

Team Working and Positive Communication Policy

Background

We really value the work that the team do, even though we probably do not say it often enough. Having a small team of people around our son that understands, values and cares for him has made a huge and visible difference to his health, behaviour, sleep and general wellbeing. We are beyond grateful for this.

We want his home to be a happy place, for people to feel valued and positive about coming to work. Working in a small home environment may be easier in some ways than working for a large, busy organization, but brings other challenges. Working in a small team in a confined space is as much like sharing a house with strangers as it is coming to work. Please be conscious that it is tricky for everyone and inevitably people may do things that get on your nerves, so please try and be kind, tolerant and handle this in a constructive way.

Most importantly, if everyone in the team is happy and there is good atmosphere, it has a positive impact on our son's well-being. If there is tension, it will impact on him too. The rest of the family quickly pick up on this too, even if you think we don't know what is going on. We live with our son and the team every day in our home. While team members can go home away from the environment, we cannot, so please be considerate.

Positive Communication

This policy is to promote positive communication in the workplace.

Listening

Listening is not just understanding the words that are said, but how the speaker feels.

Understanding how the other person is feeling and their thought processes, might help to resolve the situation, regardless of whether you agree with it or not.

When people feel that someone is listening and understanding, this builds trust and creates an environment where people feel comfortable to express opinions and solve problems.

Think before you speak

Is the problem trivial, do you really need to say anything? Is it just to 'score points'? Remember three gates that things should pass before you say something; 'is it true', 'is it kind' and 'is it necessary'. Communicate when calm: avoid communicating out of anger or frustration.

Speak up if necessary

That said, if something is causing a genuine concern, and needs to be addressed, then speak directly to the person involved rather than harbouring grudges or grumbling to others.

- Focus on the issue, situation or behaviour, not the person
- State the acts and facts only: avoid conclusions, opinions or attribution of motivation
- Try 'I' statements and avoid 'you' statements

So instead of,

• "You're late again. You're unreliable!" (*likely to result in "No. I'm not!"*),
try ...

- "It was 8.35 when you arrived this morning and on Tuesday. I have other commitments and the end of my shift and I feel frustrated when I have to stay back and I am late for them" (*more likely to result in an explanation, apology and change in behaviour*).

Gossip / Talking about others

Do not discuss anyone that is not present unless it is necessary for work matters (e.g. swapping shifts). Even if information about another person is not intended to be negative, it can injure another person's reputation and trust. In a small team anything said, however intended, will quickly get back to the other person.

Do not pass on private or derogatory information in email, texts etc. Do not participate if another person starts to discuss someone and gently remind them it is policy not to do this.

Harassment

This will not be tolerated and will be dealt with via the disciplinary policy.

This includes spreading malicious rumours, persistent gossip, unfair treatment or regularly undermining someone.

The video monitors have been installed to ensure our son's safety and also to provide evidence if any concerns are reported about staff behaviour.

Summary

Adhering to the positive communication policy is an expectation in your role. It is also for your benefit. This helps to maintain constructive relationships, self-confidence and self-esteem of others.

Lead by example and take the initiative to make things better.

[Sign off sheet for staff to acknowledge they have read this policy](#)

Print your name	Sign your name	Date
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