



## **Little Hiccups Operational Policy**

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# **Little Hiccups Operational Policy**

## **1. Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the aims and objectives of Little Hiccups and how the Committee works to achieve these objectives. It also outlines how Little Hiccups will adhere to national standards and guidance to provide the best possible and safe support for children and their families and Little Hiccups Committee members.

## **2. Who the policy applies to**

This policy applies to committee members, trustees, helpers and members of Little Hiccups.

## **3. Aims and Objectives of Little Hiccups**

The aim of Little Hiccups is to provide a support network for children with a disability/additional need and their families. This is achieved by:

- Offering a safe and unthreatening place to meet
- Providing the opportunity to meet people in similar situations, to share experiences, make friends and support each other
- Providing an environment where children can learn through play, make friends and have fun
- Providing the opportunity for families to attend events that they would not usually access on their own

Little Hiccups is committed to providing the best possible support for children and families. It aims always to place the needs of the child as a first concern and to act to ensure their safety and protection.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4a Chair of the Committee**

The chair is charged with providing leadership and direction to the Committee and is responsible for ensuring that the Committee fulfils its responsibilities for the governance and success of Little Hiccups. He/she also works to optimize the relationship between the Committee, volunteers and other members, and to achieve Little Hiccups agreed goals. The chair of the committee will arrange quarterly committee meetings and an annual general meeting. They will set the agenda and chair the meeting.

#### **4b Founder of Little Hiccups**

The Founder of Little Hiccups will ensure that the original aims and objectives of Little Hiccups are maintained and achieved. They will generally be the spokesperson for Little Hiccups and take the lead in communicating with external agencies and groups.

#### **4c Committee Secretary**

The Secretary is responsible for the documentation and communication of the activities of the Committee. The secretary is the primary administration officer of the Committee and provides the links between the Committee, members and outside agencies. The Secretary should be a good communicator, maintain confidentiality on relevant matters and have the ability to delegate tasks and supervise others. Amongst the Secretary's tasks are to prepare agendas, prepare and distribute minutes, receive and disseminate correspondence to and from Little Hiccups.

#### **4d Committee treasurer**

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial supervision of Little Hiccups to allow the Committee to provide good governance. The Treasurer is the chief financial management officer whose tasks include the preparation of annual budgets, planning for the organisations financial future and monitoring the organisations revenue and expenditure.

#### **4e Committee members**

Little Hiccups is managed by a committee who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The committee members are responsible for;

- Attending at least 60% of all committee meetings over one year
- Planning, organising and coordinating activities
- Contributing to and organising fundraising events
- Identifying new areas of need and deciding how this may be best met
- Communicating with members
- Providing support to members
- Ensuring all agreed procedures are adhered to
- Being clear as to when they are acting in their capacity as a committee member and when they are acting in their capacity as a friend
- Agreeing to a DB check every 2 years

The committee will act by majority decision with the chair casting the final vote when full agreement cannot be met.

Committee members will not be responsible for any children attending the event apart from their own children/family.

#### **4f Volunteers**

Volunteers will support the committee in providing the services and events organised by Little Hiccups. A volunteer would not be expected to run an event on their own or be responsible for any children attending the event (in their capacity as a volunteer). They are expected to maintain standards of politeness and confidentiality. See section 8 code of conduct.

### **5. Activities and Services provided**

The activities and services provided by Little Hiccups will change in response to local needs, the abilities of the committee members, feedback from families/carers and the current financial situation of the group. This list is therefore not exhaustive.

- Weekly tot session Thursday stay and play – offering a ‘stay and play’ session mainly for children under the age of 5 with a disability/additional need. This provides a place where parents/carer's can go with their children where they can relax in a safe environment and meet other families in similar circumstances. Children remain the parent/carers responsibility at all times.
- Family Fun Days – organised and subsidised events for the family of a child with a disability/additional need. Events may be held anywhere in the country. It is the responsibility of the family to travel to the event and children remain their responsibility at all times.
- Outreach - Not all Parents/Carers feel comfortable in group situations. Having a child with a disability can be a real roller coaster of emotions and finding the strength to take that first step towards accepting the reality can be very daunting. For those Parents/Carers who don't yet feel ready, we are happy to meet them for a relaxed and friendly chat over coffee because sometimes making that first contact can be a big step forward!

All events are advertised on the Little Hiccups website along with the cost. Parents are required to register for each event and pay the advertised fee prior to commencing the event. Any changes in events or services will be communicated via the Little Hiccups website or text message.

## **6. Membership of Little Hiccups**

Little Hiccups is open to families with a child under the age of 16 with a disability or additional need.

