

**Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre
Lettings Policy
8.9.08**

This Lettings policy has been devised for use by all service providers using the Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre. It aims to act as a guide for all users, setting out both the provision offered and also the expected conduct for all providers. It forms part of the *Service Provider Agreement*.

The Children's Centre is used by a wide range of service providers, with differing requirements and needs. The following information and guidance has been devised to ensure that all users have equitable access to quality premises, no matter when they use the centre.

Any group/providers or its customers/clients/patients who cannot comply with the terms and conditions of use of the centre, as set out below in this lettings policy, may be asked to find alternative premises from which to operate. If you have any queries with regards to this policy, please speak to the Children's Centre Manager or Children's Centre staff.

This policy will be updated regularly to ensure that all information is kept up to date and is included. Service providers using the children's centre premises to deliver services will receive a copy of this policy and will be asked to sign a *Service Provider Agreement* with the Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre which will include agreeing to operate within the parameters of this policy. Regular updates to this policy will be made and agreements should be signed annually.

1. Acronyms used:

CC - Children's Centre
CCM - Children's Centre Manager

2. A happy, friendly and welcoming environment:

All users and visitors are expected to respect the premises and each other. This includes the varying services provided by different users in the centre, their views and their equipment. Users are expected to instill this ethos amongst the customers using their service. Please read the Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre Welcoming Policy, provided on the reverse of every registration form (see also Appendix 1).

Please ensure that your customers are aware of this Children's Centre Welcoming Policy and the Customer/Visitor Usage Policy (Customer Charter) (see Appendix 2), and encourage them to adhere to it.

All providers using the Children's Centre premises must work in accordance with this Welcoming Policy and adhere to the County Council's Equal Opportunities Policy;

3. There may be other groups using the centre at the same time as you, or immediately after or before you. Please respect all users of the centre. Usage of the centre is restricted to the area you have requested/hired. Please speak to the Children's Centre Manager or (Administrator) if you would like to make use of other areas.

Breastfeeding is welcome at the Children's Centre. Parents who breastfeed will not be asked to leave. If the breastfeeding mother, however, would prefer to breastfeed in private, then they should ask a member of the Children's Centre staff who will do their best to find a suitable safe private space for them to do so.

4. Children's Centre Monitoring: Providers using the Children's Centre premises may be asked to provide data regarding their service users/customers. This data will be used if requested by the local authority or DCSF (Government) to provide evidence that the Children's Centre is meeting its aims and fulfilling its purpose and Designation Agreement. Any data supplied will be kept in the strictest confidence to produce statistical data, which may be published.
5. Information Sharing and Sign-Posting: Service users and visitors to the children's centre will be told of all relevant local services. The Children's Centre cannot recommend one service over another, but can act to highlight services that the customer/visitor may otherwise not have been aware of.

Visitors attending services at the children's centre may be given information regarding new services. Providers may also like to take advantage of this service to advertise their own local provision. Please speak to the Children's Centre Manager if you would like to do so.

6. Publicity: Service providers using the children's centre to deliver services must provide the Children's Centre Manager with all publicity information produced, in order for the Children's Centre staff to be fully informed of the service/s on offer and to provide accurate information to all customers.
7. Health & Safety: For the safety and security of all visitors:
 - a. Users are expected to read the Children's Centre Health & Safety documents displayed on notice board and in the Health & Safety file located in the reception/office, including the Children's Centre generic risk assessment document and emergency evacuation procedure;

