

**Information for Parents 2025/26**

**Terms & Conditions**

**Contact us**



**Belmont Pre-School**

**Prospectus and Statement of Purpose**

**Introduction**

We take pleasure in welcoming you to Belmont Playcare. The group is well-established and has been an integral part of the local community for many years.

**History**

In spring of 1965 a few members of Belmont Church were concerned that their children, born in 1961, would not have a place in Belmont Primary School in September 1965 as there were too many children for the places available, and it was felt that there was a need for a playgroup. Belmont Church was approached to see if a hall could be used for the group. All financial and other arrangements were organised by the church committee and in May 1965 Belmont Pre-school Playgroup opened its doors in Belmont Church.

Belmont was the first NIPPA-run playgroup in Northern Ireland. UTV broadcast a programme from Belmont around 1980-81 which was hosted by Frank Carson and starred the children and staff. Funds were raised for equipment by hosting coffee mornings and it was also an opportunity to meet the parents and children on a social basis.

We remained at Belmont Presbyterian Church until June 2002 when we were to move to pastures new in Belmont Tower. However, we were accommodated by St Mark’s Church due to awaiting the completion of renovations to Belmont Tower. We spent from September 2002 to April 2004 at St Mark’s and moved to Belmont Tower in May 2004, still flourishing. Sadly, we had to leave there in June 2007 but were very grateful to St Mark’s Church for accommodating us temporarily in the Heyn Hall, Sydenham Avenue while a major effort was underway to secure permanent premises and so guarantee the playgroup’s future.

In April 2009 with funding from the People’s Millions and the Education Authority Belfast Region we finally moved to purpose-built premises in the grounds of Belmont Primary School.

**Ethos and Aims & Objectives**

**Ethos**

To prepare young children for their future learning experiences within a caring, secure, stimulating environment.

We aim to:

Provide high quality care and education for children two years and 10 months to seven years.

Work in partnership with parents/carers to help children learn and develop.

Offer the children an environment that promotes equality and values diversity.

Plan careful and balanced activities designed to develop the children’s learning and skills in an unhurried environment which allows for children’s choice, ideas and interests.

Place a strong emphasis on learning through play as we believe, at this stage in a child’s development, the learning process should be as interesting and enjoyable as possible with the emphasis based on the process rather than the outcome.

We **aim** to ensure each child:

Is in a safe and stimulating environment.

Is given sensitive care and attention, which is provided through our ratio of qualified staff to the number of children attending.

Has a chance to join with other children and adults to work, play and learn together.

Is helped to take forward his/her learning and development by being helped to build on what he/she already knows and can do and given time and space to build and explore their experiences.

**Staff**

Bring a wealth of training and experiences to caring for and teaching the children, through the teams working closely together, sharing a belief that in the right environment, young children can develop as individuals with a love for learning, and the confidence to build meaningful relationships with their peers and adults.

Staff aim to develop key skills such as attention, speaking, listening to one another, and developing the children’s sense of empathy, cooperation, and perseverance. All the children are equally valued, which helps develop a strong sense of worth and self-esteem, and well-being Thus, they gain the confidence to explore and investigate their world and make the most of opportunities to learn and develop.

Our approach is child-centred and focuses on children learning through positive interactions with others, their environment, and through the nurturing atmosphere of their surroundings.  We have researched and are influenced by many approaches and attempt to create a calm, natural environment where children are encouraged to play, explore and be creative.  Overall, the staff team attempt to provide enjoyment, curiosity a sense of belonging whilst making memories for the children.

The staff and Belmont Playcare’ s Board of Trustees promote cooperation and collaboration with parents, children, and practitioners and as a key part of children’s learning and development. are

**Policies and Procedures**

We have a comprehensive list of policies and procedures as listed below, and we have outlined a number of these on the next pages. All of our policies and procedures are detailed in full in our ‘Policies and Procedures’ booklet which is displayed in our foyer and available for parents to refer to at any time.

• Child Protection Intimate Care • Confidentiality

• Complaints/comments • Equal opportunities

• Positive Behaviour Policy • Health and Safety

• Partnership with parents/carers • Admission

* Settling-in • Healthy eating

• Fundraising • Recruitment and Selection

• Observation, assessment and record keeping • Staff development and training

• Articles of association • Special Needs

• Handling & disposing of Bodily Fluids • Substance & Alcohol abuse

• Staff Complaint Procedure • Anti-bullying

• Curriculum Planning & Evaluation • Data Protection

• Whistle Blowing • Redundancy

• Communication Policy

• Storage of medicines, toiletries & cleaning materials

**Complaints Procedure** Guidelines for our comments/complaint’s procedure are displayed on the parents’ notice board in the foyer. We at Belmont endeavour to create an open environment and encourage parents to discuss their concerns at any time.

**Child Protection**

We at Belmont Pre-school are committed to providing a safe environment where children are protected from harm. Staff have had further training to ensure they are aware of any issues that may cause children harm. We will comply with Health and Social Care Trust guidelines on Child Protection (Minimum Standards) and follow procedures. We believe that the welfare of the child is paramount.

**Equal Opportunities**

As an equal opportunity employer, we try to promote a diverse environment which embraces difference whether cultural, religious, disability or gender.

**Management of Children’s Behaviour**

We at Belmont promote a positive environment, providing age-appropriate activities to engage children in play. Any issues regarding behaviour are dealt with in a positive manner demonstrating that it is the behaviour that is unwanted, and not the child. A copy of our Positive Behaviour Policy is attached to this document for you to retain for your records.

**Settling-In Policy**

We at Belmont Playcare aim to ensure that children in our care feel safe and secure in the absence of their parents/carers. We will therefore endeavour to make the settling in process a positive experience for children, and plan to have their individual needs met.

In order to accomplish this, we will ensure that prior to enrolment, exchange of information with parents/carers will be offered at an open day and through our prospectus and registration form.

Parents/carers and their children are encouraged to visit the preschool before admission to familiarise themselves with the group setting. Parents/carers are also encouraged to provide staff with information on their child’s likes/dislikes, interests, achievements etc.

All parents will be provided with a booklet with pictures of the staff team, room and outdoor play area to look at with their child to help with familiarisation. Preschool staff will visit playgroup to meet the children who will be transferring to preschool and the children will have an opportunity to visit the preschool room.

For children not attending our playgroup, a home visit will be arranged when a staff member will call to meet your child they can choose a picture for their peg and receive their preschool booklet. We have found this helps the children to feel more confident with the staff and room when they settle in.

**Communication Policy**

To enable Belmont Playcare to provide effective communication to parents and to keep parents informed of changes to sessions. We encourage parents to download the Seesaw family app, details of which you will receive in August. This app allows us to send out information about events, closures etc. (including urgent information like unplanned closures). As well as share pictures of your child in preschool. It can also be used during any periods of remote learning.

**Additional Needs**

We welcome all children with additional needs and have experience in providing support across a range of

needs. However, in some circumstances we may not be able to provide the care and support to best meet a

child’s needs. In such situations this will be discussed with parents, carers and where necessary other

medical and health care professionals.

**Staff and Qualifications**

**Morning Session:**

Mrs Rebecca Clarke PGCE in Primary and Early Years Education.

Mrs Kathy McKnight NVQ III Early Years Education

Miss Caroline Breen Level III in Children’s Care Learning and Development

**Afternoon Session:**

Mrs Linda McMordie Level 5 in Children’s Care Learning and Development

Mrs Lisa Passmore Level 5 in Children’s Care Learning and Development

All of our staff have training in First Aid and Child Protection, and they continue with professional development by attending relevant training and workshops.

**Staff Development and Training**

Due to the Pre-school’s inclusion in the PEEP programme, staff are required to attend occasional training sessions. There are usually 5 within the year for which the Pre-school will have exceptional closure dates.

**Fees**

All childcare fees are paid for by the Education Authority. However, we do require a donation which is collected termly to pay for the children’s break, craft materials, small pieces of equipment, trips out and visitors etc. Unfortunately, we cannot accept cash, for security reasons, and payment should be made by cheque payable to **Belmont Playcare**.

**Snack**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Monday | Rice Cakes, Breadsticks, Apples, Raisins, Milk or Water |
| Tuesday | Toast, Pure Margarine, Apples, Banana, Milk or Water |
| Wednesday | Bagels, Pure Margarine, Apples, Milk or Water |
| Thursday | Toast, Pure Margarine, Apples, Grapes, Milk or Water |
| Friday | Crackers and Mild Cheddar Cheese, Apples, Raisins, Milk or Water |

Please inform us of any food allergies, we will arrange a meeting to discuss how it is managed and alternative products.

**Hours of Opening**

*Morning Session:* 9 am – 11.45am

Afternoon Session: 12.45 – 3.15pm

Due to the short changeover time between the morning and afternoon pre-school sessions, children must be collected promptly following the morning session, as staff have to vacate the room to allow the afternoon staff to prepare for their session.

We follow the same holiday closures as Belmont Primary School, and these are displayed on our notice board in September. A list of exceptional closure dates for the Playcare will also be displayed when the dates are known.

