Information security

The Coordinator will ensure that all staff are familiar with the Data Protection and Safeguarding Policy and understand that it is their own responsibility that documentation and personal files are stored in locked cupboards/filing cabinets. Also that all staff have a password access only to their computers / mobile phones.

Lost keys

The management team must be made aware if staff lose the keys to the building. This will result in the locks being changed.





The Early Years can be a time of big emotions for young children.

Their brains are developing rapidly, they are trying to process experiences and feelings and this can be confusing and unsettling at times. At East Belfast Sure Start, we can support children to recognise their feelings, name them and negotiate ways of managing them.

Our aim is to support children to learn to self-regulate and begin to understand their own and others' feelings and build emotional resilience.

This is a vital stage in children learning to interact socially with others, showing empathy, independently resolving conflicts and building respectful relationships with peers.

If children cannot adequately manage their emotions, this can influence their behaviour and feelings of anger and frustration.

At East Belfast Sure Start, we do this by:

- Providing environments that are warm, supportive and nurturing where children feel safe to explore, be themselves, respond to their innate drive to be curious and develop their own sense of identity.
- Providing a sense of rhythm to a child's session/ visit. Babies and children feel secure and confident when there is a strong (but flexible) sense of rhythm to their days. Having consistent routines, like the same song before snack time, helps children to know what to expect.
- Offer opportunities for risky play and challenge so that children can experience the joy of achieving and overcoming problems. In doing so, they are learning that sometimes we have to overcome feelings of frustration by persevering and being determined. It might mean that they experience disappointment and anger but if they keep on trying then this turns into pride and a sense of accomplishment.

- Listening to our children. Their emotions can tell us so much information, but we need to tune in, not just to their verbal communication but also to observe nonverbal communication. This includes their behaviour, gestures, facial expressions and interactions with the environment. These clues give us vital insight into a child's emotions and how we can best support these. We ensure we are sensitively attuned to our children, learning how individually they communicate their needs and responding promptly.
- We help children to build a strong emotional vocabulary by naming emotions and responding appropriately (e.g. looking concerned/sad when a baby is upset, or truly meeting a baby in their joy/excitement). Talking to children, in groups or individually, can help them to develop emotional literacy – the language associated with emotions.
- Being a role model. Children look to us to support them with these vital life skills. Negotiating emotions can be challenging for some and may take more time and guidance from adults who recognise that all children are unique and develop key skills at different rates.
- By sharing our own feelings with children, we are demonstrating how to react to certain emotions. We can do this by naming our feelings and talking with children about why we might feel happy, sad, excited, angry etc. Children learn that feeling strong feelings is OK and there are ways to manage these emotions.
- Supporting children through transitions and change and helping children understand why they happen, whether it is a transition in the day and enabling them to become familiar with a routine. If you enable children to understand something, it becomes easier for them to manage.
- Using tools e.g. 'Changing time is Chatting Time' to increase parents and practitioners understanding about how a baby's brain develops, our role in this and how we can best support interaction with children in ways that promote emotional security.



Most importantly, East Belfast Sure Start recognise parents' commitment to their children's early development and give priority to working with parents. We support parents to recognise what they can do to help their children build emotional resilience.

Using guidance from the Solihull approach, we offer a shared language to all kinds of interactions, which shape the experiences of children and their families. As an organisation, the Solihull training is rolled out to all staff within our setting, explaining childhood brain development in simple terms, and helping develop a deeper understanding of mental health, behaviour and emotional wellbeing to support children to thrive.





To ensure the safety of all the children when arriving and departing at early years settings, East Belfast Sure Start is committed to ensuring the safety of children is paramount when accessing East Belfast Sure Start services and that all staff are aware of the of their responsibility within the individual settings.

All early years settings will have a sign in/out sheet at the entrance for parents/ carers to use.

A member of staff will be allocated to the gated entrance (Buggy Park)/ entrances to ensure children are safe at all times.

Staff should be available to listen to or give any verbal or written feedback regarding child's needs/ handover.

Children should be collected by an adult who is known to the staff as a regular collector. This person should be named on the child profile under the pickup permission section. Parents/Carers should notify staff if there are any changes to the pickup permission or emergency contact section on the child profile.

If there is any change to the regular collectors, staff must be informed at the beginning of the session. We will only release the child to the regular collector or one of the designated people you have arranged.

If the person collecting the child is unavoidably delayed, please ring 02890963399/ 02890735686. Please inform the staff as early as possible on the above number if your child will not be attending a session.

Unless they are the parents, persons authorised to collect children must be aged 18 or over as specified by the Childminding and Daycare Minimum Standards.

Uncollected Child Procedure

In the event of a child not being collected at the correct time, for his/her end of session, the following procedure will be adhered to:

- Reassure the child at all times.
- Ensure the child is with someone familiar e.g. Key person (back up Key person) and is kept occupied and distracted.
- Depending on timing the child may need a snack
- Check with all staff if any messages have been received, in case a message has not been passed on
- Phone the work/ home/mobile telephone number of the parent/carer who would normally be collecting the child.
- If there was no answer on the usual contact numbers, refer to the emergency contact number/details and explain the circumstances and if possible arrange collection
- If no answer on these numbers, decide a period of time to wait in case there was a delay/accident en route, before trying the numbers again.
- If the child lives within close proximity and there is sufficient staff, it may be possible to visit the house to see if anyone is at home and this could rectify the situation.
- Minimum of 2 staff members to stay in the setting with the child while this is carried out.
- If still no response from contact numbers and emergency contacts, contact will need to be made with the Gateway Team on 02890507000 or with a designated social worker.

After an uncollected child incident has occurred, complete an incident form for staff and parents/carers to sign.



Confidentiality is not just a matter of ethics. It is a cornerstone of trust in sure start settings. By prioritising confidentiality, we can create an environment where children and families feel safe, valued and respected.

East Belfast Sure Start will routinely handle confidential information about our families and employees. When managing sensitive information there is an ethical and legal responsibility to protect the privacy of individuals and families.

At East Belfast Sure Start we inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep, e.g. any injuries, concerns or discussions with parents on sensitive issues, any records we are obliged to keep regarding action taken in respect of child protection and any contact and correspondence with external agencies in relation to their child.

At East Belfast Sure Start, we expect staff to respect the confidentiality policy in the following ways:

- Parents/carers will have ready access to files and records of their own children – but not of any other child (see Parents Access to Records Policy)
- Staff will not discuss individual children with people other than the parents/carers of that child.
- Information given by parents/carers to members of the staff will only be passed on a need to know basis.
- Anything relating to a child or family will be kept in a family file and only accessed by the family/ child key worker, manager, designated officer and will only be shared on a need to know basis to other staff and external agencies.
- Photographs are used as a planning and assessment tool and will be purposeful and consent is required for the use of photographs for any other purpose.
- All staff in the setting are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and staff are made aware at induction that a breach of this policy may result in either a verbal or written warning or may be grounds for dismissal from East Belfast Sure Start.

