



# Policies and Procedures Manual

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## **Our Motto**

“A place where children learn to play and play to learn.”

## **Our Mission Statement**

Kids' Ark Childcare is situated in Triq-Hookham Frere, Gwardamangia. In our childcare, We aim to provide for all the individual needs of the child. We see every child as an independent being and strive to help each child to reach their full potential. All children and families are treated equally regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or disability. Our centre is aimed to provide flexibility as to help parents establish a healthy balance between parenthood and work. Therefore our opening hours are weekdays from 6.00am till 6.00 pm and Saturdays from 7am till 2pm.

Our Activities include Messy play, cooking, crafts, puppet storytelling, sensory play, physical exercise which includes outdoor activities. Different and exciting outings will be held throughout the year. Children at Kids' Ark all have the same access to facilities, services and opportunities and they are not disadvantaged by age, disability or by culture.

A daily routine is planned weekly to ensure that all children have the opportunity to play and learn in separate areas as to provide the children with different and new activities indoor and outdoor throughout.

If any emergencies should arise a doctor will be on call during the child care's opening hours.

## **Admission to the child care facility**

Prior to a child's attendance at the centre, the parents or guardians must complete and sign the registration form, government form (If parents are benefiting from free childcare scheme) and fill in the child's background information sheet. This will provide the centre with the following vital information:

- Name, home address and date of birth of each child.
- Starting date and number of sessions per week required.
- Arrangements for payment of fees and registration fee.
- Name, address and telephone numbers of parents or guardians.
- Emergency telephone numbers.
- Pick up authorisations.

- Special diets.
- Health history.
- Details of any allergies.
- Parental consents on emergency procedures.

During the settling in period, prior to the child's first day, a parent will also be asked to complete the Background Information Sheet which provides the preschool with further information. This includes details like the child's likes and dislikes. This extra information enables the staff to get to know the child quickly and helps with the settling in process.

### **Working in Partnership with parents/ guardians**

At Kids' Ark we welcome and appreciate the involvement of parents and guardians throughout the time the child attends the centre. The centre aims to form a good relationship with the parents and guardians as to easily exchange and inform parents about information about the child. We try to achieve working in partnership with parents in the following ways:

- Information about the child's day will be given through a virtual application. In the application there will be information on the meal times, nappy changing and a section where the carer can write any additional notes that he/she thinks the parents would like to know.
- The Manager will be available to discuss any concerns or issues that the parents may have in a private setting.
- Parental meetings are held on a regular basis on appointment. Since parents are very busy, arrangements can be made for more private discussions at agreed times.
- Information provided by parents about their children will be kept confidential.
- When possible, parents will be asked to send in objects from home, old boxes and cartons, cereal boxes, egg cartons, old t-shirts etc to involve them in our activities.
- If there are any concerns about a child's well being during the day every effort will be made to contact the parents or their emergency contact.
- The carers will discuss with the parents when they come to pick them up about the progress they are doing.
- Kids' Ark hosts outings throughout the year and parents are encouraged to join the children.
- Parents are asked to keep us informed of any changes to personal circumstances which may have an effect upon a child, e.g. change of address, telephone number, emergency contact, any change in family dynamics and any allergies that may arise throughout the child's stay at the child care.

- The staff ensures that all the children feel included, secure and valued. They build positive relationships with their parents in order to allow the parents and children to feel more comfortable and at ease.

### **Sick Child Policy**

- Sick children will not be accepted in the centre and will be sent home. A medical certificate needs to be presented to confirm when a child is fit for school.
- Parents need to call the centre before 8am to advise that the child will not be attending the centre.
- If the child is sick for three days and over, the centre will require a medical certificate in order for the child to attend nursery.
- The parents will be contacted if the child, throughout the day, experiences one or more of these illnesses: vomiting, diarrhoea more than once, a fever and a constantly leaking nose. There could be other instances where the manager decides to call the parents to pick up the child.
- If a child becomes ill we will take every step possible to contact parents, but if this is not possible, we will take responsible measures to care for the child. We will expect parents to cooperate with us by not bringing children to the centre if they have any infectious or contagious illness.
- Staff members will also be asked to not attend the child care if they have any infectious or contagious illness.

### **Accident Management Policy**

- In the case of an accident, they will receive first aid by a member of staff.
- The wound will be cleaned with sterile cloths or a cold compress applied and gloves will be worn at all times when dealing with blood or any other bodily fluids.
- If an accident has happened to a child and the child need medical assistance, the parents will be informed immediately by the manager or supervisor.
- If hospital attention is needed then the manager or the supervisor will make that decision and will take the necessary action and call 112 for an ambulance and parents will be informed immediately.
- Accidents will be recorded in the injury report. It will state the time it happened, the date, how it happened, first aid given and will be signed by the staff and parent/guardian.