**Arriving and Departing**

●Please supervise your children closely when arriving and departing to avoid disruption to classes going on in the main school building. Currently, a one-way system is in place around the school site.

●Parking in the grounds of Belmont Primary School is not permitted. Please Park carefully and considerately as PSNI make regular checks and fixed penalty notices have been issued.

●Dogs are not permitted in the school grounds.

* Scooters and bikes should not be ridden in the playground.

**In the interest of all children on the Primary School site, we ask parents and carers to ensure the tall green gate is bolted closed after dropping off or collecting the children.**

**Children MUST be picked up by a person aged 18 and over.**

**Curriculum**

The staff follow the Pre-school curriculum and plan and evaluate the activities provided. This ensures the child gains experience of materials provided and masters skills, giving staff the opportunity to observe the children, evaluate the curriculum and look for opportunities to build on the child’s individual interests and needs.

The curriculum is drawn up with the 6 areas of learning in mind. The areas are –

1. Personal, social and emotional development.
2. Mathematical development.
3. Creative and aesthetic development.
4. Physical development.
5. Language development; and
6. The world around us.

All members of staff take part in the drawing up of the preschool plans which ensures developmental needs are met enhancing stimulation and curiosity. We have a huge variety of equipment to offer and progress play, offering the children choice and encouraging independence as well as being fun. We keep a record of each child’s progress, which is shared and discussed with parents both verbally and by written reports. Informal parent interviews take place in October and March. Written reports are sent home in March and again in June. We are happy to discuss progress with parents at any stage by appointment.

### Routine

Once the children have registered their name picture card on our board, the session starts with a short movement session outside to exercise and warm up our muscles. We then have greeting time when we find out who the helper is for that morning. Then the children are free to choose where and with what they will play, with staff working alongside the children as they explore the areas of the pre-school room and the equipment and materials provided depending on the learning aims as well as the children’s own interests.

Break is available for an hour, and the children come to the table along with their small group.  Normally we try to encourage the children to do as much as they can for themselves, and a member of staff is always there to provide support when necessary, however covid guidance requires staff to prepare and serve the children.

Once the children have helped to tidy up the room it’s time to enjoy rhymes and songs and music.

Small group activities (8 Children and 1 staff member) are also undertaken during the week.

We have short mindfulness sessions each week with Fiona, our qualified mindfulness teacher.

Then it’s time to go outside to play in the fresh air – our covered play area means that we can even play in the rain!  We finish the session with story together before home time.

**Activities and Resources**

The overall aim of the curriculum throughout the pre-school year is to help each individual child develop and master skills. Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children think. Pre-school uses yearly aims and their weekly plans to provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. The children have opportunities to play independently and take part in small group, large group and one-to-one play. Children are assigned to a key worker; this enables us to plan specifically to each individual child’s needs and interests.

The children are given a wide range of stimulating activities; there are opportunities for children to engage in imaginative play and to play with construction toys, table-top toys, jigsaws, sand, water and sensory materials, as well as participating in activities such as painting, crafts, music and storytelling. Physical skills are developed through the children using a wide variety of indoor and outdoor equipment. Activities and resources are frequently changed and rotated ensuring that the learning experiences remain fresh, interesting and challenging.

**Facilities available:**

The Pre-school consists of a large, bright playroom, which has resources covering the curriculum and progression throughout the year. There is a “quiet area” for story time and a large covered outdoor play area which has been developed to offer more play and learning opportunities and now includes a mud kitchen.

**Illness-**

If your child becomes ill at the playgroup we will contact, you immediately to organise collection. A staff member will inform you of when the child became ill and the symptoms.

Below is a list of some of the more common childhood illnesses and the exclusion period (a full list is on display on our notice board):

* **Chicken Pox** - spots crusted over (usually 5 days from the appearance of spots)
* **Impetigo** - until fully cleared
* **Vomiting/diarrhoea** - until clear of symptoms (and no earlier than 48 hours afterwards)
* **Sore throat** - until physically well
* **Meningitis** - until physically well

We aim at all times to limit cross infection as far as possible – if your child is feeling unwell, please **DO NOT** send them to preschool. Please contact us that morning to let us know if your child is unwell and will be absent. Belmont Playcare may occasionally need to seek advice from health care professionals regarding illness and exclusion.

**Accidents/Incidents**

In the event of an accident at preschool we will administer First Aid to your child, ensuring that they are reassured and made comfortable. Minor incidents are recorded in our Incident Book and then explained to the parent/carer on arrival for collection who will be asked to sign this record. Major incidents are treated with immediate emergency, seeing to the child, contacting the parents and if needs be transferring to a medical unit. We will also inform our link Social Worker.

**Support**

Belmont Playcare is run by a Board of Trustees who meet every month. The AGM is held in October, and parents are encouraged to get involved and take an active role – without the trustees, the playgroup could not exist. The trustees deal with the management side of the day-to-day running of the organisation, as well as issues regarding premises and staffing etc. They also organise a number of fundraising events during the year which in turn benefit all of the children, enabling us to replace equipment and purchase new items. Contact numbers for the chairperson and trustees are available from the coordinator.

The staff team have support from an assigned Independent Early Years Specialist who visits us throughout the year to advise us on our practices and help us further develop the learning activities offered.

The report of our last inspection (November 2023) is available to read online

https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/pilot-inspection-belmont-pre-school-belfast

Belmont Playgroup is also registered by the Health and Social Care Trust Belfast (HSCT).

We have an assigned Social Worker who also inspects the organisation at least once annually unannounced and keeps us up to date on childcare issues. These professionals are there for you too and can help if you have any queries. Registration certificates by HSCT are displayed in the foyer.

**Insurance:**

Belmont Playgroup is covered by public liability and employer's liability insurance the certificate is clearly displayed on the parent’s notice board.

**Parental Involvement and Support**

*We are keen to establish good working links between home and school and support parents in building strong foundations for their child’s education at home as well as in preschool.*

*This link is undertaken by having:*

* *Interviews and reports*
* *Parents nights*
* *Helping with trips*
* *Newsletters - including suggestions for nursery rhymes and activities to try at home.*
* *Visiting preschool to talk about your job*
* *Home Packs*
* *Big Bedtime Read and Education Works events- parents’ workshops, “come and Play” Sessions.*

You can also help us in several other ways, by:

* to help with reading stories, joining in play, serving break or talking to the children about your job.
* Joining the Board of Trustees.
* joining in fundraising events.

You can also help us promote the smooth running of the preschool by –

* Bringing and collecting your child promptly,
* Sending a coat every day and clearly naming all clothing, especially sweatshirts!
* Keeping your child at home if they are unwell and unfit to attend and letting us know they will be absent.
* Encouraging independence at home with toileting, handwashing and putting on their own coat,
* Speaking to the leader promptly about any concerns you may have about your child or the preschool,
* Making comments and suggestions via our comments book or a staff member,
* Keeping us up to date regarding changes to emergency contact details etc.

**Uniforms and clothing**

The uniform (navy sweatshirt with teddy logo) is optional and is available to order online from School Days

434 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1HJ, Tel: 02895433725 (opposite Wise buys)

Wearing of the uniform gives the children a sense of common identity and belonging as well as being easily manageable for the child, promoting independence with toileting. We encourage the wearing of uniform in preschool.

We would ask that children are not brought in their best clothes or wearing belts, dungarees, one-piece suits, laced shoes or clothing which makes independence difficult. We ask you to send one change of clothing when your child starts and which we will keep as spares for the year

Please ensure that your child brings a coat every day, and a hat during the colder months. PLEASE ENSURE that all coats, hats, jumpers are clearly named.

**Forms and Records**

You will be required to complete several forms when your child commences pre-school, and these include a child profile, an enrolment form, and consent slips. These must be signed by the parent and dated. Please feel free to make notes on the back of the form, or to speak to the leader if you have any concerns, especially in the case of an allergy or medical issues. All information is confidential and is stored securely.

**Contact Us**

We are located in the grounds of Belmont Primary School, and our address is:

 Belmont Playcare

 215 Belmont Road

 Belfast

 BT4 2AG

If you have any queries, please contact us on 02890 671050 or info@belmontplaygroup.org.

Please visit our website where you will find a lot of useful information: [www.belmontplaycare.org](http://www.belmontplaycare.org)

**** **Belmont Preschool Policies**

We have available a [comprehensive book](http://www.laurelway-playgroup.com/documents/LWP_PolicyDocument.pdf) of our policies. These can be found in the Playcare foyer. These can be borrowed, and copies can be made available upon request. Some policies are displayed on the Parents Notice Board as well as other information.

Belmont Preschool have put together a selection of policies this to ensure parents are happy with these before they sign the Agreement Forms.

**Child Protection Policy**

**Principles**

Belmont Playcare is committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and promoting their rights.

This policy outlines the protection of children by identifying clear instructions in accordance with legislative framework of The Children (NI) Order 1995, taking into consideration the 5 main principles of the order the first being:

“The welfare of the child is paramount”

Prevention,

Paramountcy,

Partnership,

**Protection** and

Parental Responsibility.

Obligations to safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare are contained in both international and domestic law, as listed at the end of this policy.

