



# Participation Policy & Procedures

## POLICY

Dunscore Pre-school Centre strives to ensure that every child/adult/parent and carer can get involved in shaping the service that we provide. We encourage and welcome all forms of parental involvement in the work and life of the Centre. recognising the added value and benefits that participation can bring to the setting and to parents and children.

## PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

In order to provide the maximum possible opportunities for all to participate in Dunscore Pre-School Centre a wide variety of activities and methods are used. We actively seek participation and welcome input from all.

At Dunscore Pre-school Centre we value and welcome participation from:

- all the children at the centre
- adults, parents and carers of the children who attend the centre
- members of the local community
- Volunteers and students
- the local primary school
- outside agencies
- those parties who show interest in our Aims and Objective

## What is Participation?

Participation means literally, 'taking part'. As a child or young person, the degree to which he or she is able or willing to 'take part' is often pre-determined by adults who feel the need to retain power. Participation can range from consultation on set issues that adults then decide on, through to the ultimate when children and young people choose their agenda and make their own decisions (full participation). *Participation is a process not an event and empowerment is the outcome.*

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### Parent Participation

- ⇒ Questionnaires
- ⇒ Committee members carry out monitoring and evaluation
- ⇒ Suggestion board
- ⇒ Regular committee meetings & parent forum– open to all
- ⇒ Feedback in child's personal learning plan
- ⇒ Evaluation forms
- ⇒ Individual chats
- ⇒ Open sessions
- ⇒ Helping at a variety of events

### Children Participation

- ⇒ Listen to the children and take ideas from them before organising play sessions
  - ⇒ Involvement in planning
  - ⇒ Circle time
  - ⇒ Proposing changes to the environment and providing feedback
  - ⇒ Involvement in food choices
  - ⇒ Chat at snack



### Staff

- ⇒ Key workers
- ⇒ Meetings to discuss individual aims for children
- ⇒ Daily staff evaluation
- ⇒ Fortnightly planning meetings
- ⇒ Meeting and greeting at door

Throughout this guidance the term **parents** is used to include all main caregivers.

## Forms of Participation:

### Parental involvement in their child's learning and development

*'Parents play a critical role in promoting academic success through parent-school involvement, stimulation of cognitive growth at home, and promotion of values consistent with academic achievement' (Education Scotland)*

We acknowledge the parent's role as prime educator of the child and will encourage them to work closely with the setting to promote the child's learning and development. Within 4 weeks of starting at the Centre parents are invited to discuss their child's care plan with a practitioner and are invited to review and add to this on a regular basis. Parents will be consulted formally on a regular basis about their child's progress and informally on a daily basis.' All about me' booklets and 'wider achievement' board encourage parents to share information and successes Personal learning Portfolios PLPs are easily accessible to parents and practitioners regularly invite parents to look through these with their children and comment on them. They will be encouraged to spend time in the playroom with their child and for 'stay and play' where work and home circumstances permit.

Parental permission will be sought as appropriate for any involvement with other agencies (e.g. speech therapy, educational visitor) and their presence at planning and review meetings encouraged.

### Influencing the work and life of the setting

Through membership of the Centre's committee, participation in discussion forums and consultations via questionnaires and response slips we will invite parents to express their views and influence policies, programmes and practices within the setting. Parents will be given access to a closed parental page on the Centre's website where parents can view policies and leave feedback. We will also take cognisance of views expressed to staff by parents on a more informal basis.

### Using personal and professional skills

We will welcome the contributions parents can bring to the setting through their personal or professional skills, knowledge and interests. Contributions of practical skills that enhance the setting's environment and promote a sense of community will also be encouraged and welcomed (e.g. gardening, cooking, DIY and maintenance, craft, etc.).

### Developing personal skills

Staff within the ELCC setting will seek to share their expertise in childcare with parents who wish to increase their own knowledge and skills. We will also respond to parents' interests where possible by providing groups/classes on a variety of topics (e.g. promoting positive behaviour, healthy meals, computing skills etc.). Details of relevant courses and workshops will be made available to parents. Where appropriate and where staffing ratios allow we will encourage staff and parents to participate in learning activities together, sharing the learning.

### Open door policy

Parents will be informed at enrolment that they can speak to their child's key person at anytime regarding their child. Should they wish to speak to the manager or a specific practitioner then every effort will be made to accommodate this request immediately or as soon as possible. Parents will be made aware that we welcome their suggestions, treat their concerns seriously and are willing to advise them where we can or signpost to other services. Should a parent wish to make a complaint they should speak in the first instance to the manager (or chairperson in some circumstances) but will also be made aware that they have the right to approach the Care Inspectorate if they are unhappy with the outcome. They will also be informed that they are entitled to take complaints directly to the Care Inspectorate in the first instance (see Complaints Policy). Practitioners will be alert to any signs of dissatisfaction with the service that parents may express to them informally and feed this back to the manager.

## Volunteers

On occasion participation may take the form of volunteering to undertake a particular role within the setting, either for the benefit of the setting or to provide the volunteer with experience in order to enhance their career prospects. A volunteer undertakes voluntary work through choice with no contract of employment and without expectation of financial remuneration. This will be made clear to all those wishing to volunteer

On occasion parents or other members of the community may wish to take up a more regular or formal role within the ELCC setting (e.g. a parent may come into the setting on a weekly basis to help in the creative area or read stories to the children) or requests may be made to accommodate work experience students etc. These roles will be clearly defined for the volunteers, with expectations set out at the onset and appropriate support and guidance provided. In the case of regular volunteering a role descriptor may be deemed appropriate. All volunteers will be made aware of key policies within the setting especially Health and Safety, Child Protection, Confidentiality and Infection Control, and will be required to adhere to them.

Volunteers from outwith the setting will be carefully screened and vetted (see Safe Recruitment Policy). **No volunteer will ever be left on their own with children.** Since volunteers are not employees and will not be left on their own with children they should not require to complete a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme disclosure. However if a person is volunteering within regularly e.g. on a weekly basis, a standard disclosure check may be completed. Volunteers will be covered by the setting's insurance liability cover in the case of accidents.

## Confidentiality

Parents and other volunteers participating in work or activities within the setting will be made aware of the importance of confidentiality and the requirement not to discuss or comment on children other than their own.

Practitioners must be aware of their own conversations and actions while working with parents/volunteers, and will be sensitive to any information disclosed by a parent while working alongside them which may be given in confidence (see Confidentiality Policy).

## Inclusion

Dunscore Pre-School Centre setting adheres to a policy of equal opportunities and as such will not discriminate against parental participation and volunteer activity on the basis of age, gender, disability, ethnicity or home language etc. The Centre will endeavour to remove all barriers to participation by supporting parents and volunteers appropriately e.g. use of translators when necessary at interviews with parents, providing disabled access where possible, use of appropriate approaches to seek children's views etc.

Consideration will be given to meeting and appointment times for parents in order to accommodate work patterns and home circumstances. Information regarding participation opportunities, meeting times, parents' groups, parental updates etc. will be distributed in a variety of ways (e.g. newsletter, parental information boards, word of mouth) by the setting to ensure all parents have the same opportunities. In selecting parents for any activity (e.g. accompanying children on an outing) no favouritism will be displayed.

Staff will be welcoming, encouraging and respectful towards parents at all times in order to maximise parental involvement.