- b. You must ensure that you have undertaken your own risk assessments of your activities prior to their commencement, including any impact of the premises in which you are undertaking them;
- c. Hertfordshire County Council require providers to have relevant insurance:
- d. You must have adequate public liability insurance, a minimum of £5million (please speak to the Children's Centre Manager if you are unsure about this). You must show your valid insurance certificate to the Children's Centre Manager (who may take a copy);
- e. If you employ staff, then you should have adequate employer's liability insurance;
- f. If your service provides advice to your customers, you will also be required to have professional indemnity insurance. The Children's Centre Manager must be given a copy of your valid insurance certificate;
- g. When working with children and vulnerable adults, you must have a recent (*maximum 3 year old*) Enhanced CRB disclosure, a copy of which must be provided to the Children's Centre Manager prior to booking the premises for services. If the premises are booked for use with other customers, then this stipulation may still apply due to other more vulnerable users potentially using the premises at the same time as you. If you have any concerns about this, please discuss this with the Children's Centre Manager;
- h. In accordance with the Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre Designation Agreement with HCC, any employee of a service provider using the Children's Centre premises whose conduct places a service user at risk or might bring the Council into disrepute "shall be the subject of immediate investigation by the provider and dealt with to the satisfaction of the Council which might direct that the employee be removed from activities";
- i. You must ensure that your customers/clients/patients are aware of the fire evacuation procedures and where all the conveniences are;
- j. Do not block any fire exits. They must be kept clear at ALL times;
- k. Please sign in and out of the building, and let the Children's Centre staff know that you are leaving/have left;

- l. All visitors must sign in and out of the building, in the book at the main reception, in addition to any register that you provide (unless alternative arrangements have been made with the Children's Centre Manager);
- m. Customers/visitors to your session will not be allowed to stay in the building until service organisers have arrived;
- n. Do not allow entry to any visitors who are not accessing your services. Refer these visitors to the Children's Centre staff. If none are available, then the visitor must return when the centre is open to the public. This includes any visitors who may attend to conduct maintenance, etc...., unless you have been notified of this by the Children's Centre staff;
- o. The front doors must remain closed at all times, to ensure the safety of all people in the building, and also to maximise security of personal and Children's Centre equipment. The buzzer system must be used to allow customers to gain entry;
- p. Windows must be closed after use, and all fire doors must remain shut at all times;

8. Please be environmentally friendly:

- a. After use, please ensure that all lights are switched off and that any zip boilers used have been switched off. Please check if the room is going to be used by anyone else that day;
- b. The building will be cleaned regularly, however users must ensure that they leave the premises (at least) as tidy as they found it. This includes cleaning and putting away all relevant toys, kitchen equipment and rubbish, and cleaning up any spillages. Please check the toilets regularly (for taps left on or spillages, etc...) and any kitchen area, and communal hall ways used. Please ask for any cleaning equipment that you may require (hoover, dust pan, brush and mop are all available if necessary);
- c. If you require any additional items, please ask;
- d. If you find that stocks (toilet roll, hand soap, paper towels, etc...) are depleted or are in need of repair, please let the Children's Centre staff know immediately and we will replenish/repair these items.

9. The main storage cupboard will store all play equipment.
 - a. Any play equipment in the main rooms is for use by all groups (and is the property of the Children's Centre *or Mandeville School*);
 - b. All items stored in the main storage cupboard will be available for communal use. Groups are very welcome to store items here, following discussion with the Children's Centre staff, however they are advised that other groups will have access to use of this equipment;
 - c. Groups who store their own equipment must provide an up-to-date inventory to the Children's Centre Manager (agreed by the CCM), and must have adequate insurance for these items of equipment;
 - d. Respect for others' equipment is expected, and forms part of the usage agreement. Users who use the Children's Centre or other groups' equipment should treat this (and all) equipment with respect, using it only for its intended use. Users take responsibility for using all equipment (whether owned by them or by others), checking it is safe and appropriate to use before use by visitors/customers. No liability will be held with the Children's Centre or the owner of the equipment;
 - e. If any communal toys or other items are damaged, either before or during your session, please remove these items from children's access, and notify a member of staff immediately. If staff are not available, please leave a note on the item, and also for the staff to see (on the office door);
10. Room layouts. Each room is used by many groups for numerous differing reasons, and so room users are advised to arrive in good time before session starting times in order to ensure that the room is set up appropriately for your session;
11. Refreshments. Hot water (via the zip boilers) and cold drinking water are available for everyone's use.
 - a. Items such as tea, coffee, milk, sugar, other soft drinks, edibles and refreshments must be supplied by the user, in order to ensure availability and customer satisfaction;
 - b. Service users will be required to take adequate care and risk assess the provision of hot drinks with regard to their service provision/activity, particularly in the presence of babies or children. (Services run directly by the Children's Centre will require that any hot drinks be consumed

away from any babies or children present (eg. in the play and activity rooms) for health and safety reasons.)