- Personnel issues will remain confidential to the people involved. All staff in the setting are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and staff are made aware at induction that a breach of this policy may result in either a verbal or written warning or may be grounds for dismissal from East Belfast Sure Start.
- Personnel issues will remain confidential to the people involved.

East Belfast Sure Start will comply with all requirements of the Data Protection legislation and policy





E-safety concerns safeguarding children, families and staff in the digital world. Technology is an important part of everyday life and so E-safety focuses on learning to understand and use technology in a positive and safe way. The purpose of this policy therefore is to help support and protect children and staff when using technology in the setting.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, visitors and members of the public who use our premises. The policy covers internet, email and all electronic communications via computers, laptops, mobile phones, iPhones and other wireless technology.

East Belfast Sure Start recognise the benefits of technology in the connection of children and families with our organisation and with each other, the sharing of health and educational messaging and the promotion of East Belfast Sure Start services.

All staff members are responsible for the following:

- Understanding the risks and responsibilities, which are part of the 'Duty of Care' that applies to everyone working with children.
- Understanding the significance of E-safety, which highlights the importance of safeguarding children.
- Reporting any knowledge or suspicion of behaviour that contravenes this policy.
- Being aware of the potential risks of using social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, and the importance of considering the material they post and how publishing unsuitable material may affect their professional status.
- Protecting themselves from legal challenge and ensuring that they work within the boundaries of professional behaviour.
- Ensuring that they do not create any unnecessary business risk to East Belfast Sure Start by the misuse of the internet or email systems.
- Complying with current legislation.
- Using the internet in an acceptable way.

E-MAIL AND INTERNET POLICY

Internet

Where appropriate, duly authorised staff are encouraged to make use of the Internet as part of their official and professional activities. Attention must be paid to ensuring that published information has relevance to normal professional activities before material is released in our name. Where personal views are expressed a disclaimer stating that this is the case should be clearly added to all correspondence. The intellectual property right and copyright must not be compromised when publishing on the Internet. The availability and variety of information on the Internet has meant that it can be used to obtain material reasonably considered to be offensive. The use of the Internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material, or material that is not work-related, leaves an individual liable to disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

E-mail

The use of the E-mail system is encouraged as its appropriate use facilitates efficiency. Used correctly it is a facility that is of assistance to employees. Inappropriate use however causes many problems including distractions, time wasting and legal claims. The procedure sets out our position on the correct use of the E-mail system.

Procedures - Authorised Use

a. Unauthorised or inappropriate use of the E-mail system may result in disciplinary action which could include summary dismissal.

b. The E-mail system is available for communication and matters directly concerned with the legitimate business of ours. Employees using the E-mail system should give particular attention to the following points:-

i) All comply with Company communication standards;

ii) E-mail messages and copies should only be sent to those for whom they are particularly relevant.

iii) E-mail should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face.

iii) E-mail should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face.

iv) If E-mail is confidential the user must ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality. Our business will be liable for infringing copyright or any defamatory information that is circulated either within the business or to external users of the system.

v) Offers or contracts transmitted by E-mail are as legally binding on the business as those sent on paper.

c. The Company will not tolerate the use of the E-mail/internet system for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including:-

i) Any messages that could constitute bullying, harassment or other detriment.

ii) Personal use where this interferes with work (e.g. social invitations, personal messages, blogging, jokes, cartoons, downloading music/films/clips chain letters, buying or selling of goods, accessing social networking sites or other private matters).

iii) Use of social networking sites during your working hours is strictly forbidden. Due to the lack of confidentiality of these sites contact with clients/customers or their employees outside your working hours must not make reference to the Company or discuss business related to the Company. Failure to abide by this policy may lead to disciplinary action which could result in your dismissal depending on the seriousness of the breach.

iv) On-line gambling.

v) Accessing or transmitting pornography

vi) Transmitting copyright information and/or any software available to the user.

vii) Posting confidential information about other employees, the Company or its customers or suppliers.

Discovery of Indecent Images

Where indecent images of children are found on Company equipment, this must be reported immediately via the Project Co-ordinator (unless the manager is the subject of the concern) who will alert the PSNI and the Designated Officer. Adults who discover such images should not attempt to investigate the matter themselves as this could compromise an investigation.

Monitoring

We reserve the right to monitor all e-mail/internet activity by you for the purposes of ensuring compliance with our policies and procedures and of ensuring compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements and you hereby consent to such monitoring. This includes monitoring of any additional accounts you may be requested to set up for the purposes of performing your work tasks, which are subject to the same rules as your work email account. Information acquired through such monitoring may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings.





There are many benefits of using social media:

- It can help organisations engage with the public and be more transparent and accountable
- Social media/networking can give organisations the ability to communicate with wider audiences.
- It can be used positively to raise awareness of the services provided by an organisation.
- It can promote partnership working and enable greater collaboration between organisations.
- It can support the promotion of the activities of the organisation.

As a general principle all staff, must behave in a manner which is professional and in line with the vision and values under which East Belfast Sure Start funding was obtained.

All staff, trustees and volunteers should consider the following before posting any content on social media:

- Is it legal? – posting any inaccurate or defamatory content about any individual or organisations could result in legal action.
- Terms and Conditions of Grant - is the post contrary to the terms and conditions of grant funding?
- Health and Wellbeing of service users - is the post likely to cause distress and anxiety to individually named service users?
- Reputational Damage – is the post likely to cause reputational damage to East Belfast Sure Start and/or those that we receive funding from? Does it detract from the professional support and services being provided to service users? Is it contrary to the vision, values and principles of East Belfast Sure Start and our overall aim?
- Leadership – is it acceptable for East Belfast Sure Start staff, volunteers or trustees to post content that may cause upset and distress. East Belfast Sure Start funders expect us to show leadership in the promotion of our values at all times.

Particular attention should be paid to not posting or promoting content, which may be considered discriminatory, harassing, derogatory, or defamatory about service users or those that we are seeking to influence.

All staff members are responsible for the following:

- Understanding the risks and responsibilities which are part of the 'Duty of Care' that applies to everyone working with children.
- Understanding the significance of E-safety which highlights the importance of safeguarding.
- Reporting any knowledge or suspicion of behaviour that contravenes this policy
- Being aware of the potential risks of using social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, and the importance of considering the material they post and how publishing unsuitable material may affect their professional status.
- Protecting themselves from legal challenge and ensuring that they work within the boundaries of professional behaviour.
- Ensuring that they do not create any unnecessary business risk to East Belfast Sure Start by the misuse of the internet or email systems.
- Complying with current legislation.

Social media is not an appropriate platform to raise issues or grievances.

If you have any concerns or issues, these can be raised informally or through our existing policies.

Employee Personal Use

Outside of the working environment whether or not an individual chooses to create or participate in an online social network or any other online publishing or discussion is his or her own business.