### **Child Behaviour Policy**

At Kids' Ark, we strive to maintain a positive attitude towards all the children, parents and staff. However if any issues arise with the children, members of staff or parents,

they should be discussed in a private setting with the manager. Our childcare encourages positive child behaviour in the following ways:

- The staff members work in partnership with parents to ensure the well being of the child and to promote positive behaviour.
- The staff members ensure that children are not being bullied or/and are not feeling threatened while in their care.
- Children are not given any physical punishment nor are they exposed to intellectual, emotional or verbal abuse.
- When a child does something inappropriate the carer will:
  - address and respond to a child's difficult behaviour in a firm but caring manner. The carers will be sensitive to the child and will help promote positive interactions between the carer and child and between the child and the other children.
  - The carer explains to the child why, what he/she was doing was wrong while showing the child positive guidance and the carer will redirect the child to other positive behaviours.
  - Children will praise and receive positive reinforcement when they show positive behaviour.

#### Prohibited Discipline

Our centre has a zero tolerance policy for any form of aggression being verbal, physical or emotional towards children, other members of staff and parents/guardians. Any form of aggression will be reported immediately to the police.

- No abusive language.
- Children will not be force fed.
- No negative reinforcement.
- No corporal punishment such as hitting, spanking or beating.
- No threats of corporal punishments.
- No form of public humiliation.

#### Children's Personal Records.

- Children's personal records include registration and admission forms, signed consent forms, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations done by staff on any matter concerning the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
- These records are confidential and are stored in a locked cabinet and are kept secure by the Manager in a safe and private place.
- Staff will not discuss any personal information given by parents with other members

of staff, except where it may affect the planning for the child's needs.

- Parents have access to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.

### **Children's Protection Policy**

Once parents sign the registration form of the child care they are abiding to all policies and procedures and also our child protection policy form. This policy refers to the agreement that if any staff member has any suspicion regarding any form of child abuse, after first consulting with the manager, it is reported to the child protection unit at Appogg on 179.

If a child arrives to the centre with an injury the staff should:

- Ask the parents/ carer how the injury happened.
- Explanations should be accepted and no accusations should be made.
- A record should be written including diagrams, of observations and explanations given. Have a witness wherever possible.
- If you suspect that the injuries have been caused by assault or by failure to protect the child, the manager will report to Agenzija Appogg on 179.
- Ensure that any documentation relating to neglect or suspected abuse is stored in a secured area and released only to authorized persons under legal request.

### **Transitions**

We understand that children might experience separation anxiety when placed into the care of someone with whom they are not familiar. Therefore, our highly skilled carers will try their best to make the child feel loved and more comfortable.

Settling in period will be over 3 different occasions. On the first occasion, the child will spend 2 hours with the parent going around the centre and socialising with the children and their assigned carer. On the second occasion, the parents will once again attend the child care with the child, however this time the child will be more encouraged to participate with the other children and their assigned carer. On the third occasion, the child will be welcome to attend the childcare for 2 hours without a parent or guardian.

### **Daily Transitions**

- At the centre we understand that some partings are especially tearful, and parents are always welcome to call anytime to see how their children are doing.
- Parents are also encouraged to call at the centre should they wish to check on their child.
- When parents drop off their children at the childcare the parents are welcome to stay until they feel comfortable to leave their child and a proper goodbye is done. The

child is explained by the parents that he or she will be picked up soon.

#### Transitions from one section to another

If there is an instance where the parents inform us that the child will be hospitalised for a few days, the carers and manager will try their best to make the child less anxious about their stay. This means that carers will create activities for the children which are hospital themed, there will also storybook telling and reassurance from the carer.

Whenever the child is transitioning from childcare to kindergarten, a small party will be held to celebrate the children's milestones and developmental accomplishments. The carers will also begin to speak about the 'big school' a few weeks before the transition as to reassure children and help bring about excitement for the children about this transition.