As an organisation we must be aware of how the legislation applies to Belmont Playcare in working to safeguard children.

**Policy**

We in Belmont Playcare are committed to providing a safe environment where children are protected from harm. The staff, volunteers and students accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop an awareness of issues that may cause children harm. We will comply with Health and Social Care Trust on Child Protection and will appoint designated persons to deal with Child Protection issues, (see Procedures for Reporting Concerns).

**Designated Persons**

Lisa Passmore- Coordinator

Martina McGeown- Leader Morning Playgroup Session

Linda McMordie – Afternoon Preschool Session

Jessica Barratt- Afterschool and Holiday Club Leader

**Procedures**

In accordance with Trust guidelines (Minimum Standards for Childminding & Day-care for children under Age 12 –Version 3 October 2017), Our Duty to Care and Getting It Right, we will endeavour to safeguard children by:

* Building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.
* Making all staff and parents/carers aware of our safeguarding policy and procedures.
* Providing adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of the children.
* Informing candidates of the need to carryout “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 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, trainees and volunteers.
* Belmont Playcare adheres to the Recruitment of ex-Offenders Policy. Applicants are made aware of the Access NI Code of Practice. Applicants’ information is handled and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Access NI Privacy Notice <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/ani-privacy> .
* Students, trainees and volunteers do not work unsupervised.
* Belmont 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.
* Belmont has a procedure for recording the 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.

**To minimise the chance of any misunderstanding the following procedure will be applied: -**

* If a child sustains an injury whilst in our care, we will record it in the accident book as soon as possible. When the child is collected, we will inform whoever picks the child up about the injury and ensure that they also sign the accident book.
* If a child arrives with an injury sustained elsewhere e.g. cut on face, bump on leg, broken arm, etc. We will ask for an explanation and will record this in the accident book with the explanation given and parent will be asked to sign the entry.
* We will try to avoid situations where an adult is left alone in a room with a child. If this does occur, we will make sure that the door is left open and there are other people around.
* We will avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves, wherever possible.
* We will ensure all adults working in the Playcare are aware of Belmont Playcare’ s Code of **Conduct**.
* Staff and volunteers will receive an induction with the coordinator detailing tasks and limits placed on them, as newcomers to the Playcare, before working with the children.
* Staff will attend child protection training and update this on a regular basis.
* Appropriate adult/child ratios will be maintained, and adults will not be left alone for extended periods of time with individual children or small groups.
* The layout of the room and outdoor area will permit constant supervision of the children.
* Appropriate activities to develop children’s self-esteem with regard to self-protection will be provided.
* We will take up references, including one from the candidate’s last employer, and will always question any gaps in employment history.
* We encourage an open-door ethos, to enable staff to talk to the coordinator and or Board of Trustees if they have concerns about the conduct of any of their colleagues.

**Responding Appropriately to Suspicions of Abuse**

**All those working with children are aware that abuse of children can take different forms as listed in this policy.**

We will do this by:

* Using appropriate strategies e.g. listening to the child and not ask leading questions in order to support children who may make a disclosure of abuse.
* By observing children on a regular basis and noting any significant changes in behaviour that may give cause for concern.
* By keeping appropriate records: Making a dated record of the details of the concern (cause of concern form) and discuss what to do with the settings designated officer. The information will be stored securely.
* We understand that information and documentation may require to be transferred to relevant organisations and will do so strictly confidentially.
* By keeping a pastoral care file. Within this file a notebook will be kept logging adult/staff reported child protection Issues. The pastoral care file will be kept in a locked cupboard.
* In line with confidentiality guidelines and the Data Protection Act and public interest disclosure order.
* We will keep child protection records until a child’s 21st birthday, in case of possible legal action. After this time the information will be disposed of appropriately. This information will be kept locked away with only designated persons able to gain access to it.
* Belmont will refer concerns to the Gateway team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
* The designated officer will use the Cause for Concern form and complete an Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) form if Gateway investigates the concern, within 24 hours.
* We will also contact our Early Years Link Social Worker/ Early Years Team Duty Officer.
* Where a child is already known to Health and Social Care Trust and has a social worker, we will contact them directly.

**Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff.**

Where a child makes a comment to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes 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 without pressing for information or asking leading questions. Will offer reassurance and give assurance that he/she will take action.
* The staff member will inform their session leader and then designated officer.

The responsibility rests with the individual to inform the correct persons so action is taken as soon as possible on the day that the concern is identified.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

* Record real-time notes, direct speech as soon as possible
* Record on Cause of Concern Forms found in session register (accurate record of all actions,

Record of name, age, date and time of observation or disclosure. Exact words spoken by the child, then names of who reported to within organisation).

These recordings are signed and dated and kept securely and confidentially.

Belmont Playcare staffs are not responsible for deciding or investigating whether or not significant harm/abuse has occurred. This is a task for statutory organisations (Gateway).

There is no absolute definition of ‘**significant harm’**, as this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. [Article 50(3) of the Children Order](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1995/755/article/50) states that “where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child”.

Where a HSCT suspects that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, the HSCT has a duty under [Article 66 of the Children Order](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1995/755/article/66) to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, to enable it to decide whether it should take any action to safeguard or promote the child’s welfare. **Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland -Page 13**.

**Gateway Services- is a social work services for children and families. It is the first point of contact for people who are concerned about a child or young person not already known to social services.**

**Calls to Gateway are made when we have reasonable grounds for concern such as specific report from the child of an incident involving threat/physical injury or harm. Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way.**

**OR**

**If we are in any doubt over concerns, we will contact Gateway for advice and act on their advice. Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from significant harm it also includes child safety, bullying, care and welfare of children and their family.**

**We have a duty to report and can report without parental consent as the welfare of the child is paramount.**

**The above process comes from the** Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) Procedures Manual, and it states our responsibilities below.

**2. The Responsibility to Refer**

All staff in statutory/voluntary and community organisations have a responsibility to refer a child/young person to children's social services if they believe or suspect that the child/young person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm (see [**Responding to Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure**](https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/p_respond_abuse_neg.html)).

In an emergency a referral should be made directly to the police.

When staff make a referral to children's social services, they should include relevant information in respect of the child/young person. Any information they have about the child/young person's developmental/communication needs and the capacity of their parents and carers to meet these within the context of their wider family and environment should be provided as a part of the referral information.

**Calling Gateway:**

* The designated officer with the leader in charge of the session will contact Gateway. The name of the child and family will be withheld at this stage, unless Gateway ask for it.

**Informing Parents**

* **Parents are normally our first point of contact.**
* **Parents have the right to respect and be consulted.**
* **We will discuss concerns with parents to gain their views on events. We will inform parents where we need to make a record of concerns in their child’s file and note of any discussion; we have with them regarding a concern.**
* **If concerns are discussed with Gateway and they advise we make a referral to them. Belmont Playcare will make a call to parents advising them a disclosure has been made, and Gateway has been contacted, and they will contact the parents directly.**

**Parents will NOT be informed, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser.**

**Supporting families**

Belmont Playcare believes in building trust and supportive relationships with families, staff/students/trainees/volunteers in the group.

Belmont Playcare makes clear to parents, our roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the Health and Social Care Trust.

Belmont Playcare follows child protection guidelines as set out by the Health and Social Care Trust in relation to the settings designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.

Records kept on a child are shared with the child’s parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.

**Recruitment Policy and Recruitment of ex-Offenders Policy.**

To achieve this, we will ensure:

* Pre-Employment interviews take place and take up two references.
* Access NI Disclosure and SOCARE Checks are carried out as per Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.
* New staff are employed in line with Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996.
* References will be taken up (one of which will be current or most recent employer) prior to employment or voluntary work.
* All appointments will be subject to a probationary period, which will be reviewed within six months.
* Social Services will be informed of changes to staff team.

***Allegations against staff:***

What happens if an **allegation of abuse** is made against a member of staff at Belmont Playcare

This procedure will be undertaken if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff.

* We ensure that all parents/carers and staff know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, including any allegations of abuse.
* We follow the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust when responding to any complaint that a parent/carer has put forward.
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the settings, may have taken, or is taking place, **by first recording the details of any such alleged incident** **on designated form.**
* We refer any such complaint immediately to the Gateway and our Link Social Worker to investigate. Belmont Playcare is aware it is an offence not to do this.
* We will also notify our insurance legal team of the complaint (no staff details will be submitted).
* We co-operate entirely with the investigation carried out by Gateway and the PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland).
* Where the management committee and Gateway agree it is appropriate, the chairperson may be advised to suspend the member of staff, whilst enquiries are carried out.
* Belmont Playcare could also invoke their disciplinary procedure.

This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff/volunteers as well as children and families whilst the investigation is being carried out.

**Belmont employees who also work in other settings** who have had an allegation made against them should inform Belmont Playcare’ s coordinator as soon as possible.

The Health and Social Care Trust should also advise Belmont Playcare that an allegation has been made against the staff member employed in another setting. They will advise whether the member of staff should remain in the workplace or whether they are to be suspended until the investigation is resolved. If the member of staff remains in the workplace, safeguards will be put into place to protect the member of staff and the children in the setting (e.g. admin duties).