However, as an employee of East Belfast Sure Start, it is important to be aware that posting information or views about East Belfast Sure Start cannot be isolated from your working life.

Comments about East Belfast Sure Start, our clients or colleagues can bring East Belfast Sure Start into disrepute and make both East Belfast Sure Start and the employee liable to legal action. Staff should therefore keep their use of social media as separate as possible from their professional life.

You are also personally responsible for what you communicate on social media sites outside the workplace, for example at home, in your own time, using your own equipment. You must always be mindful of your contributions and what you disclose about the organisation.

The following conditions must be met for personal use:

- use must take place outside of normal working hours, for example, breaks, lunchtime or before working day or after the working day has ended.
- use must not interfere with business or office commitments.
- use must comply with our policies including the Equal Opportunities Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Computer and Telephone usage Policy, Data Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure.
- Employees must NOT add/ friend or contact any users of East Belfast Sure Start. If there are incidences where families are known on a personal level, there must be no discussion of the workplace.

Specific Responsibilities for East Belfast Sure Start Online Presence

East Belfast Sure Start will ensure that the organisation has employees who have specific responsibility for posting material to the organisations social media platform, in the organisation's name and on its behalf.

Guidelines for Social Media use for parents/ carers.

East Belfast Sure Start may share images/ videos of children for promotional reasons. Those accessing early years settings e.g. programme for 2-3 year olds, child development sessions will have an opportunity to give written consent for the sharing of images. Those who access other services e.g. events/ groups will have given consent when registering for Sure Start. If at any time you do not wish for images of you or your child to be used then you should inform a staff member who will refrain from taking/ using photos/ videos.

East Belfast Sure Start asks that parents/ carers are mindful of what they share on social media regarding the service.

- Refrain from divulging any information about children and parents within the setting.
- Refrain from making comments that may be seen as detrimental to the reputation of the sure start. Staff are available at any time.
- Ensure that photographs or materials published on social networking sites do not identify the setting, its staff or children and their families.
- We ask parents not to post photographs that contain children other than their own without express permission.
- Refrain from sending sure start staff 'friend' requests as this may put our staff in an awkward position.





When registering for East Belfast Sure Start a parent/ carer will receive a copy of our Privacy Notice. This document details the use images and social media within the organization and includes the following statement:

‘From time to time Sure Start may wish to use photographs or video taken of you/ your child for press release or promotional purposes. These images will be used to positively promote Sure Start and the activities and events it provides to local communities across Northern Ireland.’

A notice will be also be placed within each Sure Start setting prior to any event where we plan to either film or photograph activities that involve sure start participants.

- If you do not wish to be filmed or have your picture taken, arrangements will be in place locally that will allow you to still fully participate and benefit from the activities and events.
- By participating in promotional events (‘opting in’), where photographs or video is being taken, you are consenting to sure start using those images for promotional purposes and to publicise our services and facilities.

For children accessing early year’s settings e.g. Programme for 2 Year Olds/ Child Development sessions, consent will also be sought on a child profile for the use of photographs/ videos for both in house and promotional purposes. This written consent is then stored in the child’s individual file.

It is essential that when work with children involves the taking or recording of images this should safeguard the privacy, dignity and well-being of children. Staff should be mindful that the child is willing to be photographed or videoed and it is causing no distress.

Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications especially if the image is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media.

It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of children for their own personal use.

When working directly with the children, do:

- 1) Be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the images.
- 2) Be able to justify images of children in your possession.
- 3) Avoid making images in one to one situations or that show a single child with no surrounding context.
- 4) Ensure the child understands why the images are being taken and that they are appropriately dressed.
- 5) Only use equipment provided or authorised by the organisation.
- 6) Report any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive images found.
- 7) Ensure you have parental permission to take and/or display photographs.

When working directly with the children, do not:

- 1) Display or distribute images without consent.
- 2) Use images that could cause distress.
- 3) Use mobile phones or other devices to take photographs, (unless you have specific authorisation).
- 4) Use personal ICT equipment, unless with specific authorisation.
- 5) Take images 'in secret' or images in situations that could be construed as being secretive.

COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Communication between users of the service and staff should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, websites etc. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. There is a need to be cautious to avoid any possible misinterpretation of motives or behaviour that could be interpreted as inappropriate or grooming. Staff should not therefore give personal contact details to families.

E-mail communications outside of the agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary action and e-mail systems should be used in accordance with the acceptable use agreed policy.

When communicating with families through technology, do

- 1) Only use equipment provided by the setting to communicate.
- 2) Only make contact for professional reasons and follow acceptable use agreement.
- 3) Be careful about your own use of technology and who has access, for example, social networking sites.
- 4) Staff SHOULD NOT add or accept sure start families on social media sites e.g. Facebook/ Instagram. In cases where the family is known to the staff member on a personal level there should be no communication regarding sure start or it's services.

When communicating with children through technology, do not:

- 1) Give out personal contact details to children or young people.
- 2) Use internet or web based communication channels to send personal messages to a child or young person.

SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR STAFF MOBILE PHONES

- Staff personal mobile phones must be switched off/ left outside of the setting and not used during the session.
- Mobile phones should not be carried by staff and should be stored in a secure place e.g. staff locker/ locked cupboard
- The setting has a telephone/mobile for incoming and outgoing calls – this number may be given by staff as a work/emergency contact number for incoming calls only.
- If a member of staff is expecting an emergency or important call, then their personal mobile phone may be switched on but must not be kept on their person. Permission may be sought from the supervisor/senior staff member who will agree and determine a suitable area or place where the phone is accessible should the need arise.
- During group outings nominated staff will have access to the setting's nominated mobile phone, which is to be used for emergency purposes only.

- Practitioners and their managers who will be required to drive on behalf of the early years setting must ensure any work and/or personal mobile phones are switched off whilst driving.

Managers/Senior Staff Members

Managers/senior staff members are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that mobile phones, even if turned off, are not carried by staff during the session.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of and understand this policy and how it links to other relevant policies.
- Putting relevant systems in place to ensure the protection of information and appropriate access to the internet, e.g. passwords on computers, limited access to certain websites.
- Monitoring the policy to ensure that staff are complying with it; this includes the right of managers/senior staff members to access emails, images and internet sites visited, where there is a suspicion of improper use.
- Dealing with breaches of the policy and ensuring that the highest standards of practice are maintained.

Breach of Policy

All employees should be aware that any failure to comply with this policy will be taken seriously and may be dealt with in accordance with East Belfast Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. If an employee is found to have breached the policy, they will face a disciplinary penalty ranging from a verbal warning to a dismissal. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be referred to the PSNI.

Guidelines for parents on mobile phones.

- East Belfast Sure Start ask that parents/ carers do not use their mobile phones/ smart watches/ cameras to take photographs or videos when attending a sure start service. Staff will be available to take photographs and these can be shared with parents with consent.