Little Hiccups accepts members of families irrespective of race, religion, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, social and employment status.

Children and their families can be referred to, self refer or join on a recommendation of another person.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Provide the information required to become a member and complete the registration form which will be updated annually
- Pay their contribution to events
- Take responsibility for their own children at all times
- Comply with any activity regulations
- Maintain acceptable standards of behaviour for themselves and their children
- Not bring children to an event if they have a contagious illness or have added one in the last 48 hours

If they are not able to commit to these expectations, the committee may decide to ask them to leave.

## **7. Joining process**

Parents/carers interested in joining will be provided with an information pack about Little Hiccups and the activities/services it provides. They will be required to complete a registration form – see appendix 1 and agree to the terms and conditions.

## **8. Code of Conduct for Committee members and volunteers**

All committee members and volunteers must agree to:

- Maintain confidentiality of information relating to parents/carers and children who use Little Hiccups, unless information is about harm to themselves or others or illegal activities
- Be polite, kind and considerate
- Treat people as individuals respecting their dignity
- Strive to provide high standard of service
- Be open and honest and act with integrity

## **9. Data Protection**

Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of personal data. This requires Little Hiccups to:

- Only process data in an authorised manner, only for the purposes that it was obtained and only in accordance with the expectations of the data subject.
- Ensure that we have legitimate grounds for collecting and using the personal data and that the amount held is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Ensure that any personal data held is accurate and where necessary up to date
- Ensure we are transparent about how we intend to use the data, and give individuals appropriate privacy notices when collecting their personal data.
- Agreement to share information with other organisations must be sought from the parent/carer unless harm to the child is considered. In this case the sharing of information must be discussed with another committee member and appropriate safeguarding guidance followed. See section 15.
- Seek consent of parents/carers to use photographic and video images of their children
- Ensure that the personal data is held for no longer than necessary
- Ensure that adequate data security safeguards are in place to ensure that information is not lost, stolen or otherwise disclosed to unauthorised persons
- Ensure that all documentation or other materials no longer required containing personal data are disposed of securely
- Be ready to respond to any breach of security swiftly and effectively.

## **10. Health and Safety**

All Committee members and volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Read and comply with all notices and instructions about health and safety matters
- Adhere to specific safety notices relating to premises and activities provided by another organisation
- Know what to do in the event of an outbreak of fire in the location of the event they are attending
- Carry out tasks only that have been agreed to within the remit of Little Hiccups and that they are competent to do
- Report all hazards, accidents or damage whether or not people are injured

## **11. Risk Assessments**

All premises and equipment used by Little Hiccups will be assessed to ensure safety and suitability. In terms of premises, the committee members will ensure that the company providing the premises has evidence of completing this assessment. In terms of activity, if provided by another organisation we will check that this has been done and ask to see copies.

Any activity put on independently by Little Hiccups will be risk assessed for any potential harm.

Any equipment or toys provided by Little Hiccups must be inspected and cleaned every 3 months.

## **12. Dealing with accidents, injuries and incidents**

In the event of a child becoming ill or injured, we will make every effort to support the parent/carer. This includes if the illness or injury is severe calling an ambulance. Little Hiccups committee members and volunteers are not insured to transport ill/injured children in their own vehicle.

There will be a responsible person at each Little Hiccups meeting/family event to assist/deal with any accident, injury or incident that arises. This includes having access to a First Aid kit, reporting the incident in the Accident/Illness book and cleaning and disposing of any mess immediately.

No medication shall be given to the child by a Little Hiccups committee member or volunteer.

### **13a Reporting accidents**

An Accident Book is kept by each session leader and one with the First Aid kit and any accident should be recorded, no matter how slight. Details should be recorded as soon as the accident is dealt with while still clearly remembered.

Details that should be recorded are:

1. Full name of casualty.
2. Date, time and place of accident.
3. Circumstances in which it occurred.
4. Nature of injuries.
5. Treatment given and medical aid sought.
6. Names of witnesses and persons dealing with the accident.

The bottom copy of the report will be given to the parents/carers; the top copy is retained by Little Hiccups.



The accident book will be inspected quarterly by a designated session leader, and a summary written. This will help to pinpoint any hazards and help to prevent any further accidents of the same nature. Any area of concern identified will lead to a review of procedures.

Accident books will be kept for three years in line with legal requirements.

### **13b Reporting incidents**

Session/event leaders will have ready access to telephone numbers for emergency services, including local police. As Little Hiccups rent the premises session/event leaders must ensure that we have access to the person responsible and that there is a shared procedure for dealing with emergencies.