Once investigation meetings have taken place Belmont Playcare will be informed by the Health and Social Care Trust of the outcome.

***Disciplinary action:***

* Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups), can be identified and barred from working with these groups.
* Health and Social Care Trust Early Years Team must be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises. They will also be notified of the action taken in respect of the allegations. These will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

**Supporting Staff**

We will support all staff through the process of reporting any known or suspected abuse; we will ensure all procedures are followed through correctly and followed up if required.

**Sharing Information**

We will do this by:

* Sharing concerns only with those agencies who need to know e.g. the Gateway Team
* Involving parents and children appropriately as recommended by “Getting It Right”/ “Keeping Safe Project” and information received from the Gateway Team.

**Belmont Playcare’s childcare protection policy comes from international and domestic legislation on child protection as listed below.**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The Children (N.I.) Order 1995. There are main points in this order and the first states that
 |
|  “The welfare of the child is paramount”. |
| 2. Safeguarding Vulnerable groups (NI) Order 2007. |
| 3.The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child  |
| 4.The Human Rights Act (1998) – Articles 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14 |
| 5.Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (updated 29.08.17) |
| 6. Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland Information and Guidance |
| 7.The Data Protection Act 2000 |
| 8.The Sexual Offenses (NI) Order 2008 |
| 9.Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 specifically Standard 1 |
| 10.Trust Guidelines, Our Duty to Care and Getting it Right  |

Our Child Protection Policy is linked to:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Admissions
 |
| 1. Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
 |
| 1. Anti-Bullying
 |
| 1. Behaviour Management
 |
| 1. Comments and Complaints
 |
| 1. Code of Conduct
 |
| 1. Confidentiality
 |
| 1. Disciplinary Procedure
 |
| 1. Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination
 |
| 1. Health and Safety
 |
| 1. Partnership with Parents
 |
| 1. Staff Recruitment and Training
 |
| 1. Staff Induction and Development
 |
| 1. Staff Code of Conduct and Roles/ Responsibilities about the room
 |
| 1. Whistle Blowing
 |

**We always remember: The welfare of the child is Paramount.**

**Definitions and Signs and Symptoms of Abuse**

The abuse and neglect of children is something that can occur within many situations including the home, preschool, playgroup, school, community and all forms of clubs and societies. Children are much more likely to be abused by someone known to them, or more rarely a stranger. There are different types of abuse, and a child may be abused in more than one way. Types of abuse and their commonly accepted definitions include:

**Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

**Signs and Symptoms**

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

* Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
* Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
* Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
* Refusal to undress for gym
* Bald patches
* Chronic running away
* Fear of medical help or examination
* Self-destructive tendencies
* Aggression towards others
* Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
* Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
* Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Smothering a child’s development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

* Physical, mental and emotional development lags
* Sudden speech disorders
* Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
* Overreaction to mistakes
* Extreme fear of any new situation
* Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
* Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
* Extremes of passivity or aggression

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Signs and Symptoms**

* Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
* Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
* Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
* Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
* Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
* Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
* Being isolated or withdrawn
* Inability to concentrate
* Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
* Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
* Become worried about clothing being removed
* Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
* Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect the child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Signs and Symptoms**

Constant hunger

Poor personal hygiene

Constant tiredness

Poor state of clothing

Emaciation

Untreated medical problems

No social relationships

Compulsive scavenging

Destructive tendencies

***Exploitation***

*The intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power over a child or a young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or a young person’s 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 the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.*

*Sexual exploitation of a child is defined as the act of employing, using, persuading, enticing, or coercing a minor child to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing visual depictions.*

**Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done.**

It's also known as "female circumcision" or "cutting". FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before [puberty](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/stages-of-puberty-what-happens-to-boys-and-girls/) starts. It is illegal in the UK and is child abuse. FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organ for non-medical reasons (World Health Organisation).

FGM is not an issue that can be decided on by personal preference – it is an illegal, extremely harmful practice, and a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. Professionals in health, social care and education have a statutory duty to report all cases of FGM to Gateway in line with this policy, where disclosure or signs of FGM are noted, or where a person knows or suspects FGM has been – or will be – perpetrated.

**Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse may take many forms. Witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent may cause considerable distress to children, and both the physical assaults and psychological abuse suffered by adult victims who experience domestic abuse can have a negative impact on their ability to look after their children. Children can still suffer the effects of domestic abuse, even if they do not witness the incidents directly. However, in up to 90% of incidents involving domestic violence where children reside in the home, the children are in the same or the next room. Children’s exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress among children.

Domestic abuse can therefore have a damaging effect on a child’s health, educational attainment and emotional well-being and development. The potential scale of the impact on children is not always easy to assess, but may manifest itself as behavioural, emotional, or social difficulties, including poor self-esteem, withdrawal, absenteeism, adult-child conflict. Children sometimes disclose what is happening or may be reluctant to do so, hoping that someone will realise something is wrong.

**Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

Harmful sexual behaviour is characterised by a range of behaviours that can include:

* Sexual name-calling
* Sexual harassment
* Online sexual bullying
* Sexual image sharing
* Sexual assault
* Rape

**Signs that may indicate harmful sexual behaviour.**

* Taking younger children to ‘secret’ places or hideaways or playing ‘special’ games with them (e.g. doctor and patient, removing clothing etc.)
* Seeking out the company of younger children and spending an unusual amount of time in their company.
* Insistence on hugging or kissing a child when the child does not want to.
* Frequently using aggressive or sexual language about adults or children.
* Showing sexual materials to younger children.
* Sharing sexual images of someone without their consent.
* Sharing sexual images of themselves without the recipient being clear that they would like to see them.
* Viewing sexual images of children online.
* Making sexually abusive telephone calls.
* Sharing alcohol or drugs with younger children or teens.
* Exposing their genitals to younger children.
* Forcing sex on another adolescent or child.
* Befriending a younger child in order to engage in sexual activity and asking them not to tell.
* Having sexual activity with someone who is significantly more drunk than themselves.
* Touching someone’s bottom, breasts or crotch area without in-the-moment indications that the touching is desired.

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse.
It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone

*Source: Kidscape*

**Designated Child Protection Leaders**

*Person within Belmont Playcare* who should always be informed of any concerns about a child Protection.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Designated Persons** |  |
| **Lisa Passmore** | **Martina McGeown** | ***Linda McMordie*** | ***Jessica Barrett*** |
| **Co-ordinator** | **Playgroup Leader** | ***Preschool Afternoon Leader*** | ***Afterschool and Holiday Club Leader*** |
| A person wearing a blue shirt  Description automatically generated with medium confidence |  | A person with curly hair  Description automatically generated with low confidence | A person smiling for the camera  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |

***Contact us on 02890671050***

***Appropriate contacts outside Belmont Playcare.***

**Gateway (children’s social work service)**

**02890 507000 (9.00am-5.00pm)**

**Regional Emergency Social Services**

**08001979995**

**(Outside Normal Office Hours Including Weekends and Public Holidays)**

**Social Services – Early Years team 028 95042811**

**Police 101**

**Procedure for Reporting An Incident Of Suspected/ Disclosed Abuse**

Member of staff has concerns about a child,

as a result of one observation or several over a period of time.

They do not investigate but must act PROMPTLY

**OR**

**Where a child discloses abuse or neglect**.

**Staff must act PROMPTLY**

The adult reports matter to Leader and Designated person, staff member completes (Cause for Concern Forms).

**Discuss concerns with Designated Officer**

**The Designated Officer will consider actions required, including contact and direction given by Gateway. Concerns and discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions should be recorded in writing. Including courses of action and decision making made by Gateway.**

**UNOCINI referral form MUST BE completed (within 24hours) and sent to Gateway, when a referral is made.**

**Intimate Care Policy**

The aim of Intimate Care Policy is to work in partnership with parents to help children develop a healthy interest in and understanding of how to look after his/her own personal needs. Belmont Playcare ensures that staffs are aware of the Intimate Care Policy and conform to the expectations of Belmont Playcare in line with current standards of care and adhere to the Child Protection policy.

If children are becoming independent in using the toilet, staff will encourage them to do as much as possible for themselves but will be available to provide any help requested. All help given will be explained to the child.

***In the case of special medical or child developmental circumstances, all intimate care procedures will be discussed and agreed with parents before the child starts in the setting or during the settling in period. The constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation are considered.***

We will try to ensure a child’s privacy while at the toilet or while being changed, while not operating behind closed doors. A child will never be left unattended in the toilets when being changed. Every member of staff will advise other staff when they are taking child/children to the toilet or for changing.

