

CHILDREN AND PARENT HANDBOOKS

Both the children's and parent's handbooks serve two purposes:

1. to inform children and parents about the service,
2. to market the service

The handbooks should also be shared with professional colleagues such as head teachers and social workers- the handbooks are fundamentally there to let other people know who you are and what you do.

Children's Handbook

Every child who currently attends the service, and every child who is going to attend the service should have a copy of a handbook- this document contains all the information that children need to know about the service. So what should be in the document?

First of all welcome the child to the service with reassuring words, you could talk about the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators but in child-friendly language, e.g.

"Welcome to Super Fun Kids Out of School Care, we want to make sure you are: HAPPY and HAVING FUN; HEALTHY; LEARNING NEW THINGS; CARED FOR; ACTIVE; LISTENED TO and INCLUDED, and FEEL SAFE. We are here to help you, so let us know if you have any problems or worries. We can't wait to be friends!"

Once you have welcomed the child, let them know:

- **Who is in the service?** Include pictures of children who are already in the service and of course information about the staff. The staff information should include a photograph, name, job title, likes, dislikes – the children in the service could develop the questions and then interview the staff. Of course, children could also interview other children about their favourite things in the service.
- **What happens in the service?** This should include lots of pictures and a little explanatory text of the activities and play opportunities in the service. This could also include sample programmes for term-time and holiday-time. You should also talk a bit about your play and learning ethos of the service.
- **Where is the service located?** Through pictures and a little explanatory text, show all the indoor and outdoor areas of the service.
- **What's for snack?** Talk briefly about your healthy eating policy (but also the occasional treat times as well)- plenty of pictures and sample menus.
- **Simplified version of policies** Children need to know what to do if they are being bullied, have a concern or are worried- they need reassurance that something will be done.

- **Children's rights.** Inform children of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and show how the service meets these.
- **Services Children's Charter & Golden Rules** We would recommend that all services have a Children's Charter, which has been developed by the children- include this (as well as any rules you may have, again, these also should be developed in partnership with the children).

We suggest the handbook should be personalized for each child with their name and, if possible, their photograph on the cover. We would recommend that the handbook is made of robust materials so that it lasts and that it is also easily replicated e.g. double-sided colour photocopy. Rather than stapling, the book could be spiral bound; the cover pages can be strengthened by laminating them.

Children should be involved in creating the handbooks.

The handbook will need to be updated on an annual basis but could keep the same template from year to year.

Parent's Handbook

The parent handbook is separate from the child's registration form although it could form part of the registration pack. This should contain all the "need to know" information for parents. (Please remember that you should also point parents to the children's handbook- there is no point in duplicating information.)

- Aims and objective of the organisation and any mission statements
- Opening hours
- Contracts, fees and cancellations
- Information about additional support to pay for fees such as, childcare vouchers and childcare tax credits.
- Business structure of the organisation.
- Contact information for the service.
- Staff members- you should include more in-depth information here such as qualifications, training, registration etc.
- Board or committee members (if applicable) – name, post held and when they joined the committee.
- Information about the board or committee (if applicable) – who is the point of contact, role of the committee, how to join etc
- How the service supports and meets the outcomes of the following national strategies and policies: National Care Standards, Getting It Right For Every Child, Curriculum for Excellence, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Playwork Principles and National Play Strategy.
- Information about the service's registration with the Care Inspectorate and staff's registration with the Scottish Social Services Council.
- Talk about links the service has with other agencies supporting children such as schools and health etc., and also the wider local community.
- Services should state clearly how they will support the individual needs of children, in particular the needs of disabled children and children with additional support needs.



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supporting children's rights to play, care and learning.

- Behaviour rules and codes of conduct (for children, staff and parents).

Policies and procedures

- Absence policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Child protection policy
- Children's participation policy
- Collection procedure
- Complaints procedure
- Equal opportunities policy
- Health and safety policy
- Healthy eating policy
- Homework policy
- Illness and infection policy and procedure
- Internet and mobile phone policy
- Medication policy and procedures
- Play and risk policy
- Social media policy

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list – there may be additional information particular to your service which you should highlight.

Further information and resources:

Could your children's and parents' handbooks answer the questions contained in the following guides? They should:

SOSCN Children's Guide to Out of School Care – Your 20 Questions Play Book:

https://soscn.org/families/childrens_guide

Out of School Care A – Z for parents and carers:

https://soscn.org/osc_a_to_z

SOSCN Parents Guide to Choosing Out of School Care:

https://soscn.org/families/parents_guide