- c. Please feel free to use the fridges in the tea areas to store any appropriate items;
 - d. The fridge will be cleaned periodically, however it is the responsibility of all users to clean up any spillages and to remove any items after your session;
 - e. The Children's Centre cannot be responsible for any items left in the fridges or other communal areas;
 - f. Any out of date items will be thrown away.
12. Parking: There is no parking on the school premises. All providers and visitors are asked to park considerately and respect local residents when parking their vehicles, and to pass this information onto their service users in any advertising literature prior to activities commencing.
13. Buggy store: The buggy store is used at the buggy owners own risk. The Children's Centre cannot accept any responsibility for items lost from the buggy store. Padlocks can be borrowed from the main reception, when staffed, on receipt of a deposit item on a daily basis (to be returned to the user when the padlock and chain are returned after use). If you want to enquire whether this service will be available during your session, please check with the Children's Centre staff prior to commencement of your session/s. Otherwise you may wish to create your own system, or discuss a solution with the Children's Centre staff, who will be happy to advise you.
14. Security: Every attempt will be made to keep the building secure, however the Children's Centre cannot accept any responsibility for items lost in the Centre. Items left in communal areas (coats, bags, etc..) are left at the owners' own risk.
15. We ask that Service Providers pass the above information onto users of your service, and highlight the Customer/Visitor Usage Policy (Customer Charter) (Appendix 2), available in the lobby at the Children's Centre for all users to read.
16. Usage outside normal opening times: charges may need to be made outside of term-time and core term-time opening for lighting, heating, opening & locking up, and any additional cleaning.

Please also note the following:

Charges to use the centre are yet to be agreed collectively amongst St Albans & District Children's Centres, which will include taking into consideration local charges.

Appendix 1: Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre Welcoming Policy (Rules & Regulations) - to help ensure that all visitors' experiences are positive and welcoming.

The Children's Centre believe that children develop and learn best in a positive, encouraging and welcoming environment where they feel respected and safe to explore. We therefore seek to create this environment within the services we provide, and believe that all children under 5 and their families attending our services are entitled to this. In order for this to happen, we ask that the following points are adhered to:

- All parents and carers are responsible for the welfare of their child/ren and must actively and positively address any unwelcome behaviour displayed by any child/ren in their care;
- If you have concerns about another child's behaviour, then this must be addressed politely and resolved in a positive way;
- If another member of the group raises a concern about you or your child/ren's behaviour then this must be responded to and resolved politely and in a positive way;
- No discrimination or discriminatory behaviour must be displayed, and will not be accepted;
- Cold refreshments will be available at snack time. Hot drinks may be available. Service users will be required to risk assess the provision of hot drinks with regard to their service provision/activity. Services run directly by the Children's Centre will require that any hot drinks be consumed away from any babies or children present (eg. in the play and activity rooms) for health and safety reasons.

If you have any queries about the above regulations, or would like to make additional suggestions about how to ensure the Children's Centre is welcoming to everyone, please speak to the Children's Centre Manager, who will be happy to discuss this with you.

**Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre
Customer/Visitor Usage Policy (Customer Charter)**

Customers/visitors using the building are asked to read and adhere to the following information:

The Children's Centre is used by a wide range of service providers, with differing requirements and needs. The following information and guidance has been devised to ensure that all users have equitable access to quality premises, no matter when they use the centre.