*Parents should be aware that the toilets are shared and staff from different sessions may be present. All staff are trained internally in good practice regarding intimate care and aware of privacy and child protection issues.*

Belmont Preschool/Playgroup accepts there may be times when staff will need to provide intimate care for a child. This may include bottom wiping or removing clothes due to soiling or vomiting. Staff will follow the procedure below:

* Explain to the child that you need to help them get cleaned up.
* Plastic Gloves and a disposable apron must always be worn and put on before changing soiled clothing / items. Soiled items will be wrapped and either disposed of or handed back to the parent / carer.
* All efforts will be made to provide space for the child to be changed in.
* Changing areas will be warm.
* Staff and carers hands will be washed using soap and water and all surfaces will be disinfected to avoid cross contamination.
* Only staff employed by Belmont Playcare who have been vetted, will be allowed to provide intimate care. Students, parents and volunteers are NOT permitted to do this or to have access to the children’s toilets.
* If a child objects to a member of staff providing intimate care, parents will be contacted to come to Playcare and provide care themselves if necessary.
* Staff are gentle when changing. They avoid pulling faces and making negative comments.
* Staff do not make inappropriate comments about young children’s genitals.
* We have a duty of care towards children’s personal needs and children are not left soiled.

Belmont Playcare use a duplicate book to record when changing children. This will be signed by the parent /carer on collection and a copy given to them.

**Intimate Care/ Physical Contact**

At Belmont Playcare we care for very young children. There will be times when staff are required to have close physical contact with a child. It is also important for the children to feel safe, secure and loved in their environment. We understand that children can react differently to physical contact, and we respect this.

Staff have received training in safeguarding & child protection. Staff are aware of potential hazards and cautions when providing physical contact. If staff have any doubt about physical contact or they observe any practice that causes concern, then they are to speak to the Designated Officer.

This policy sets out the reasons for physical contact between an adult and young

person.

The policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Intimate Care policy.

- Safeguarding policy,

- Child Protection policy,

- Health & Safety policy

- Moving and handling policy.

**Specific reasons touch, and physical contact are used:**

**Communication**

Placing a hand on child’s shoulder when speaking to them.

Supporting communication e.g. directing, guiding supporting children in a task.

**Learning**

Climbing up slide (Hand on back).

To assist and prompt interactions with peers and staff.

To support engagement with the resources.

**Transitions**

Using a hand to guide, prompt a learner during changes between activities.

**Play**

Many aspects of play activities naturally involve touch.

**Emotional Reasons**

To communicate affection and warmth.

To give reassurance (young children at the playgroup stage can need consistent physical contact and reassurance from a familiar adult and there is a greater need for a nurturing environment. This can include sitting on an adult’s knee (cushions available), cuddles and snuggling into familiar adults. This usually is for a short period, until the child becomes familiar with the new environment and appropriate relationships have been established with staff and peers.

Note: This depends on the individual child. Staff will encourage contact side by side).

Reduce risk of harm

Protect children from harm by physically intervening.

To calm down (a gentle stroke on the back).

**Other Intimate Care**

To give medical and nursing care.

At Belmont Playcare the adults when providing physical contact would be in clear view and with other adults present.

Wherever possible, a description and rational will be given to the child.

 “I am going to help you down”.

“I am going to lift you down”.

“Can I lift you up?”

This will be followed by positive praise appropriate to the situation and age and stage of the children.

If a child has a straddle injury (when the child hurts the area between the legs. This can happen after a fall onto an object such as a bicycle bar or the top of a fence).

We will reassure the child, give then a soft cushion to sit on, contact parents to check the child and possibly take home. Staff are unable to check this area for bruising or a cut.

NOTE: two staff members should be present throughout this process.

Accident book will be completed for the parent collecting.

**REFERENCE TO RELEVANT POLICIES/ LEGISLATION**

* Child minding and day care minimum standards (2012) standard 1, 3
* Handling and disposal of bodily fluids

**Inclusion and Individual Learning Policy**

In Belmont Playcare we believe that every child should have the best possible learning opportunities and we therefore endeavour to promote an inclusive practice.

Belmont Playcare’ s Playgroup and Preschool are committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, which offers as far as possible with our available resources equal access for all children. We recognise that some children may have special educational needs and/or a disability, and we aim to make suitable arrangements to provide for their individual needs.

It is the policy of this preschool/playgroup to provide places for the integration of children with special educational needs subject to:

● The view of the child’s parents.

● The ability of the session to meet the child’s needs.

● The efficient education of the other children in the session is assured.

● The efficient use of resources to determine suitability.

This is in line with SENDO legislation.

 **Definition**

**The code of practice (CO**P) for Special Educational Needs (SEN) defines ‘special educational needs’ as:

“A learning disability which calls for special educational provision to be made”

The COP adopts the definition of SEN as laid down in the 1981 Education Act and subsequently in the 1993 Education Act. Our aim is to ensure that “Special Educational Provision” will be made for any child who has a “Special Educational Need”.

“Learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of educational provision, which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age.”

**Code of practice paragraph: 1:4**

A child is deemed to be in need when;

● The child’s developmental progress in the playgroup/preschool will be affected by their general health status.

● A Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) considers that a child has special educational needs.

● The development progress gives rise to concern.

● A child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his or her age.

● Has a disability which hinders his or her use of educational facilities.

● Is specially gifted.

**Rationale**

The purpose of education for all children is the same, the goals are the same. But the level of support required by children to progress towards goals will be different. The preschool/playgroup is sensitive to the needs and feelings of children with SEN and their families and will ensure individual needs are recognised and addressed. Parents / carers will be involved at every stage and in any plans that are made to meet a child’s individual needs.

If a child has special needs of any kind, we will discuss;

● How the child and parent can be helped.

● How the staff can help.

● What advice and practical help we can get from outside agencies.

● What adaptations may need to be made.

● How we can support and help the parent.

● What behavioural and/ or educational plans need to be devised, with outside agency help, tailored to each individual child.

When applying for a place, parents should state if their child is receiving help from any of the following;

● Child Development team.

● Educational Psychologist.

● Occupational Therapist.

● Speech Therapist.

● Social Services.

Contact may be made to any of the above with parental consent if deemed appropriate.

The successful integration of children with special educational needs requires careful and detailed planning before starting the session.

**Procedures**

If a child enrols in either the Playgroup/Preschool sessions and has already been identified as having individual needs, we will firstly discuss with the parent and other supporting professionals, if Belmont Playcare can offer the appropriate care and education for their child. Every consideration of the child, other children in attendance and our available resources will be considered.

**Early Identification**

Individual needs are identified by close observation and use of professional judgement. If we observe a child is experiencing difficulty, we will discuss this with the parent/carer. We will request permission to consult the appropriate external support agency.

We will work in partnership with the parent to ensure that every possible assistance be given to the child.

**Prior to admission.**

● It is important that the child’s parents are willing to use this place.

● It is essential for the leader and staff to gain as much information as possible from the child’s parents and other professionals involved with the child.

● It is essential to ensure that extra classroom assistance or equipment is available, if necessary.

**Admission of child with special educational needs.**

After consultation with all concerned with the child, the child will usually be admitted into the playgroup/preschool in the same manner as the other children. Acting on the best interests of the child and to meet their needs, we reserve the right to adjust the normal settling in arrangements (i.e. frequency and duration of attendance- in the early days at least). We will also discuss with parents:

● The child’s reaction to previous experiences of separation from parents.

● The extent of the special educational need.

● That it may be preferable not to admit a child with special educational needs until most of the other children have been settled, depending on the particular need. It may be possible to admit them earlier if classroom assistance is available.

● That the child’s admission may have to be more gradual than usual. The length of stay shall be increased, as the child is ready. It is important that the parents of the children with special educational needs should be seen as active educators of their children and be very involved with the education of their child in the playgroup/preschool.

There will be regular contact with the leader to exchange information, and extra support shall be given to those parents, if necessary.

**Integration of children with special educational needs.**

● It is recommended where possible, the child with special educational needs will follow the same routines and have access to the same experiences and materials as other children. It is however recognised that those needs may result in him/her having additional attention and/or the use of special areas and equipment.

● The identification of areas requiring additional support may result in the leader devising individual learning plan for the child.

● It is important that good working relationships are established between professionals working with the child in order to share information and appropriate skills. We welcome and facilitate visits from professionals working with the children in the setting.

● Care will be taken to ensure that the child is socially integrated with the help from all members of staff.

● Systematic observations and records are especially pertinent for children who have special educational needs. They are necessary for the children who already have been, or are likely to be, statemented.

All staff work with the children to foster an inclusive learning environment where a positive approach is modelled, and children are encouraged to support one another.

***PRESCHOOL- follows the 3-stage approach as outlined in the code of practice.***

***PLAYGROUP- follows the same 3-stage approach as outlined in the code of practice.***

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**THE THREE-STAGE PROCEDURE**

**Stage 1**

The preschool leader raises a concern that a child may have special educational needs. They then consult with the child’s parents and permission is sought to place the child on the SEN register.

The staff will;

● File a record of concern.

● Offer differentiated teaching strategies.

● Monitor and review progress.

Stage 1 reasonable adjustments and additional strategies and approaches aimed at meeting and addressing the child’s needs.

**THE CHILD WILL ONLY MOVE TO STAGE 2 ONCE ANY EXTERNAL SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IS BEING IMPLEMENTED.**

**Stage 2**

The key worker shall;

Be responsible for working with the child in the classroom carrying out an individual education plan and shall monitor/review with the parents.

Appropriate individual/small groups will be put in place.

The child’s parents should be involved as much as possible and given suggestions on how they may contribute to their child’s educational plan.