- If a parent/ carer needs to take a call then they must leave the setting if it is safe to do so.
- East Belfast Sure Start recognise the effect of adult's excessive use of mobile phones on children's well-being. We will endeavour to ensure parents' carers are aware of this impact e.g. Message of the Month Campaign.





At East Belfast Sure Start, we recognise that technology can facilitate great parental engagement, which in turn promotes the best possible outcomes for children.

Communicating with parents/ carers and families has never been more important, and the use of WhatsApp messaging can be an excellent way of building connections and creating effective methods of communication with parents/carers in a way that is meaningful to them.

Transparent, regular, effective communication is essential to any relationship. It makes an enormous difference to the parents/ carers of children in sure start. It keeps them informed, reassures them and develops parental engagement over the long term

While we are aware face-to-face communication will always remain the most valuable method of engagement to our service, we are also aware that some parents/ carers feel more comfortable on occasions receiving information/ having conversations through WhatsApp messenger therefore, digital updates have a number of advantages.

At East Belfast Sure Start, our WhatsApp groups may consist of an individual parent and staff member but may also consist of hundreds of individual members depending on the purpose of the Group and the intended audience. We have both open and closed groups

We use WhatsApp messenger for the following services:

- Early Years Settings/ Programme for 2-3 Year Olds
- Parent/Carer Groups/ Parent and Child Together Groups
- Family Support Services
- Ante Natal/ Post Natal Groups e.g. Breast Start
- Staff information groups.

We use WhatsApp for the below purpose:

- Sharing of information e.g. Message of the Month/ Reminders of services/ Invitation to services/ play ideas etc.
- Providing advice and answering queries. This may include checking in with families.
- Sharing photos with parents of their children's day – reassuring parents. (consent must be given)
- Sharing information of community/ statutory services- signposting.
- Staff information groups – team groups to facilitate the distributing and sharing of information/ ideas.

At East Belfast Sure Start, we recognise that we have a duty to protect both our employees and service users therefore have guidelines around the use of WhatsApp within our service.

- WhatsApp groups for service users must only be available on work mobile phones/ computers. Staff have a responsibility to ensure that the device they use to access the group is secured i.e. password / pin protection and the group is not left open for others to see.
- Groups will regularly be reviewed regarding participants.
- When using WhatsApp to engage with an individual family or parents regarding anything that may be deemed as a significant conversation/ contact, these must be recorded using the notes template/ contact sheet and kept in the family file. When necessary, a copy of the messages can be printed out and added to the file.
- WhatsApp messages should be deleted at regular intervals or once the contact has been recorded if appropriate.
- Staff or parents groups are not to be used to berate someone or air grievances. Normal procedures should be used in these instances.
- There is also no requirement for staff to respond outside of their working hours, this applies to all members of the group. If a participant does choose to respond outside of working hours, this will be of their own volition and not an expectation of the organisation

- The administrator will remove any ex-employees from the group after their last working day.
- The rules governing the use of information are similar to paper records, e-mails and telephone calls, there is a responsibility by everyone involved to adhere to the data protection principles
- Confidentiality is a fundamental factor when processing data via WhatsApp.
- For WhatsApp groups, a copy of the consent form including aspects of the policy should be posted when initially setting the group up and every time a parent is added.

Ask yourself 3 questions before you post, is this relevant? Is this necessary? Is this a good time to post?

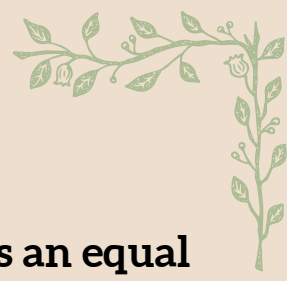
- Remember to be considerate and respectful to others.
- Please be polite and observe the same level of courtesy, as you would do if you were speaking to someone face to face.
- Please refrain from commenting or sharing content (including videos or pictures) that could be interpreted as inappropriate, demeaning or inflammatory
- Please do not share confidential information.
- Understand that any discussions will be moderated by the group administration.
- Do not use the group to raise any grievances. If you wish to discuss any issues, please refer to the Complaints Procedure or discuss with your link worker.
- Please be mindful that staff may only be available on WhatsApp groups during their working hours. While we recognise the value in the peer support parents/ carers will provide to each other, East Belfast Sure Start cannot be held responsible for posts made outside of working hours.
- Think carefully if you are sharing any photos of your child.
- If at any time you have a complaint or issue regarding a post/ message please contact the group administrator privately.

Remember:

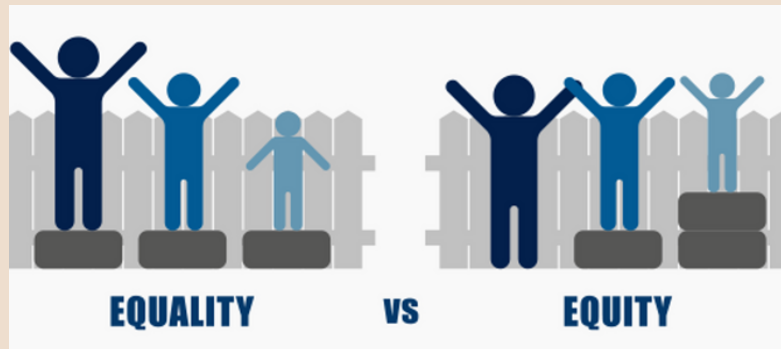
- In a WhatsApp Group, other members of the group can see your name, mobile number and profile picture. Any photos or information you share (including your child's name) will be available to everyone in the group so make sure you are happy with this before you share anything.
- Once anything is shared in the group, your content can no longer be controlled by you or the group administrator.
- WhatsApp is run by Facebook who will therefore manage the data. Sure Start will not be responsible for any information shared on this app.

East Belfast Sure Start will adhere to our Safeguarding Policy at all times.

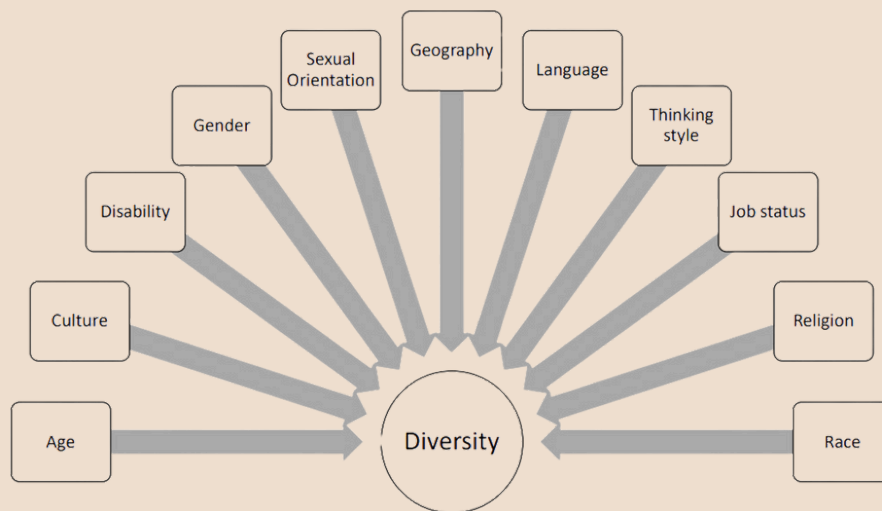




Equality - Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents



Diversity - Diversity means understanding that everyone is unique and recognizing their individual differences



Inclusion - Inclusion is the process of a person or group of people being included within something. They are to be included within its processes, structures and everyday typical experiences



Participation in inclusive high-quality early childhood settings enhances all children's early experiences. In an inclusive setting, there is an awareness and respect for each child's individual strengths and differences. Inclusive settings engage in meaningful collaboration with parents/carers and other professionals to ensure access, equality and full participation for all children.