#### Uncollected Child

- The childcare must not release the child to an unauthorised person, even if the collection is late, unless an authorized person telephones to state that because of an emergency a different person will be collecting. When this happens the authorized person must state the Id Card of the person going to collect the child and the manager/carer should check this card before allowing the child to leave.
- In the case where a parent will be picking up the child late for a specific reason, a phone call is required explaining why and what time the child will be picked up.
- If a child is uncollected all effort will be made to contact the child's authorized persons to pick up the child. However, if the attempts to contact the parents/guardians and authorized persons fail, the carer/manager should inform the police to become in charge of the situation and to help trace the parent/guardian of the child.
- A record will be kept in the register of all children who are not collected by the due time. This will note the date, the time at which the child was collected, who collected the child, and the reason given by the parents.
- In the event that a child is not collected by the final collection time after the closing hours of the childcare, the parent will be written to by the childcare, pointing out the difficulties late collection causes the childcare and:
  - Informing the parent that a charge of €13 will be charged for every hour that the child is left on the premises after the final collection time.
  - If this situation occurs more than three times in one year the manager will inform the parent that the child will not be able to attend the centre any longer if this happens again.



## **Food and Drink Policy**

- Before a child starts to attend our child care centre, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs, including any allergies. These allergies will be recorded in the child's registration record.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and students are fully informed about them.
- Parents will be asked to send healthy and nutritious foods, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives and preservatives.
- Depending on the duration the children will stay at the child care, parents will be asked to provide breakfast (which is usually served between 8:00-8:30), snack time served at 10am, lunch (served at 12pm) and a snack for those children who will be present at the childcare at around 3.30-4.00. However, during those hours in between, if a child is hungry he or she will be provided with food.
- Fresh drinking water will be constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day and during activities.
- We welcome and encourage foods from the different diets of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and experimenting and introducing them to new ones.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for the children's diets and allergies.

## **Healthy Eating Policy**

When food is provided by the Child Day Care Facility, for example the yogurt scheme that we will have in place, the Facility will ensure that the food is nutritious and suitable for children and all allergies will be cared for with great caution.

The carers will also help the children learn about healthy eating habits and encourage them to make healthier choices.

Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.

- We provide children with utensils which are safe and appropriate for their ages.
- We inform parents when providing food for their children about the storage facilities available in the centre and about the suitable containers the children breakfast/lunch/snack should be brought in.
- We ask the parents not to send food which can be a choking hazard to the children (nuts, whole grapes, larger chunks of meat/cheese etc).

## **Health and Safety policy**

- It is our policy to provide a healthy and safe environment for staff and children.
- Staff will do everything possible to make sure injuries do not occur to themselves or to others.
- The premises are kept well maintained and cleaned on a daily basis.
- The premises are equipped with not slip floors and there are no sharp corners and edges in the centre.
- Washing of the premises and toilets are disinfected daily with wiping of all objects used by the children and staff.
- Staff uses disposable gloves when they change nappies or dealing with vomit or blood. Nappies are put in nappy disposable bags and garbage is taken out every morning.
- Hand washing is strictly noticed at all times and children are encouraged to wash their hands after each activity.
- The management and staff are provided with a first aid course and a first aid box is always available which is stocked on a regular basis.
- The premises are equipped with fire safety equipment. In case of a fire the staff are to follow the fire drill that is practised twice a year and evacuate the children accordingly. The children are the first priority and immediate action is to be taken to safeguard the children and staff. All rooms will be re checked after all the children are safe and the carer will head count all the children to ensure that everyone is safe. The carers will then call the fire department on the 112 which is written near the telephone.

## **Non Discriminatory Policy**

At Kids' Ark we positively welcome children and their families of all races, cultures, languages, beliefs and backgrounds and strive to provide all children with positive values and to help them feel included. Children of both sexes are encouraged to participate in all activities irrespective of gender. Members of staff are employed because of their knowledge, qualifications and expertise irrespective of what race and culture they come from.

Children with special needs will be given extra help in areas of their development such as communication, physical skills, learning or behaviour. We believe that early identification is essential in order to support children and help them achieve within our child care. We aim to make all activities available to all children throughout the centre at

a level appropriate to their developmental needs. The centre is well structured to cater for persons with a physical disabilities and wheelchair users.

No child will be left excluded due to race, ethnicity, disability, gender or any sort of matter. We believe that everyone is equal and we strive to make the centre an enjoyable place where children enjoy playing, learning and socialising with each other.

We will not tolerate any sort of labelling of the children from staff or parents. We encourage parents to allow their children to explore different cultures and learn new things.

### **Staff Recruitment**

The management of Kids' Ark Childcare centre strives to select the most professional carers to educate the children in the best way possible.