External provision and implementation of any provision/strategies as a result of external advice will be put in place.

**Stage 3**

Statement of Special Educational Needs.

The key worker, external provision continue to work together to implement individual educational plans. Parents are updated at regular intervals on individual education plans in place.

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Sometimes a child will start preschool with a statement already in place. These children will need to be reviewed to make sure the needs of the child are being met and to consider the appropriateness of future provision.

**Record Keeping**

The sessions SEN information file is kept locked away in the office and only session staff, SENCO and coordinator has access to it.

We update our register as required.

Within this file we keep records of external support services available.

**Monitoring**

Staff keep a careful eye on each child’s individual progress. Regular review of IEP’s that focus on learning outcomes and inform future planning and movement either up or down through the code of practice stages are undertaken.

The designated SENCO is Linda McMordie

 The SENCO is responsible for ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the setting’s approach to identifying and meeting SEN.

** The SENCO is responsible for working with advising and supporting individual practitioners in the setting**

**Legislation**

**The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**

**Equality Act 2010.**

**Minimum Standards**

**Section 1- Quality of Care**

**Working in Partnership with parents**

**Additional needs**

**Links to following policies:**

**Admissions**

**Behaviour management**

**Health and safety**

**Child protection**

**Confidentiality**

**Curriculum policy**

**Observation and assessment policy.**

**Complaints Policy**

Supporting children with SEN is very much a partnership working process. Regular review meetings are held to discuss progress and outcomes for their child. It is our first step to listen and work through any issues with parents in house. However, the complaints policy is in place to support staff and families.

Professional development

Belmont Playcare strives for delivering quality practice for with SEN through investment of staff development. Please see training policy.

**Positive Behaviour Policy**

**Policy’s Statement of Intent**

Belmont Playcare recognises the importance of supporting the development of children’s positive behaviour to promote their welfare, learning and enjoyment.

The aims of our positive behaviour policy are to help children to:

* Develop a sense of caring and respect for themselves and one another.
* Develop confidence and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.
* Develop a range of social skills and become aware of appropriate kinds of behaviour
* Build caring and co-operative relationships with other children and adults.
* Begin to develop an awareness of how their behaviour can affect others
* Begin to develop awareness of their emotions and appropriate ways to express these
* Begin to regulate their own behaviour.

We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents/carers and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.

We familiarise new staff and volunteers and parents/carers with our positive behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.

Belmont Playcare staff will encourage positive behaviour through the use of clear, consistent and positive strategies.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute to these strategies, raising any concerns or suggestions. Promotion of positive behaviour in Belmont Playcare will be structured around the following principles:

* Staff and children will work together to establish a clear set of ‘ground rules’ governing all behaviour in the session. These will be periodically reviewed so that new children have a say in how the rules of the session operate. They will be clearly displayed in session.
* Defined ‘ground rules will apply equally to all children and staff.
* Positive behaviour will be reinforced with praise and encouragement.
* Negative behaviour will be challenged in a calm but assertive manner. In the first instance, staff will remind children of the relevant rule. Staff will be open in stating and explaining non-negotiable issues.
* When dealing with negative behaviour, staff will always communicate in a clear, calm and positive manner.
* Staff will make every effort to set a positive example to children by behaving in a friendly and tolerant manner themselves, promoting an atmosphere where children and adults respect and value one another.
* Staff will facilitate regular and open discussions with children about their behaviour. This will help them to understand the negative aspects of their behaviour and enable them to have their say and be helped to think through the causes and effects of their actions.
* Staff will work as a team by discussing incidents and resolving to act collectively and consistently.
* Staff will try to discuss concerns with parents/carers at the earliest possible opportunity in an attempt to help identify the causes of negative behaviour and share strategies for dealing with it.
* Children who experience bullying, racism or other unacceptable behaviour will be given the confidence to speak out.
* Staff will encourage and facilitate mediation between children to try to resolve conflicts by discussion and negotiation.

**Layout of the room and session programme**

We recognise that the layout of the room and programme of activities offered are key factors in the promotion of desirable behaviour, and consequently the prevention of undesirable behaviour.

* We will set out the room in such a way as to accommodate a wide range of stimulating, absorbing and enjoyable activities which are suitable for the children’s developmental levels, while dividing it into a number of distinct and accessible work areas. These include areas for both quiet and more physical activities.
* We will offer activities which are appropriate to the developmental levels of the children to encourage independence and good self-esteem.
* We will ensure that expectations for an area or activity are explained and made clear to the children, with visual reminders where possible, for example ‘5 can play here’ in the block area and our good sitting and listening rules during Storytime.
* We will also provide activities to foster co-operation and sharing amongst the children, for example our system for using the block area/home corner whereby the children must wear one of a limited number of wristbands, which are removed when leaving that activity. The procedure and reasons for its implementation are clearly explained to the children in an effort to encourage turn-taking and co-operation.
* We will provide opportunities for pretend play as a way in which the children can experiment with situations and express feelings in a safe and acceptable way. Play with materials such as sand, water and dough provide appropriate outlets for feelings of aggression.
* We provide a wide variety of age-appropriate, planned learning opportunities for children to become aware of their emotions and behaviour and to promote their wellbeing, including Mindfulness, yoga, breathing and relaxation and small group discussion activities.
* We aim to balance new experiences with familiarity through a well-planned, predictable sequence of activities, so providing the children with security and a sense of control and reducing the likelihood of disruptive, aimless behaviour.
* We will provide a seamless, flowing sequence of activities in the routine of the Playcare, during which the individual child can make their own choices and have a sense of control over what is happening next. The daily routine is displayed visually for the children and frequently referred to.
* We will avoid, where possible, long waiting periods and make short waits as active as possible.

**Adults’ expectations and interaction**

As members of staff in Belmont Playcare, we recognise the need to support and encourage the children through modelling care and concern for others, rather than taking a controlling and punitive approach to discipline.

* We will give positive encouragement and praise to acknowledge children’s efforts in an attempt to promote self-esteem and reinforce desirable behaviour.
* We will seek, value and listen to children’s ideas and points of view.
* Children will be given clear, consistent explanations for rules and limits.
* We will be consistent in following through agreed expectations and necessary limitations, while avoiding those that are unnecessary.
* Staff will model strategies for the resolution of issues, such as using a large sand-timer for turn taking and methods for dealing with unwanted attention from others.
* Staff will support children in the resolution of conflict situations, helping children to verbalise their feelings in an acceptable way and negotiate settlements.
* Staff will intervene immediately in the event of aggressive or destructive behaviour, giving a clear reason for their action.
* In the event of dealing with unwanted behaviour, staff will aim to demonstrate to the child that it is the behaviour rather than the child that is not wanted.

**Collaboration with parents**

We acknowledge that children will bring diverse experiences into the group, and that parenting-and lifestyles are varied. We aim to work in partnership with parents.

* We will aim to share our policy on behaviour with parents before children attend the group in an effort to promote mutual understanding and acceptance of what we are trying to do, and the methods used to achieve this.
* We will work in collaboration with parents, sharing information on a regular basis.

**When staff intervention is required to respond to negative behaviour**

Behaviours can include tantrums, hitting or kicking others, throwing things or self-harming.

Behaviour is challenging if it is harmful to the child and others around them, and if it stops the person achieving things in their daily life, such as making friends or concentrating short periods.

We understand that all behaviour is communication. We require all staff to use positive strategies for handling any negative behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children’s ages and stages of development.

* Staff will listen to the child or children concerned and hear their reasons for their actions. Staff will then explain calmly to the child or children what was negative about their behaviour and that such actions have consequences for both themselves and for others.
* Staff will make every attempt to ensure that children understand what is being said to them.
* Staff will discuss the session’s rules with an individual, group or whole class and try to help the child/ren see where they went wrong.
* Staff may withdraw a child from an activity which he/she is disrupting, pointing out the unacceptable behaviour and allowing the child a short “reflection” time which is supported by the adult.
* Staff may use their discretion and judgement to redirect children to an appropriate activity to help support self-regulation, e.g. sensory play with dough, or a physical activity.
* Dangerous behaviour will not be allowed, and the child will be withdrawn from the activity and only allowed to resume it when the staff judge it is appropriate.
* When staff/volunteers see danger or damage threatening, they may **firmly say "No or "Stop"** followed with reasons and positive guidance towards acceptable activities
* Physical intervention e.g. lifting the child will not be used unless it is required to prevent injury to child or other children, adults or property. Staff will use physical interventions only as a last resort and only then if they have reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary. Before reaching this stage, staff will have used all possible non-physical actions, such as dialogue and diversion, to deal with the behaviour. The child or children concerned will be informed verbally that physical intervention will be used if they do not stop. As soon as it is safe, the physical intervention should be gradually relaxed to allow the child or children to regain self-control and dialogue will be maintained with the child or children at all times, so that the member of staff can explain what they are doing and why they are doing it. NOTE: Only the minimum hold will be used which is necessary to prevent injury or damage.