All forms of early years' service provision should be

'...without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his/her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status'

U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 2.1

The purpose of this policy is to recognise that East Belfast Sure Start is:

- A service where everyone, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, ability, disability and social circumstances, feels safe, feels a sense of belonging, is respected and valued and has their individual needs understood and met as far as resources allow within the context of the service provided.
- All children and families are enabled to meaningfully participate in all aspects of the programme, and learning is extended to challenge and promote the individual abilities and development.
- That service planning and provision embraces the needs of all families and children and works to deliver an inclusive and accessible environment for all.
- Children of all abilities have equal access to culturally and developmentally appropriate play.
- Parents are acknowledged as the experts on their child, and the smooth transitioning from home to sure start is supported. The service works in partnership with parents, families and the wider community to promote equality of opportunity and to oppose all forms of bias, oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.
- The service provides opportunities that help develop children's and parents sense of personal and group identity so that they can become confident, open to difference, receptive to change and respectful towards other identities

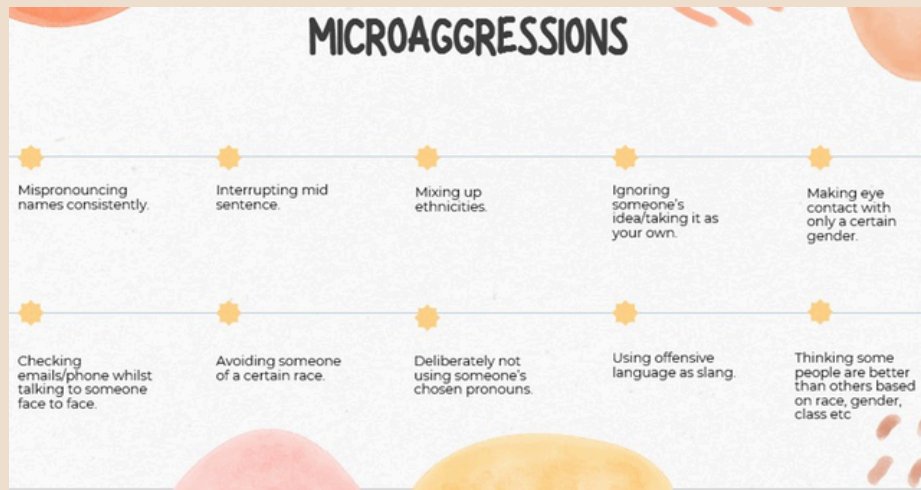
- The service enables children and staff members to have the confidence and skills to challenge instances of prejudice and discrimination.
- Equality of opportunity is an integral part of all planning and decision making within the service.
- The service operates inclusive recruitment practices.

The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy has implications for most aspects of service provision including:

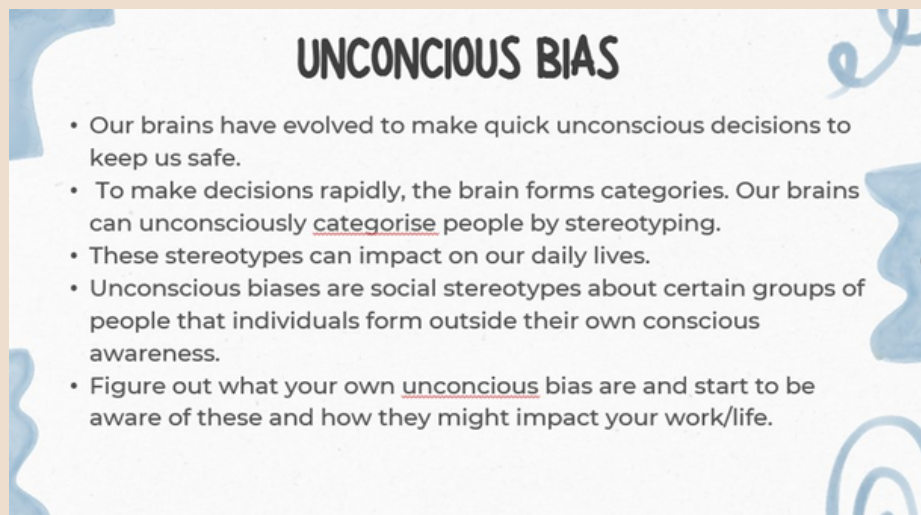
- The Workplace - diversity among the workforce and interaction between staff members.
- Employment - advertising; recruitment; selection; interviewing; promotion; access to training and other employee benefits
- Admissions - Considering content and wording of application forms; offers of places; waiting lists; criteria.
- Resources - Carefully evaluating all the materials and equipment in the setting for messages.
- Taking account of the different learning styles which the children/ parents/ staff in the settings use to concentrate, process and retain information when planning activities and programmes.
- Programmes - Ensuring equal access to the programmes for all. Considering the physical layout of rooms; visible representations of diversity; the individual needs of neurodiverse children/ adults; the needs of those learning English as an additional language - valuing home languages and dialects, understanding bilingualism.
- Considering whether specific action needs to be taken to address inequalities. Ensuring that there is a basic understanding and knowledge of the beliefs and faiths of the children and families in the setting, considering whether specific action is needed to involve everyone, questioning and evaluating the purpose of celebrating festivals relevant to the users of the service.
- Addressing issues such as bullying, inappropriate body language, harassment, name-calling.
- Communication - Ensuring that all parents/guardians and staff members are able to communicate clearly with one another.

- Training - Ensuring that all training needs relevant to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion are identified and included in the budget and that appropriate training is provided for all staff members.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND UNCONCIOUS BIAS



A microaggression is a term used for brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward any group. - Professor Chester. M. Pierce



Unconscious Bias; Influences such as our background, experiences and environmental conditions can all play a part in shaping our choices, whether we realise it or not. For the most part, this is not a major issue. But we display unconscious bias when we favour or discriminate against people because of these influences without even realising it.

At East Belfast Sure Start, we strive to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender expression, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity.