- When a suitable applicant with relevant childcare experience and/or qualifications contacts us, we arrange for the applicant to come to our office for an interview.
  - During the interview we go through the applicant's CV and we discuss with the applicant and find out any aim/objectives.
  - The applicant must supply us with original certificates relating to any qualifications they state they have.
  - Applicants must possess a childcare diploma, food handling certificate, first aid course and a clean police conduct.
  - We confirm with past employers that all employment history given by the applicant is correct.
  - The centre's manager must be qualified with a level 5 childcare diploma and a first aid course.
  - Before recruiting the carer the manager will give the carer an induction period. This means that the manager will introduce the staff member to all the staff, show him/her around and explain the policies and duties of a child carer listed below:
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- Carers must be qualified with a childcare diploma, first aid course, food handling certificate and a clean police conduct.
  - Carers must report for work on time.
  - Carers do not leave children unattended at any point during the day unless another carer is informed and the other carer can supervise extra children.
  - Carers do not allow any person to pick children from the centre unless such person is authorised.

- Messaging and mobile calls are not allowed during working hours.
- Carers who feel sick shall not report for work but must give at least a two hour notice beforehand.
- No smoking is allowed within the premises.
- No corporal punishment or foul and abusive language of any kind whatsoever is tolerated.
- Carers must adhere to the rules of professional secrecy and confidentiality.
- In case of any accident the carer must contact the ambulance on 112 and then inform the parents about the accident.
- Staff need to wear comfortable clean clothes and provide indoor protective shoes.

### **Staff Development**

- Once every 2 months a meeting is held after hours where carers have the opportunity to share new and creative ideas and discuss difficult situations that they have might have encountered during working hours.
- Staff is encouraged to engage in on-going training related to child care for the benefit of the centre and to keep the staff fresh with ideas. They should attend refresher First Aid courses to maintain their certification.
- We encourage staff to self-reflect and identify their aspirations as well as being supported in this process by their manager.

### **Staff Supervision**

At Kids' Ark we provide professional development in supervision and behaviour guidance for all staff members. The door is always open for staff members if they have any concerns or suggestions that they would like to discuss regarding their work in the centre. However, once a month, the staff will be invited into the office, individually, to discuss staff development and any other matters regarding work. Everything that is discussed during Staff Supervisions will be kept confidential.

### **Staff Record's Keeping**

Our centre is committed to ensuring that a consistent system of record keeping is in place to benefit both the centre and all members of staff.

- Due care is taken to proceed in accordance with the Data Protection.
- Details of all members of staff are held in confidence and therefore with access limited to only the Manager.

- Staff details, assigned position and details of salary amendments are kept by the Manager in the office.
- Sick leave, roasters and leave papers are all treated with confidentiality and kept in the office.

### **Whistle -Blowing**

If any member of the staff notice any form of abuse which might have been committed within the centre by any other staff member or student the staff member has the rightful duty to report the incident to the manager. This policy helps safeguard children from any type of abuse at the centre. Reports may be forwarded to the Department of Social Welfare Standards located in Santa Venera. The staff may be assured that the manager will not take any action against any staff member reporting such abuse.

### **Nappy Changing Policy**

These procedures are to ensure the safety of both the children in our care and the Nursery staff.

- A child's nappy should be checked on arrival at the nursery. If necessary it should be changed immediately. If it does not need to be changed the time checked should still be noted on the HI MAMA Application.
  - All children should be changed as and when needed, but at least 3 times daily, morning, lunch and afternoon. Whenever possible the child should be changed by their key person. All nappy changes must be recorded by the member of staff responsible.
- It should also be recorded whether the nappy was W (wet) or BM (bowel movement), time of nappy change and initialled by the member of staff.
- A child should be changed immediately if they soil their nappy or it becomes wet.
  - Only staff with a valid child care course and POMA Clearance will be permitted to change nappies to ensure the safety of the child.
  - When changing a nappy, staff members must wear white disposable gloves. These must be removed after every nappy change, disposed of and new ones worn for the next nappy change.
  - When changing a nappy a sheet from the blue/white roll must be placed on the changing mat to lay the child down on. This must be replaced after the mat has been sprayed with the anti-bac after every nappy change. Please wash hands after nappy change.
  - Potties – staff are to give children privacy when using potties, by sitting them out of sight of passers-by and other children using the toilet area. After use

staff need to dispose of the waste appropriately in a toilet, potties must be cleaned with anti-bac and put away immediately.

- Children need to wash their hands after using the potty.
- Respect the parent/carers choice of nappies for their child by ensuring you are using the correct make and size of nappy. Only nappy creams brought in by the parent/carers for their own child may be used on the child. Staff must record when a child is sore and cream has been applied. In case of an

emergency, the nursery will have a pot of antiseptic cream to apply to children who are sore and the parent has given permission to apply the cream. To prevent cross infection a spatula must be used to apply the cream and washed after use.

