

Professional Love Policy



Basis

The Policy has been developed having regard to –

1. The Lord's summary of the commandments: ***You shall love your neighbour as yourself.***
2. The undisputed fact that love and affection are natural and normal aspects of human relationships.
3. The first of the Mr Noah's values: Loving one another
4. John Bowlby's Attachment theory.
5. The work of Dr Jools Page and the Professional Love Group at Sheffield University, including the report 'Professional Love in Early Years Settings'.
6. The importance of young children's wellbeing for their growth and learning.

Policy

We believe that the child ought to have a sense of love, bond and security comparable to, but not the same as, the love of the home and family. (The pedagogue or teacher is *in loco parentis* but is not the parent.)

*'Professional Love' provides pedagogues with the language to appropriately describe the close, loving, intimate and affectionate bond which, over time, is inevitably developed with the children in their care in the context of reciprocity (meaning with mutual agreement) and shared understanding. **

The Policy should be read with due regard to other policies including:

- Behaviour guidance
- Children's voice
- Disclosure of concern
- Safeguarding

Applications

Our whole attitude and conduct towards children will be influenced by professional love and will affect areas including –

1. Settling in new children. Members of staff will seek to make bonds with children and especially their key group children. They may use such mechanisms as stroking the head or whispering in hushed tones to reassure.
2. Physical expressions of affection. In contrast to the commonplace 'no touch' Early Years policies, members of staff will use physical contact with children when and as appropriate, in response to a child's need or initiative. For example,
 - Children may hold the hand, hug, or sit on the lap of a pedagogue.
 - A pedagogue may kiss a child on an injured finger to 'make it better', or in response to a child's initiative.
3. Verbal expressions of affection. Members of staff may respond in kind to a child's profession of love. That is, they may reply to the child's "I love you" with "I love you".

Qualifications to the above

1. Members of staff are regularly briefed and advised with regard to professional love and their role. This includes whole staff training and individual advice. New and younger pedagogues are supported in particular.
2. The child's expressed wishes are respected, and the child's initiative is always of primary importance.
3. Parents are made aware of the policy from the children's induction into Mr Noah's Nursery School. Parental need for reassurance and affirmation of their unique role are carefully and deliberately recognised.
4. Action must always be taken in the event of any abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

* Quoted from Sheffield University's 'Attachment Toolkit' booklet 2.

This policy was adopted on:
Signed:

April 2024

Role of signatory
Date policy to be reviewed not later than

Director
April 2027