Belmont Playcare aims to encourage children in developing positive behaviour and to support their family in their role. Children can sometimes require additional support with their behaviour for a number of reasons. If staff identify concern regarding a child’s behaviour we will arrange to meet with parents or carers to share the concern, to try to identify any triggers and plan the way forward, such as undertaking closer observation or seeking advice and support from other professionals (e.g. Health Visitor).

Through a positive approach to behaviour we hope to empower children to understand and take responsibility for their own behaviour.

**Rules of Happy Playcare Play**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Preschool** **AM & PM** | **Rules*** Children are encouraged to be kind to each other.
* Use quiet voices and listen to each other
* Use their walking feet.
* Look after our toys
* Do what the leader asks.

**Rewards*** Happy words from leaders
* Pom-pom in class jar (once full children receive a special class treat).
* Positive praise relayed home/sticker

**Process*** Spoken to first time.
* 2nd time brought to rules to discuss.
* 3rd time – supported reflection time.
* If behaviour continues staff refollow positive behaviour chart and if needs be discuss child’s behaviour with parent at end of the session.
 |
| **Playgroup Session** | **Rules*** Children are encouraged to be kind to each other.
* Use quiet voices.
* Listen to each other.
* Use their walking feet.
* Do what their leader asks.

**Rewards*** Positive words from leader
* Positive praise relayed home.
* Stickers and pom pom jar

**Process*** Spoken to first time.
* 2nd time brought to rules to discuss – timer used for 2-minute adult-supported time in an area of Playgroup. Once timer finished staff member reinforces the positive behaviour.
* If behaviour continues staff refollows positive behaviour chart and if needs be discuss child’s behaviour with parent at end of the session.
 |

Physical punishments including smacking, slapping or shaking are neither used nor threatened by any adult or child in Belmont Playcare environment. PARENTS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS STATEMENT

**Exclusion Procedure:**

In rare cases it may be necessary to exclude a child. The decision to exclude, either temporarily or permanently, can only be taken by the coordinator and Board of Trustees.

**A decision to exclude would only be taken as a last resort after all strategies and practices in this policy and our inclusion policy have been exhausted, or if allowing the child to remain in Belmont Playcare would seriously harm the education or welfare of the child or other children and staff.**

Reasons for Exclusion

Exclusion may be considered in one or more of the following circumstances:

A child exhibits repeated violent and/or uncontrollable behaviour

A child persistently directs abusive or threatening language towards either a member of staff or to another child Persistent asocial behaviour or problems of an indefinable nature

The child through his/her behaviour is perceived to represent a physical risk to him/herself, to other children or to members of the staff.

Belmont Playcare staff will initiate the following actions:

 Playcare staff will execute the Behavioural Policy and Procedures.

 If the behavioural problems persist.

The parents of the child will be consulted so that an action plan can be formulated.

 Specialist advice, assistance and help will be sought.

 A meeting with all relevant outside agencies, staff and parents/guardians will be held to discuss the behavioural issues and to agree upon an action plan.

Playcare staff will report progress to the child’s parents/guardians on a daily basis.

 Regular review meetings will be held.

If there is no improvement in the child’s behaviour or the behaviour constitutes an immediate threat to another child or member of staff, the child will be excluded

A letter to the parents/guardians will be sent informing them of Belmont Playcare’ s decision to exclude the child.

Linked to:

Child Protection Policy (We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access Belmont Playcare and promote the **welfare** of all our children attending).

Links to Harmful Sexual Behaviours (see definitions)

Individual Learning and Inclusion Policy

HST Minimum Standards- Standard 6 Promoting Positive Behaviour.

**Anti-Bullying Policy (Preschool and Playgroup Children)**

**What is bullying?**

Bullying is not always easy to define as it can take many forms and can be either short term or long term. It has been defined as “the wilful conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone.”

We at Belmont Playcare are committed to provide a caring, friendly and safe environment for all children and their families, so they can learn through play in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying/harassment (physical or emotional) by children, parents, staff/volunteers is unacceptable in Playcare. Bullying/harassment will be positively challenged by supporting the child/person who has suffered the effects of this and helping those responsible to understand and overcome their behaviour.

This policy aims to produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur, and we aim to make all those connected with Belmont Playcare aware of our opposition to bullying. We do not tolerate any kind of bullying and support all parties involved to gain a full understanding of our ethos.

**Bullying of any kind is unacceptable**

The Anti-Bullying Policy also has links with other policies,

* Child Protection
* Behaviour Management
* Special Needs
* Complaints
* Equal Opportunities
* Whistle Blowing
* Confidentiality.

**Preventing bullying by means of good practice**

* Encourage a whole group approach to prevent bullying.
* Provide a safe, secure and happy environment.
* Promote positive behaviour.
* Work in partnership with parents.
* Encourage respect among children.
* Encourage respect for equipment and resources.
* Ensuring that awareness is raised through staff training.
* Explain boundaries within the setting.
* Promote co-operative group work.
* Set boundaries for the play.
* Support the play to find alternative solutions to ‘weapon’ play, exploring different scenarios.
* Television or films, which include superheroes, often influence young children and they will mimic this behaviour through their play. Staff recognise that this is pro-social play rather than aggressive.

Very young children are ‘egocentric’, which means that they put their own feelings before others and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over exuberance. We acknowledge that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported and that very young children usually do not intentionally wish to cause hurt.

 If hurtful comments are made, our strategies are: -

  To recognise that very young children are not always able to manage their own feelings and deliver them appropriately.

  Assist in this management to support their development & understanding.

  Offer support to both parties and to discuss the issues through play, story time or circle time activities.

**Types of bullying**

1. **Verbal bullying**

This is the most common type of bullying and it includes teasing, name- calling, taunts and threats.

1. **Nonverbal bullying**

Non-verbal forms of communication include gesture (a clenched fist), body language (a swagger) and facial expressions.

1. **Physical bullying**

Physical bullying can range over a wide continuum of severity, ranging from a push, pinch or some form of physical assault.

1. **Exclusion bullying**

This can be heard in phrases such as `You’re not playing with us` or `You’re not coming to my party`. To be left out of the social group can be hurtful for young children.

1. **Extortion bullying**

This may appear to be a strong word, but it includes forcing someone to hand over play materials or valuables.

1. **Hiding things**

Young children are sensitive about their possessions and become upset if their precious items regularly go missing.

1. **Spoiling things**

Knocking down someone’s work or destroying a game can be very distressing.

**Possible signs of being bullied**

* Unwillingness to go to the Playcare session.
* Visible signs of anxiety when entering certain situations.
* Unexplained mood swings/ becoming withdrawn at group situations.
* Loss of concentration and enthusiasm when taking part in activities.
* Reluctance to speak out/ say what is troubling them.
* Becoming upset for no obvious reason.
* Complaining about being unwell.
* Atypical soiling.

This is not an exhaustive list and these signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered.

**Procedure**

To discourage perceived bulling behaviour we will ensure that staff are aware of signs of bullying and a consistent approach is used.

Belmont Playcare will employ the most appropriate of a range of strategies e.g. the no blame approach, initially. Belmont Playcare will take the issue seriously and deal with the concerns.

Liaise with all members of staff and devise appropriate and consistent strategies to deal with bullying behaviour.

The staff will record, through observation, incidents that may cause concern. Incidents which may have caused marks to a child will be recorded in the accident book.

Parents of the pupils involved will be informed.

We will talk with children at their level and explain acceptable behaviour towards other children.

If problem persists, we will refer to our Behaviour Management Policy.

If necessary, we will involve parents and work in partnership to develop strategies to overcome bullying behaviour.

Time to investigate parental concerns may be required, Parents will be given an appointment to discuss information from any investigations.

**Staff**

• Session staff will have good communication with each other.

. • A “telling” ethos will be developed and encouraged.

• School rules will be as positive as possible.

• Responsible behaviour and preventative strategies will be discussed in class in curriculum areas such as Personal Social and Emotional Development and during circle time. Perceived bulling behaviour will be tackled through the curriculum i.e. circle time, role-play and co-operative play to develop social skills.

• Self-respect and self-esteem will be promoted at all times.

* Staff create opportunities for caring and sharing.
* Staff monitor and evaluate the situation.
* Staff work in partnership with parents.
* Support is offered to both, the child who has suffered the effects of perceived bullying behaviour and to the child who is carrying out the behaviour, through building the self-esteem of both children.
* Staff have appropriate procedures for recording incidents.

**The Role of Parents**

Parents, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child might be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact Belmont Playcare. Parents have a responsibility to support Belmont Playcare’ s anti-bullying policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of their session. Parents are expected to develop their child’s social skills, in support of Belmont Playcare’ s ethos.

**This Policy** works in compliance with the Whistle blowing Policy

**Complaint Policy**

**Policy:**

We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of Belmont Playcare. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach with the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of Belmont Playcare to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

There are 5 stages to making a complaint

**Stage 1**

Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of Belmont Playcare’ s provision talks over his/her concerns with your session leader or the coordinator first of all. Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. We record the issue, and how it was resolved, in the complaints file.

**Stage 2**

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the coordinator or board of trustees.

If the complaint requires investigation by the trustees, it will be led by the Chairperson who will gather information from staff and read-through any paperwork completed concerning the complaint.

