



A Guide to Writing Policies and Procedures

Quality Improvement and Support Team



All information contained in this booklet was correct at the time of writing.

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This guidance has been written by Calderdale Quality Improvement and Support Team. It is intended as a guidance booklet only. It is the responsibility of each setting to ensure that any information used in the writing of their policies and procedures is up to date and in accordance with current legislation.

A guide to writing policies and procedures

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 (EYFS 2017), states that:

Where providers other than childminders are required to have policies and procedures as specified below, these policies and procedures should be recorded in writing. Childminders are not required to have written policies and procedures. However, they must be able to explain their policies and procedures to parents, carers, and others (for example Ofsted inspectors or the childminder agency with which they are registered) and ensure any assistants follow them.

Providers must make the following information available to parents and/or carers: details of the provider's policies and procedures (all providers except childminders (see paragraph 3.3) must make copies available on request) including the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent and/or carer failing to collect a child at the appointed time, or in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting.

The aim of this guidance is to help you create policies and procedures that include all the relevant information needed under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They should explain how your setting runs and how you use your resources to meet the needs of the children.

All employees, volunteers and students should have access to and acknowledge that they have read and understood every policy and procedure within the setting. This should be part of your induction programme. You should also make sure employees, volunteers and students are included and updated whenever you review or rewrite your policies. All employees, volunteers and students should be aware of the content of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and should have access to a copy.

You should ensure that prospective new parents are aware of your policies and procedures so they can make an informed choice about which setting they want their child to go to. Parents who already have a child at your setting should be able to

access your policies and procedures at all times. You may want to give each parent a copy (remember how large it is) or you may just want to give them certain policies or procedures for their reference. If you have a website you can post key policies on it. Parents should acknowledge that they have read, understood and agree with every policy and procedure within the setting. You may want to send copies of policies electronically, remember that policies sent electronically may be copied and changed unless systems are put in place to prevent this (such as saving it as a pdf).

What is a policy?

- A policy shows how you deliver the EYFS.
- It is a statement of the ethos, values and beliefs of your organisation.
- They are the principles that guide you and if they are formulated, written down and delivered consistently, they will demonstrate a professional approach.
- They clarify roles, responsibilities and can be used to aid decision making.
- A policy will explain what to do in any situation (a procedure will tell your employees, volunteers and students how to do it).
- It should contain all necessary information; including legal obligations to your setting and practice.
- It is important that policies are concise and easy to understand so all employees, volunteers and students comply consistently with policies.
- Your policies will inform your procedures and make sure that all employees, volunteers and students adopt a standard of practice in your setting that minimises risk to the children in your care.

Why are written policies important?

- Policies can help you to think strategically about your business when making decisions.
- Having a clear written policy will ensure continuity of information given to employees and service users alike and leaves less chance of misinterpretation.
- They will set clear expectations and boundaries and will often bring greater compliance than verbal information.

What are procedures?

- A procedure is a documented process to be used as a reference when performing a task.
- It captures the knowledge of a job in a form that can be understood and followed by another person.
- Procedures clearly state the course of action to be taken in a given situation. This makes sure that your childcare practice is consistent and that clear standards of practice are upheld.
- Procedures make sure that everyone knows what will happen in any given situation and if parents know what to expect they are often more comfortable with leaving their child in your care.
- Carefully planned procedures also make sure that children benefit from a consistent approach that gives them the comfort of an established routine.
- If people start to move away from the agreed procedures, you need to decide whether the procedure should be changed to match this new way of working or whether the procedure should stay the same with the employees, volunteers and employees, volunteers and students receiving additional training to re-establish the correct procedure.

Why are written procedures important?

- Your procedure should be an extension of your policy and a step by step guide to how achieve the outcome stated within your policy.
- Your written procedure should be easy to follow and where possible should be practiced regularly to ensure that each step is achievable and reflects current practice.

Reviewing your policies and procedures

Policies should be reviewed annually or following significant changes to legislation or incidents or changes in the setting. Remember that, although they need to be reviewed annually, this does not necessarily mean that they need to be changed. However, they should be re-dated and signed.

When a policy is changed, don't forget to update:

- Your induction programme

- Employees, volunteers and students handbook
- Operational plan
- Prospectus / parent handbook.

Consider a rolling programme of review across the year and put reviews on agendas for staff meetings (including employees, volunteers and students,) and committee / governor meetings etc. If you know that big changes are imminent, time your reviews appropriately.

To summarise

- A policy is a course of action adopted by an organisation or individual.
Policies inform procedures.
- A procedure is a series of actions carried out in a certain order or manner.
Each setting is unique in the service they provide, therefore, your policies will all be different and unique in order to reflect the service you offer.
- Your policies and procedures should be written and reviewed with input from your whole team, parents, carers, committee members and children. Their contributions should be valued and included where appropriate.
- Policies and procedures should be clear and concise. You need to revise them regularly and see them as a working document; to make sure they reflect best practice
- Good well thought out and implemented policies and procedures ensure:
 - Good practice
 - Helps to establish a professional and effective organisation
 - They provide consistency amongst employees, volunteers and students, parents and children
 - They can prevent any ambiguity about how particular situations/issues should be handled in the
 - service
 - They promote harmony among employees, volunteers and students
 - More efficient and effective delivery of service

EYFS 2017 Requirement

3.69: Records must be easily accessible and available (with prior agreement from Ofsted of the childminder agency with which they are registered, these may be kept securely off the premises). Confidential information and records about staff and children must be held securely and only accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see them. Providers must be aware of their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998* and where relevant the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

***The Data protection Act 1998 has now been replaced with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) inclusive of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.**

Writing your policies and procedures is just the first step – your setting then needs to make them happen.

This guide is written in a variety of styles in order to address different people's ways of working. Some parts of the guide may have detailed links to legislation or good practice; others may point you in the right direction to find this information yourself. This guide is not exhaustive and as legislation changes frequently may not reference current documents. It is your responsibility to ensure that your policies and procedures are current and meet the requirements of your provision and the regulatory body.

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Partnerships
Uncollected Child
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Arrival or Departure, including Visitors
Admissions
Settling In

A full copy of the ***Guide to writing Policies and Procedures*** can be purchased from the Quality Improvement and Support Team. For information about current costs, or to request a copy please email QISO@calderdale.gov.uk