Parents or carers may request access to any confidential records held on their child and family at East Belfast Sure Start by following the procedure below:

- Any request to see the child's personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the Project Co-ordinator.
- The Project Co-ordinator informs the chair of the management board and sends a written acknowledgement.
- The setting commits to providing access within 14 days, although this may be extended.
- The Project Co-ordinator and chair of the management board prepare the file for viewing.
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. Copies of these letters are retained on file.
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records.
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health visitor, etc.
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter.
- A photocopy of the complete file is taken.
- The Project Co-ordinator and chair of the management board go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file.
- What remains is the information recorded by the setting, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters, known as the 'clean copy'.

- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the project co-ordinator, so that it can be explained.
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against the setting or another (third party) agency.
- All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the setting, which is to the safety and well-being of the child.



East Belfast Sure Start places the child's well-being at the very core of the ethos of the setting.

It is our aim to safeguard and maintain the wellbeing of all children within our settings and the staff who look after them. We work in partnership with parents and carers and our staff will respect and are aware of cultural, ethical or religious reasons, which may relate directly to the administration of medicine.

East Belfast Sure Start will administer medication as part of maintaining a child's health and well-being.

In many cases, it is possible for children's GP's to prescribe medicine that can be taken at home in the morning and evening. As far as possible, administering medicines will only be done where it would be detrimental to the child's health if not given in the setting. If a child has not had a medication before, it is advised that the parent keeps the child at home for the first 48 hours after taking the initial dose to ensure there are no adverse effects and to give the medicine time to take effect.

The principle person responsible for the correct administration of medication to a child is the child's key worker. This includes ensuring that a parent consent form has been completed, that the medicine is stored correctly and that records are kept according to these procedures.

- Children taking prescribed medication must be well enough to attend the setting and be free from sickness and diarrhoea for at least 48 hours.
- Only medication prescribed by a doctor (or other medically qualified person) is administered. It must be in-date and prescribed for the current condition (medicines containing aspirin will only be given if prescribed by a doctor). NB Children's Paracetamol and/or Ibuprofen (un-prescribed) will not be routinely administered to any child. .

- However, children who present with a high fever during the session and whose parents/ carers are not able to collect immediately may be given medicine to prevent febrile convulsion. Permission for this is on individual child profiles.
- Children's prescribed medicines are stored in their original containers, are clearly labelled and are inaccessible to the children.
- Parents must give prior written permission for the administration of medication. The staff receiving the medication must ask the parent to sign the consent form stating the following information. No medication may be given without these details being provided: - full name of child and date of birth; - name of medication and strength; - who prescribed it; - dosage to be given in the setting; - how the medication should be stored and expiry date;
- The administration is recorded accurately each time it is given and is signed by the administering member of staff. Parents are shown the record at the end of the session and asked to sign the record to acknowledge the administration of a medicine.
- All medication is stored safely or refrigerated as required.
- Whenever possible all stored medicines are to be kept in a marked (named) plastic box.
- The child's key worker is responsible for ensuring medicine is handed back at the end of the day to the parent.
- For some conditions, medication may be kept in the setting. The key worker must check that any medication held to administer on an 'as and when' required basis, or on a 'regular' basis, is in date and any out-of-date medication is returned to the parent.

Children who have long-term medical conditions and who may require on ongoing medication.

An Emergency/ Medical Care Plan is carried out for each child with long-term medical conditions that require ongoing medication. This is the responsibility of the Nurture Lead alongside the key workers of the child.

Parents/ G.P/ Community Nurses will also contribute to an Emergency Care Plan. Training needs for staff form part of the Care Plan. The Care Plan for the child is drawn up outlining the key worker's role and what information must be shared with other staff who care for the child and will include the measures to be taken in an emergency. The plan is reviewed yearly or more if necessary. This includes reviewing the medication, e.g. changes to the medication or the dosage, any side effects noted etc.

Medicines are administered as follows:

- Before a medicine is administered to a child, the following practices are followed
 - The child's personal medication record is consulted to identify the medicine, dosage instructions required and to confirm when the last medication was administered
 - The medicine pack is checked to confirm it is labelled with the child's name, dosage instructions and to ensure the expiry date has not passed
 - Medicine doses are prepared immediately prior to their administration from the container in which they are dispensed
 - The correct dose is identified and appropriately administered at the specified times according to the prescriber or manufacturer's instructions which should be clearly labelled on the medication label or product
 - 2 members of staff are present, one of which is the designated member of staff
 - Hands should be washed prior to administering medicine.

- When the medicine is administered, the medication record is immediately updated with details of the dose given, names and signatures of the staff involved and the time and date

Any refusal of medication by the child is recorded and reported to the parent.





We recognise our responsibility to promote an environment that is safe and healthy for all. In order to maintain a clean and healthy environment this policy provides guidance for staff as to when children/ parents should or should not be in the sure start setting if showing signs of sickness.

The health and wellbeing of all our users is of paramount importance to enable them to thrive.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- To ensure that sick children are appropriately and correctly identified.
- To ensure sick children are cared for appropriately.
- To protect children and adults from preventable infection.
- To enable staff and parents to be clear about the requirements and procedures when children/ adults are unwell.

Guidance:

- Children should not be brought into the childcare setting and parents/ carers should not attend groups if they are displaying signs of illness.
- Parents are responsible for keeping the setting informed about their child's health or informing the setting if they are unwell.
- If parents do bring children to setting and staff feel that they are unfit to be here, parents / carers / emergency contacts will be contacted and requested to come and collect their child and requested not to return their child to the setting until symptom free. Staff may also ask the same of a parent who appears unwell.
- Children/ parents with infectious or contagious diseases will not be permitted to attend for certain periods. If staff suspect that a child has an infectious or contagious disease, they will request that parents / carers consult a doctor before returning the child to the setting.

Below is guidance from the PHA on when children should be kept off school/ childcare setting. It is not a conclusive list and also applies to adults attending our settings.

Please note: Due to the nature of our organisation and the age of the children attending, the following illnesses differ from PHA guidance. These include:

Hand Foot and Mouth – children should remain away from setting until lesions have crusted over.

Conjunctivitis – Children should remain away until eyes have stopped weeping and recovered.

Ringworm – Children should remain away until treated.