- Should a member of staff have any concerns about a child they should follow the child protection procedures.
- The changing mat must be disinfected with anti-bacterial spray between each nappy change. Allow the mat to dry naturally or wipe it dry with a paper towel before changing the next child.
- Children must never be left unattended on the nappy changing stand.
- All children should be encouraged to use the steps to access the mat on the changing table, staff are not to lift heavy children onto the changing table.
- All nappies and wipes must be put into nappy sacks and disposed of in the Sengenic bin provided. All gloves must be put into nappy sacks and disposed of in the correct bin provided.
- At the end of the day, or if the bin becomes full, the nappy bags need to be taken outside and placed in the big bins. An apron and gloves must be worn when doing this.
- Soiling – if a child has a wetting accident, the soiled underwear needs to be placed in a nappy sack and then into the child's bag or on their peg immediately. Any child having a bowel movement accident needs to be cleaned appropriately, if the underwear is badly soiled, place in a nappy sack and keep in the toilet area until parent collects explain to the parent the condition of the underwear giving them to choice of keeping the underwear or allowing the staff to dispose appropriately in the yellow sack. The same procedure applies with any garments soiled with blood.

The nappy changing area will always be visible without eliminating the privacy of the child to allow proper monitoring by the management in charge to avoid any possible threat to the safety of the child.

## **Action Plan for Complaints about the services**

At Kids' Ark we are more than welcome to hear suggestions about how we can improve our centre. A suggestion box will be available, and both parents and members of staff are encouraged to put in a suggestion of how we can improve our level of service. Through the suggestion box, complaints and suggestions will be anonymous to allow parents and members of staff to voice their opinion without being known. However if there are more formal complains we ask the parents to:

- Pass his/her complaint to the manager where the complaint is discussed in private.
- If the problem re occurs or is not settled, the complaint is manifested in writing to the manager and director.
- If the complaint is not resolved the complaint will enter into a centre complaint form and a meeting is held with the parent, manager and the director.
- The director will take the final decision and the complaint is signed by the manager, parent and director.

One may also file a complaint with the DQSE on the following website:

<https://education.gov.mt/en/dqse/Pages/Complaints.aspx>

## **Data Protection Act**

Any photographs of the children during an activity, will be posted in a private page on Facebook, only with the consent of parents, which will be signed from both parents in the registration form. Any information and records concerning children or their families will only be shown to the appropriate authorities. These are the Department for Social Welfare Standards, or in the case of suspected child abuse to the Child Protection Services.

## **Government Scheme Terms and Conditions**

Children whose parents are in work or in education can benefit from the free childcare scheme. 'Parents in work' is defined as both parents / guardians who are in work, or single mother / father / guardian who are in work and paying social security contributions.

'Parents in education' is defined as both parents / guardians who are in education leading to a recognised diploma or degree or single mother / father / guardian who are in

education. Parent/s is / are entitled to free Childcare for all children of childcare-age, at a rate which is prorated to the mother's (or single father) employment hours.

- Parent/s is /are to inform the provider of any changes in the number of hours and days of service one month in advance according to the Government deadline.
- Parent/s is / are urged not to over-book more hours of childcare than what is necessary. In case of overtime or unforeseen circumstances, an additional allowance of 10% over the booked hours will be paid by the government if utilised.
- Parent/s can consume more hours over and above the additional allowance of 10% that they are entitled to with the free Childcare scheme. These hours will be noted as extra hours and parent/s must pay the provider directly. Providers must inform parents of the chargeable rate prior to registration.
- Parent/s have to present a medical certificate when a child is sick for more than 3 days, in order to be allowed to re-attend child care. Parent/s are entitled to a monthly absence allowance of 10% under the booked hours. For example for a 100 hour monthly pack, a child can attend a minimum of 90 hours. Furthermore, an additional yearly absence allowance of 15% over the booked hours applies.
- Parent/s are free to avail themselves of free childcare within the childcare centre of their choice (provided that the childcare centre enters into the free child care scheme agreement with Government)
- Free Childcare is terminated once the child is eligible to enrol into Kindergarten 1.
- Government will continue to pay for free Childcare while the mother is availing herself of maternity leave. Free Childcare is not extended to parental leave.
- Parent/s will be able to opt either for free Childcare or the tax rebate scheme.

### **Fees**

- Parents needs to advise the manager one month before the termination of their child, from attending the centre as parents will still be charged for the following month.



- Extra hours for the government scheme or any other hours charged at the centre will be charged with the rate of 6 euro per hour.
- Parents are requested to pay the monthly fee in advance and discuss with the centre's Manager, the best pack that meets the family needs.
- Fees are not refundable.
- Hours cannot be transferred for the following months.

Parents/Guardians signature

Date

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