The provider of the premises/activity will keep an incident book for recording incidents that we can provide information for.

Little Hiccups will ensure that any animals brought into playgroup are safe to be in the proximity of the children and do not pose a health risk.

### **14. Preparation of refreshments**

All committee members and volunteers must observe the following;

- a) General standards of hygiene should be observed when preparing food or drink
  - b) Hand washing prior to any preparation of food or drinks
- c) Work surfaces should be cleaned before and after the preparation of food/drinks.
  - d) All crockery and cutlery should be washed thoroughly after use.
  - e) Take extra care when handling boiling/hot water.
  - f) Any spills should be cleaned up immediately to avoid slips and falls.
  - g) Visually check electrical equipment before use.
- h) Some groups and owners of premises that Little Hiccups uses do not allow the provision of hot drinks for example Children's Centres. Little Hiccups will comply with any such instructions.

### **15. Safeguarding**

Little Hiccups is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all of their committee members and volunteers to share this commitment. This commitment includes accepting a responsibility for the protection of children and ensuring that all concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing which come to the attention of the committee members or

volunteers will be followed up and dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible.

The following information has been taken from the Children Leeds website and will be direct the actions of the committee members and volunteers:

**What you should do if you think a child or young person is being harmed?**

Act straight away if you think a child is being abused.

It is important to stop the abuse as soon as possible to prevent the worsening of a child's health and wellbeing; in a few extreme cases, even a child's death. Children and young people are dependent on others for their survival and have a right to be protected and to have someone who will act on their behalf.

**For details about who to contact to report child abuse please see below.**

**Members of the Public:**

If you are a member of the public and are concerned about a child please call: 0113 2224403

If you feel urgent action is needed because a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, contact the police on 999.

If you need to report a crime, but it is not an emergency, phone the police on 101.

Please act promptly. It can be very difficult to investigate concerns if there is a delay, as some signs of abuse can disappear quite quickly. If you are unsure, please discuss your concerns with your committee's safeguarding lead, or if you are a member of the public you may first like to discuss your concerns with someone who works with children and families, such as your health visitor, social worker, school nurse or teacher (as all schools have a teacher responsible for child protection).

**What will the Contact Centre do when I contact them?**

All child protection referrals are taken very seriously and your concerns will be properly considered and acted upon by a senior officer.

**Will I have to give my name?**

All practitioners must give their name and the agency they work for.

If you are a member of the public and you feel very strongly that you cannot give your name, you need not do so – your concerns for a child or young person will still be examined. Your name and address will be kept confidential if you request it.

### **What happens once I have told the Contact Centre about my concerns?**

The person you speak to will take your concerns very seriously and refer the matter to a Social Worker specially trained in child protection who will contact you. The Social Worker will first check their records to see whether the person is already known to Children's Social Work Services and will then discuss the case with a senior officer in the organisation. Enquiries often start with asking a teacher, a health visitor or a doctor who knows the child. In most cases there will be a discussion with the parents and the child. Sometimes it becomes clear at a very early stage that concerns are not founded.

If initial enquiries do reveal significant concerns about the child or young person's welfare, then the formal Child Protection Enquiry procedures will begin immediately.

### **Will I be kept informed of progress?**

Because of the highly confidential nature of this work, you will not be given detailed information about the outcome of an enquiry. However, you will be told whether an enquiry is taking place and you may be contact for further information.

A secure method of record keeping should be agreed for recording any concerns and actions taken.

### **16. Patient/carer involvement**

Member's feedback is sought after each event by way of a questionnaire. The feedback is then collated and used in decision making as to whether the event is repeated. From time to time parents are consulted as to what other events they would like to see Little Hiccups organising.

### **17. Dealing with complaints or concerns**

There may be occasions when a parent/carer expresses a concern about an aspect of Little Hiccups. This should be dealt with in a sensitive manner taking the individual's concerns seriously. Often listening to the member's concerns and responding with an appropriate reply or course of action will

resolve the situation satisfactorily. If the concern cannot be resolved in this way the complainant should be informed of how to make a formal complaint and the chair of the committee or founder will be informed.

The lead for dealing with complaints is the founder  
Complaints can be accepted in writing, email or verbally. The initial response to the complaint must be made within 3 working days with an acknowledgement of receipt and outline of further action to be taken. The complainant should be asked how they would like the complaint to be resolved and in what timescales. Often an investigation will need to be completed along with a review of procedures. The response must include details of the findings of the investigation with learning and actions outlined. Each response should include who to contact next if the person believes that the complaint has not been dealt with properly.