NOTE: Trustees will follow the government publication decision-making for charity trustees (see appendices)

When the investigation is completed and a decision reached the coordinator/trustee meets with the parent to discuss the outcome. We inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of him/her making the complaint. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaint File.

Belmont Playcare stores all information relating to written complaints from parents safely and securely.

**Stage 3**

If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with our coordinator. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and our coordinator should have the support from a Belmont Playcare trustee. An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points in our Complaints file.

**Stage 4**

If at the stage three meeting the parent cannot reach an agreement with us we invite an external mediator to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides, and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers, but can help us to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.

A representative from our HR company Think People are appropriate persons to be invited to act as mediators

The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. She/he can hold separate meetings with our staff and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

**Stage 5**

When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent and our coordinator and owner is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached. A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

In some circumstances, it may be necessary to involve the Health and Social Care Trust Early Years Team. Parents can contact ***Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Early Years Team on 02895042811***

Also available is the ombudsman whose function is to investigate complaints about most public services in Northern Ireland. The complaint must usually have exhausted the complaints process of the public body first.

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

[**Address**](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEA_enGB938GB938&q=northern+ireland+public+services+ombudsman+address&ludocid=15905910752437744389&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj22KfhlKb6AhXlQkEAHTzADO4Q6BN6BAhhEAI)**:**Progressive House, 33 Wellington Pl, Belfast BT1

[**Phone**](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEA_enGB938GB938&q=northern+ireland+public+services+ombudsman+phone&ludocid=15905910752437744389&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj22KfhlKb6AhXlQkEAHTzADO4Q6BN6BAhgEAI)**:**[0800 343424](https://www.google.com/search?q=ombudsman+ni&rlz=1C1GCEA_enGB938GB938&oq=ombudsman+ni&aqs=chrome.0.0i355i512j46i175i199i512j0i512l8.4229j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

These details are also displayed on our indoor notice board.

**Records**

A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept for at least three years; including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

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**Seesaw Communication and Assessment Policy**

Seesaw is a secure online learning journal which is used to record photographs, observations and comments. This system allows us to work with parents and carers to share information and record the children’s play and learning in and outside of the session.

How does Seesaw work?

Seesaw provides each individual child with their own Learning Journal held online. Parents and carers are given their own log-in. All our staff are given secure log-in codes.

Parents can change their settings so that an email is then automatically generated informing them when an observation has been added so they can have a look and add any comments of their own.

Seesaw does not share any information with any outside organisations. Further information is available on the Seesaw website <https://web.seesaw.me/privacy>

**How Seesaw will be used at Belmont Playcare:**

Any messages sent to the session staff through Seesaw will only be responded to during working hours. We expect any messages to be courteous and to ensure communication is kept to a professional level.

SeeSaw will only be used by session staff within session working hours. Please be aware that if you send a message to the session staff, they may not see it as they are working with their session throughout the day and may not see a message until after the children go home.

Although information will be sent out to inform parents/carers, SeeSaw will not be used as a platform for dialogue or individual communication between staff and parents.

 Access to the service will only be given to approved parents and carers.

Parents should not screenshot or share any information on social media or any other platform outside of Seesaw.

As with all aspects of digital technology, Belmont Playcare takes every precaution possible to keep children and staff safe online. We encourage parents to be vigilant if children are using Seesaw at home to watch any session videos.

If there is a future lockdown, Seesaw will be used as a home learning platform. Session Staff can also be contacted through Seesaw between normal session times during a period of lockdown.

To adhere to GDPR, staff will only identify children on the service using their first name and surname.

Session staff will approve all posts and comments from parents/carers before publishing.

Session staff will provide specific session information about upcoming events, learning and trips. Newsletters will also be shared via SeeSaw.

Children’s work is private to the session by default. Session staff control what is shared and with whom.

Session Leaders will ensure adequate training is provided for staff on the use of Seesaw within the session.

**How assessment will be evidenced on Seesaw:**

Seesaw provides electronic profiling and will create a snap-shot of children’s learning.

**Session staff are responsible for:**

Developing the skills of pupils to capture evidence by adding examples of learning, like photos or drawings and comments.

Staff will look at and identify next steps.

Staff will provide feedback that moves learning forward.

Staff will engage with parents and carers to create an online environment which creates a meaningful home-school connection so that parents and carers can better support their child’s learning.

Over the academic year, Seesaw builds an organised, digital portfolio of each child’s learning. **It is not shared with anyone else as each child has their own individual unique journal.**

**Seesaw apps available and instructions:**

There are two apps available to access Seesaw. Both have different purposes.

**Family app:**

This is used for parents to view a child’s journal. If you have more than one child at Belmont Playcare then you can view both journals. Through the Family app you can message your child’s key worker (once they have messaged you and established the contact chain) regarding photographs and accompanied comments.

 If you require more information regarding your child’s development or concerns please do not hesitate to phone or arrange a suitable appointment at drop off or collection time.

Once you have logged into this app, it will stay logged in. This app will not notify you of any posts that have been put up.

Afterschool parents only require the family app as no observations are taken in this session.

**Class app:**

This app is used to add to your child’s journal and is accessible through your child’s Home Learning code, which is sent as a post on family app by each session.

Parents can respond to activity suggestions or posts made by session staff in a picture/video/PDF/note form. Any journal entry or comment made, will be only be posted once your child’s key worker has approved the post.

**How do I view more than one of my children’s journal on the Family app?**

Once you have set up the app for one child, you can add a journal by clicking on your initials in the top left hand corner and then clicking ‘Add Child’s Journal’. You will then be prompted for a QR code. This will code will be printed and handed out to each child by your child’s key worker. Scan the code and then you will need to wait for your child’s class teacher to verify your email address. Once they have done this, you will be able to view and comment on your child’s journal entries and receive any announcements or message from your child’s key worker.

**How do I message my child’s session staff?**

You can message your child’s key worker through SeeSaw using the Family app once the staff has sent a message first to begin the contact. You can do this through the third tab on the Family app which is ‘Inbox’. It is through the inbox that you will also see any announcements that your child’s key worker sends.

**How long can I access my child’s journal?**

Your child’s journal will be established from September until August each year. The journal is live for each academic year and then archived. Archiving a class will remove a class from present active class list. Once a class is archived parents will no longer be able to see their child’s journal in the app.

**Belmont Preschool CHARGES AND REMISSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Belmont Playcare believes in open communication between parents/carers, management, and staff. This charging and remission policy outlines and ensures parents/carers understand the terms and conditions when their child attends Belmont Playcare in regards to the invoices they will receive and the payments they are required to make.

**Statement of Intent**

Belmont Playcare is a registered charity, which includes the playgroup, preschool, and for primary school aged children an afterschool, breakfast and holiday club. One of our financial aims is to ensure we do not make a loss at the end of the year. Each year our budget is carefully planned according to the number of children we have and the fees that we will charge for the year to cover building rent, insurances and staff wages, along with all other expenditure.

**Aims**

The charitable purpose of our Pre-School is to promote play based learning environments, to enhance the development and education of preschool children regardless of religion, culture, race or means primarily in the Belmont area of East Belfast but not exclusively. As we are a non-profit organisation any income we receive is used to provide the best care and experience possible for the children under our care, therefore it is important for us that we are able to collect due fees and donations as fully and efficiently as possible.

**Charges**

Note: All fees/charges must be paid in full prior to the end of June in the current academic year.

**Preschool children**

The curriculum for the preschool funded children’s places at Belmont Preschool is provided free of charge. However, it is necessary to request voluntary contributions of monies from parents/carers, as a means of providing enrichment to our curriculum e.g. baking activities, presentations from visitors, educational trips and provision of consumables e.g. tissues, first aid items, paper for painting and additional play resources, which we are not able to provide from the Preschool’s allocated budget from the Education Authority.

Failure to donate to the voluntary contribution will not preclude any child from participating in any of the additional experiences. However, if we do not receive the required donations, the type and frequency of these additional offerings and hence the experiences of our children, will be reduced as they are governed by the amount of money contributed.

In addition to the contributions made by parents/carers, the Preschool finances benefit from fundraising throughout the year and from the profit on the sale of school photographs and uniform.

The voluntary contribution will be agreed by the Board of Trustees during the academic year, with any new charges being implemented in the following academic year. The voluntary contribution will be requested at the start of the academic year and reminders will be emailed throughout the year. All monies received from parents/carers will be sent electronically and therefore both parties will have a record of the payments made.

Payments for the year can be made in full in September or in 2 instalments. Further to these options a parent/carer may set up a standing order to pay an equal amount for the 10 months (September to June) under agreement with the Finance Manager (email admin@belmontplaycare.org).

**Voluntary Donations - Gift Aid**

The parents/carers of all children who attend Belmont Preschool will be asked to make voluntary donations. To maximise the full potential of such donations, we would ask that parents complete a Gift Aid Declaration Form. By confirming you are a UK Income or Capital Gains taxpayer Belmont Playcare can reclaim tax on your donation made i.e. 25p of tax on every £1 that you donate. If however, circumstances change and you pay less Income Taxor Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all of your donations it is your responsibility to pay any difference.