Slapped cheek – Children should remain away from setting until recover

Rashes and skin infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Athlete's foot	None	Athlete's foot is not a serious condition. Treatment is recommended
Chickenpox*	Until all vesicles have crusted over	See: Vulnerable children and female staff – pregnancy
Cold sores, (Herpes simplex)	None	Avoid kissing and contact with the sores. Cold sores are generally mild and self-limiting
German measles (rubella)*	Four days from onset of rash (as per "Green Book")	Preventable by immunisation (MMR x 2 doses). See: Female staff – pregnancy
Hand, foot and mouth	None	Contact the Duty Room if a large number of children are affected. Exclusion may be considered in some circumstances
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted and healed, or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment speeds healing and reduces the infectious period
Measles*	Four days from onset of rash	Preventable by vaccination (MMR x 2). See: Vulnerable children and female staff – pregnancy
Molluscum contagiosum	None	A self-limiting condition
Ringworm	Exclusion not usually required	Treatment is required
Roseola (infantum)	None	None
Scabies	Child can return after first treatment	Household and close contacts require treatment
Scarlet fever*	Child can return 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment recommended for the affected child. If more than one child has scarlet fever contact PHA Duty Room for further advice
Slapped cheek (fifth disease or parvovirus B19)	None once rash has developed	See: Vulnerable children and female staff – pregnancy
Shingles	Exclude only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered	Can cause chickenpox in those who are not immune i.e. have not had chickenpox. It is spread by very close contact and touch. If further information is required, contact the Duty Room. SEE: Vulnerable Children and Female Staff – Pregnancy
Warts and verrucae	None	Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools, gymnasiums and changing rooms

Diarrhoea and vomiting illness	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting	48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting	
<i>E. coli</i> O157 VTEC*	Should be excluded for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea	Further exclusion is required for young children under five and those who have difficulty in adhering to hygiene practices
Typhoid* [and paratyphoid*] (enteric fever)	Further exclusion may be required for some children until they are no longer excreting	Children in these categories should be excluded until there is evidence of microbiological clearance. This guidance may also apply to some contacts of cases who may require microbiological clearance
<i>Shigella</i> * (dysentery)		Please consult the Duty Room for further advice
Cryptosporidiosis*	Exclude for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea	Exclusion from swimming is advisable for two weeks after the diarrhoea has settled

Respiratory infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Flu (influenza)	Until recovered	See: Vulnerable children
Tuberculosis*	Always consult the Duty Room	Requires prolonged close contact for spread
Whooping cough* (pertussis)	48 hours from commencing antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment	Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks. The Duty Room will organise any contact tracing necessary

Other infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Conjunctivitis	None	If an outbreak/cluster occurs, consult the Duty Room
Diphtheria *	Exclusion is essential. Always consult with the Duty Room	Family contacts must be excluded until cleared to return by the Duty Room. Preventable by vaccination. The Duty Room will organise any contact tracing necessary
Glandular fever	None	
Head lice	None	Treatment is recommended only in cases where live lice have been seen
Hepatitis A*	Exclude until seven days after onset of jaundice (or seven days after symptom onset if no jaundice)	The duty room will advise on any vaccination or other control measure that are needed for close contacts of a single case of hepatitis A and for suspected outbreaks.
Hepatitis B*, C, HIV/AIDS	None	Hepatitis B and C and HIV are bloodborne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact. For cleaning of body fluid spills. SEE: Good Hygiene Practice
Meningococcal meningitis*/septicaemia*	Until recovered	Some forms of meningococcal disease are preventable by vaccination (see immunisation schedule). There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. In case of an outbreak, it may be necessary to provide antibiotics with or without meningococcal vaccination to close contacts. The Duty Room will advise on any action needed.
Meningitis* due to other bacteria	Until recovered	Hib and pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination. There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. The Duty Room will give advice on any action needed
Meningitis viral*	None	Milder illness. There is no reason to exclude siblings and other close contacts of a case. Contact tracing is not required
MRSA	None	Good hygiene, in particular handwashing and environmental cleaning, are important to minimise any danger of spread. If further information is required, contact the Duty Room
Mumps*	Exclude child for five days after onset of swelling	Preventable by vaccination (MMR x 2 doses)
Threadworms	None	Treatment is recommended for the child and household contacts
Tonsillitis	None	There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic

We ask that parents do not bring children who are unwell into the setting, as they will be sent home upon arrival. This includes children that have had paracetamol before entering the premises as this could mask symptoms of an illness or infectious diseases.

Child becoming unwell at the setting:

In the event of a child/children becoming ill whilst attending the setting, staff will follow the procedure outlined below:

- Description of the symptoms/problem to be relayed to the immediate supervisor/ Early Years Lead/ family Support Lead who will assess the situation and decide on the appropriate action required.
- If the child is thought to have an infectious disease or is deemed too unwell to continue to attend the setting a member of staff will contact the child's parents/carers to ask them to collect the child as soon as possible.
- If the child's parent/carers are unavailable to collect the child then emergency contact numbers will be used.
- If the child is deemed well enough to attend the setting, or is awaiting collection by his/her parents, the child will be offered fluids and supported in a quiet or restful area with support from the practitioners.

Antibiotics:

If your child has been prescribed antibiotics your child will need to be absent from the setting for the first 24 hours of having taken the antibiotics, this is in case your child has a reaction to the antibiotic.

Coughs and colds:

Coughs and colds do not normally require the child/ parent to be absent from the setting, this however depends on the severity.

Parents and visitors will be notified if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease.

The child's wellbeing will be paramount in all decisions taken by East Belfast Sure Start



Parental Responsibility refers to the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities that most parents have in respect of their children. Parental responsibility includes the right to consent on behalf of the child.

Who has parental responsibility?

- A mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth.
- A father has parental responsibility if he is married to the mother at the time of the child's birth.
- If a father marries the mother after the child's birth, he has parental responsibility if he lives in Northern Ireland at the time of the marriage.
- An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he is named, or becomes named, on the child's birth certificate (from 15 April 2002).
- Same-sex parents/ Civil partners
- Same-sex partners will both have parental responsibility if they were civil partners at the time of the treatment, e.g. donor insemination or fertility treatment.

Those with parental responsibility will have a right to make decisions/ be involved in their child's life at sure start unless we are informed of any legal / safeguarding restrictions.

East Belfast Sure Start Early Years Settings

These services include:

The Developmental programme for 2-3 Year Olds

Child Development Sessions

Little Learners

Parents/ carers who have children that are offered places in these settings will be asked to complete a child profile. Children will not be allowed to attend the setting until this form is completed. The child profile will include seeking consent on the following:

- Intimate and personal care
- First Aid Treatment
- Observations
- Application of sunscreen
- Teeth brushing
- Photo/ Videos
- Speech and Language/ developmental screening.
- Administration of medicines

The child profiles are held in the children's individual files.

Other Sure Start services

- For WhatsApp groups, a copy of the consent form including aspects of the policy should be posted when initially setting the group up and every time a parent is added.
- When registering for East Belfast Sure Start a parent/ carer will receive a copy of our Privacy Notice. This document details the use images and social media within the organization and includes the following statement:

From time to time Sure Start may wish to use photographs or video taken of you/ your child for press release or promotional purposes. These images will be used to positively promote Sure Start and the activities and events it provides to local communities across Northern Ireland.'

A notice will be also be placed within each Sure Start setting prior to any event where we plan to either film or photograph activities that involve sure start participants.

If you do not wish to be filmed or have your picture taken, arrangements will be in place locally that will allow you to still fully participate and benefit from the activities and events.

By participating in promotional events ('opting in'), where photographs or video is being taken, you are consenting to sure start using those images for promotional purposes and to publicise our services and facilities.