Any visitors (customers, clients or patients) who cannot comply with the terms and conditions of use of this centre, as set out below in this *Customer Charter/Policy*, may be asked to leave. If you have any queries with regards to this policy, please speak to the Children's Centre Manager.

1. A happy, friendly and welcoming environment:

All users and visitors are expected to respect the premises and each other. This includes the varying services provided by different users in the centre, their views and their equipment. Please read the Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre Welcoming Policy, provided on the reverse of every registration form (see also Appendix 1).

2. There may be other groups using the centre at the same time as you, or immediately after or before you. Please respect all users of the centre.

Breastfeeding is welcome at the Children's Centre. Parents who breastfeed will not be asked to leave. If the breastfeeding mother, however, would prefer to breastfeed in private, then they should ask a member of the Children's Centre staff who will do their best to find a suitable safe private space for them to do so.

3. Health & Safety: For the safety and security of all visitors:

- a. Visitors are encouraged and advised to read the Children's Centre Health & Safety documents displayed. Further Health & Safety information can be found in the Health & Safety file located in the

reception/office and is available upon request from the Children's Centre Manager. This includes the Children's Centre generic risk assessment document and emergency evacuation procedure;

- b. Please ensure that you are aware of the fire evacuation procedures and where all the conveniences are. If in doubt, please ask;
- c. Do not block any fire exits. They must be kept clear at ALL times;
- d. All visitors must sign in and out of the building, in the book at the main reception, in addition to any register provided by your service provider, unless your service provider / group organiser provides this information to the Children's Centre Manager. You will be advised which register/s to complete by your service provider;
- e. The front doors must remain closed at all times, to ensure the safety of all people in the building, and also to maximise security of personal and Children's Centre equipment. The buzzer system must be used to allow customers to gain entry;
- f. For security, please do not allow entry to any visitors other than yourselves. Refer any other visitors to the Children's Centre staff. If none are available, then the visitor must return when the centre is open to the public. This includes any visitors who may attend to conduct maintenance, etc..
- g. Windows must be closed after use, and all fire doors must remain shut at all times;
- h. If any communal toys or other items are damaged, please remove these items from children's access, and notify a member of staff immediately. If staff are not available, please leave a note on the item, and also for the staff to see (on the office door);

4. Please be environmentally friendly:

- a. Please dispose of all rubbish and waste in the appropriate way. This includes sanitary and nappy disposal. Please use the bins provided and use nappy sacks before you put your soiled disposable nappy in the nappy bin;
- b. If you find that stocks (toilet roll, hand soap, paper towels, etc...) are depleted or are in need of repair, please let the Children's Centre staff know immediately and we will replenish/repair these items.

- c. Respect for others' equipment is expected.
5. Refreshments:
- a. Cold drinking water is available in the lobby area for everyone's use;
 - b. Hot drinks may be available. Service users will be required to risk assess the provision of hot drinks with regard to their service provision/activity. Services run directly by the Children's Centre will require that any hot drinks be consumed away from any babies or children present (eg. in the play and activity rooms) for health and safety reasons;
 - c. The Children's Centre cannot be responsible for any items left in the fridges or other communal areas;
 - d. Any out of date items will be thrown away.
6. Parking: There is no parking on the school premises. All providers and visitors are asked to park considerately and respect local residents when parking their vehicles.
7. Buggy store: The buggy store is used at the buggy owners own risk. The Children's Centre cannot accept any responsibility for items lost from the buggy store. Padlocks can be borrowed from the main reception, when staffed, on receipt of a deposit item on a daily basis (to be returned to the user when the padlock and chain are returned to the Children's Centre after use). If you want to enquire whether this service will be available during your visit, please check with the Children's Centre staff prior to the session commencing;
8. Security: Every attempt will be made to keep the building secure, however the Children's Centre cannot accept any responsibility for items lost in the Centre. Items left in communal areas (coats, bags, etc..) are left at the owners' own risk.