At East Belfast Sure Start, we believe that any meal times should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times. Children are encouraged but given a choice as to whether they would like to participate.

We are committed to offering children and parents/ carers healthy, nutritious snacks, which meet individual needs and requirements.

We will ensure that:

- A balanced and healthy snack is provided for children attending a child development session or programme for 2 year old/ Little Learners.
- Snacks are planned in advance, rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation. These are displayed for parents to view.
- Children's/ adults likes and dislikes are taken into consideration when providing snack.
- We provide nutritious food at all snack times, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible and is frequently offered to children. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated.
- Individual dietary requirements are respected. We gather information from parents regarding their children's and their own dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that they have and any special health requirements including sensory needs. Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary plan.
- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's/ parents diets and allergies. They do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.

- Staff set a good example and eat with the children/ parents. Snack times are organised so that they are work for that particular group of adults or children. In some cases staff may decide that a running / buffet snack is more suitable or there may be occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups.
- Staff use snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating.
- We provide foods from the diet of each of the children's/ parents/ carers cultural backgrounds, providing familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed.
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for young children.
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions.
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking.
- We will sometimes celebrate special occasions with the occasional treat of foods such as cake, sweets or biscuits.
- We do allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions. We ensure that all food brought in from parents meets the above and health and safety requirements and ingredients that are listed within the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014 and detailed in the allergens policy and procedure.

- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene.
- East Belfast Sure Start will offer healthy eating education to parents e.g. Cook it.
- Food and drink will not be used as reward or punishment.

Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

As part of the induction to the setting, parents will be asked to share information on their child's dietary requirements (including any allergies). This is recorded on the child's individual child profile. This information will be used when planning food/meal time. It is parent's responsibility to inform the setting if this information changes.

- Children with severe allergies will have an individual care plan.
- Parents should also inform staff if they have an allergy before attending a group where food is provided.
- All East Belfast Sure Start settings are nut free zones. Consideration will be given to all allergies when both providing food and/or play resources.





At East Belfast Sure Start, we provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, resources and systems of work for all our employees and a safe early learning environment in which children learn and are cared for and parents/ carers feel safe and supported.

To develop and promote a strong health and safety culture within the organisation for the benefit of all staff, children, parents and any visitors, we provide information, training and supervision. We also accept our responsibility for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by our activities.

We follow all relevant legislation and associated guidance relating to health and safety within the settings.

To achieve this, we will actively work towards the following objectives:

- Ensure all entrances and exits from the buildings, including fire exits are clearly identifiable, free from obstruction and easily opened from the inside.
- Regularly check the premises room by room for structural defects, worn fixtures and fittings or electrical equipment and take the necessary remedial action. Early Years practitioners will carry out a daily checklist of both indoors and outdoors before the children come in each day.
- Ensure that all staff, parents and children are aware of the fire procedures and regular fire drills are carried out.
- Has the appropriate fire detection and control equipment which is checked regularly to make sure it is in working order.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the procedure to follow in case of accidents for staff, visitors and children (see accident policy).
- Ensure that all members of staff take all reasonable action to control the spread of infectious diseases and wear protective gloves and clothing where appropriate (see infection control policy).
- Ensures there are suitable hygienic changing facilities (see infection control policy).

- **Prohibit smoking/vaping on the premises.**
- **Prohibit any contractor from working on the premises without prior discussion with the officer in charge.**
- **Risk assesses all electrical sockets and take appropriate measures to reduce risks where necessary and ensure no trailing wires are left around the nursery.**
- **Ensure all cleaning materials are placed out of the reach of children and kept in their original containers.**
- **Ensure staff wear protective clothing when preparing food.**
- **Prohibit certain foods that may relate to children's allergies, e.g. nuts are not allowed in the nursery (see food, drink and menu policy)**
- **Follow the EU Food Information for Food Consumers Regulations (EU FIC) by identifying the 14 allergens listed by EU Law that we use as ingredients in any of the dishes we provide to children and ensure that all parents are informed.**
- **Familiarise all staff with the position of the first aid boxes and ensure all know who the appointed first aiders are. Our aim is that all sure start staff working with children are first aid trained every 3 years.**
- **Provide appropriately stocked first aid boxes and check their contents regularly.**
- **Ensure children are supervised at all times and the recommended ratio's are adhered to.**
- **Take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises.and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors. (see security of setting policy).**
- **Ensures no student or volunteer is left unsupervised at any time.**
- **Maintain a safe environment for those who are neurodivergent and ensure all areas of the setting are accessible (wherever practicable).**
- **Encourage all staff, visitors and parents to report any unsafe working practices or areas to ensure immediate response by the management.**
- **No hot drinks are served during any child/ parent sessions.**
- **Any sure start outing or event is individually risk assessed.**
- **All employees have the responsibility to cooperate with this policy and the managers to achieve a healthy and safe nursery and to take reasonable care of themselves and others. Neglect of health and safety regulations/duties will be regarded as a disciplinary matter (see separate policy on disciplinary procedures).**

Whenever a member of staff notices a health or safety issue or problem, which they are not able to rectify, they must immediately report it to the appropriate person named above.

Health and Safety Professionals – Leo Larkin

Health and Safety Professionals are responsible for all Sure Start risk assessments. All premises are inspected on an annual basis and feedback with actions are passed to the management team. This includes the PAT testing of all sure start electrical equipment. Each setting will hold a health and safety file with the individual risk assessments.

Training

East Belfast Sure Start staff are provided with training through Health and Safety Professionals and, other external organisations and in house. Training will include:

Paediatric First Aid

Health and Safety

Fire Safety

Food Hygiene

Manual handling

Safeguarding

Supervision/ staff / team meetings

Maintenance and Replacement of Play Equipment.

We provide a range of toys, equipment and resources that promote play and all areas of children's learning and development. Staff will also provide a range of child/ parent activities each week.

All resources and equipment are checked as they are put out or put away to ensure they are in good condition. Any broken or unsafe equipment is disposed of and this is reported to the manager. We endeavor to replace items as soon as possible. All equipment is thoroughly cleaned and sanitised.

Please note : It is acknowledged that risky play is an invaluable part of childhood. Research shows that not only does it increase children’s physical and motor skills but also teaches them about their own limits, and how to deal with risks in the future. It is important that we provide children with an environment where they can engage in risky play that is as safe as necessary rather than as safe as possible.

Occasionally, as with any play experience, accidents may happen. We absolutely understand that any fall or accident with a child can be distressing for both the child and their parents however; our aim is to support children to grow into independent, resilient adults and to balance any risks with benefits.

With care, we can raise children who will actually be safer, more self-aware, and more confident as they face any number of challenges in life. The more children are free to engage in risky play the better they will be at managing risks, judging what they are capable of, and keeping themselves safe.

The role of sure start is to provide a challenging and risky learning environment that will support all children as they become more motivated, curious, able, and adventurous.

