Little Acorns Montessori

Ascot, Bracknell & Crowthorne

Parental Involvement Policy

Partnership, Communication & Family Engagement

Document Control

Policy Title	Parental Involvement Policy
Setting	Little Acorns Montessori
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Written By	Jonathan Duffy
Job Role	Director

Role	Name	Campus
Designated Officer / Nominated Individual	Jonathan Duffy	All Campuses
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SENDCO	Agata Payne	Bracknell Campus
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Section 1 — Policy Statement

Little Acorns Montessori believes that the most positive outcomes for young children are achieved when nursery staff and families work in genuine, consistent, and well-supported partnership. This policy sets out how we build, sustain, and deepen that partnership across our Ascot, Bracknell, and Crowthorne settings.

We recognise, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework 2025, that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We regard the relationship between the nursery and each family as a shared commitment to every child's wellbeing, learning, and development — not simply a service arrangement.

This policy applies to all three settings of Little Acorns Montessori. It should be read alongside the nursery's Parent Code of Conduct Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and Confidentiality and Information-Sharing Policy.

1.1 Our Commitments to Families

- We will treat all families with dignity, respect, and fairness at all times.
- We will communicate openly, honestly, and in a timely manner about children's learning, development, and wellbeing.
- We will share information in a way that is accessible and inclusive, taking account of language, literacy, and communication needs.
- We will listen to the views of parents and carers and take them seriously in planning for each child.
- We will provide clear information about nursery policies, procedures, session arrangements, and the EYFS.
- We will invite families to participate actively in their child's learning, both at nursery and at home.
- We will support families who are experiencing difficulty wherever it is within our power and remit to do so.

1.2 What We Ask of Families

- Share relevant information about your child so that we can plan effectively and meet their individual needs.
- Inform us promptly of any changes in your child's circumstances, health, or home life that may affect them at nursery.
- Engage with us in two-way communication about your child's development and wellbeing.
- Attend, where possible, the meetings, reviews, and events we offer as part of our partnership approach.
- Read and follow the nursery's policies, including the Parent Code of Conduct Policy.

Section 2 — Scope

This policy applies to:

- All parents and carers of children enrolled at Little Acorns Montessori.
- Any other adult who brings a child to, or collects a child from, the nursery on behalf of a parent or carer.
- All members of nursery staff, who are responsible for implementing this policy in their day-to-day practice.

This policy applies across all three settings:

- Little Acorns Montessori, Ascot
- Little Acorns Montessori, Bracknell
- Little Acorns Montessori, Crowthorne

Section 3 — Statutory and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been developed in compliance with, and with reference to, the following verified legislation, statutory frameworks, and guidance. All references reflect the current versions in force as at the date of adoption.

Primary Legislation

- Childcare Act 2006 — the primary legislation governing childcare and early years provision in England, under which the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 — establishing the paramountcy of the welfare of the child, and the duty on all those working with children to act in the child's best interests and share information appropriately to safeguard them.
- Equality Act 2010 — requiring the nursery to treat all families fairly and without discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics. This policy must be implemented consistently with the nursery's obligations under this Act, including making reasonable adjustments to ensure all families can participate.
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 — governing the processing of personal data. All personal information shared by families must be handled lawfully, fairly, and with transparency.
- Children and Families Act 2014 — establishing the rights of children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families to be involved in decisions about their support. This policy must be implemented consistently with the SEND Code of Practice 2015 in relation to the involvement of parents and carers of children with SEND.

Statutory Framework and Guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework 2025 (Department for Education, effective 1 September 2025) — Section 1 sets out learning and development requirements that must be delivered in partnership with parents and carers. Section 3, Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, sets out specific duties in relation to information sharing with families, the key person role, and the records that must be maintained and made available to parents.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (Department for Education, published March 2026) — statutory guidance on multi-agency working to safeguard children. Emphasises that effective parental engagement and honest, timely information-sharing between families and professionals are central to safeguarding practice. The 2026 edition places explicit expectations on organisations to adopt anti-racist and anti-discriminatory approaches to family engagement, recognising that racism, discrimination, and previous negative experiences of services can significantly affect whether families feel safe engaging with

professionals. The guidance reinforces a whole-family approach, requiring practitioners to work in genuine partnership with parents and wider family networks whilst keeping the child's safety and lived experience at the centre of all decisions.

- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework — in force from 10 November 2025 — Ofsted has replaced the previous single overall effectiveness judgement with a report card approach, assessing providers across a number of separate evaluation areas on a five-point scale (Exceptional, Strong Standard, Expected Standard, Needs Attention, and Urgent Improvement). Safeguarding is assessed separately as either Met or Not Met. Inspectors assess the quality of relationships with parents and carers, including how effectively the nursery communicates about children's learning and welfare and whether families are genuinely included in their child's experience. Inclusion is now a dedicated evaluation area. Providers cannot achieve an Exceptional grade without demonstrating strong parental engagement. Inspectors gather the views of parents as part of the inspection process and these views directly inform the report card judgements.

Note for Inspectors: This policy supports compliance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, Section 1 (Learning and Development) and Section 3 (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements), by setting out how Little Acorns Montessori fulfils its duty to work in partnership with parents and carers and to share information with them about their child's care and development.

Section 4 — The Key Person Approach

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, every child enrolled at Little Acorns Montessori must be assigned a key person. The key person is the primary point of contact for that child's family.

4.1 Role of the Key Person

- The key person must help ensure that each child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- The key person must help the child to settle, build a secure relationship with the child, and build a positive and trusting relationship with their family.
- The key person must observe and assess the child's learning and development and share this with the family on a regular basis.
- The key person must listen to parents and carers and take account of information they share about the child's life at home when planning for the child's development.
- The key person is responsible for sharing relevant information about each child with other members of the team, including details provided by parents and carers about the child's family, home life, and circumstances, so that all staff can support the child effectively.

4.2 Home Visits

Where possible, home visits will be offered to families prior to, or shortly after, a child's enrolment. A home visit provides a valuable opportunity for the key person to begin building a relationship with the child and their family in a familiar and comfortable environment, to gather information about the child's individual needs, routines, and interests, and to support a positive and settled start at nursery.

We recognise that home visits are not always possible in every circumstance — for example, due to family preference, staffing, or logistical constraints. Where a home visit cannot be arranged, the key person must ensure that an equivalent settling-in conversation takes place, either in person at the nursery or via Famly, before the child's first session.

Home visits are an aspiration and, wherever possible, a standard part of our settling-in process. Where they are not possible, an alternative first-contact approach must be agreed with the family in advance.

4.3 Sharing Information via Famly

The nursery uses Famly as its primary digital communication platform for sharing information with families. The key person must ensure that:

- Observations, learning stories, and development updates for their key children are shared with families through Famly on a regular basis.
- Relevant information shared by parents and carers through Famly — including updates about the child's home life, health, or wellbeing — is read promptly and acted upon or passed to the relevant colleague without delay.
- Any significant or sensitive information shared by a family through Famly is also recorded on the child's file and, where appropriate, brought to the attention of the Manager or DSL.

4.4 Shared Key Working

Little Acorns Montessori operates a model of shared key working. Whilst every child is assigned a named key person who holds primary responsibility for that child's observations, assessments, and family relationship, we recognise that children form bonds with a range of adults across the setting and that effective care requires the whole team to know each child well.

- The key person will actively encourage positive relationships between their key children and other members of staff across the setting, recognising the value of the time children spend with the wider team.
- Group time activities at Little Acorns Montessori are led by practitioners across the team and are not restricted to key person groups. All staff who work with a child are expected to be familiar with that child's needs, interests, and development.
- All staff must feel confident to share observations and relevant information about children who are not their own key children, and to pass this information to the relevant key person promptly.
- Where a key person is absent, any member of staff who has interacted with or received information about a child must ensure that information is communicated to the child's key person or, where necessary, to the Manager.

Shared key working does not dilute the key person's accountability. It strengthens the consistency of care and ensures that no child's needs go unnoticed when their named key person is unavailable.

4.5 Informing Families

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, the nursery must inform the parent or carer of the name of their child's key person and explain what the role involves. This must happen before, or as soon as possible after, the child's enrolment.

Where a key person is absent or changes, the Manager must ensure that the family is informed promptly and that a named alternative or successor is allocated.

Section 5 — Information Sharing with Families

5.1 Information the Nursery Must Share

The nursery must make the following information available to parents and carers, in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025:

- How the EYFS is being delivered in the setting, and how parents and carers can access further information (for example, via the Department for Education website).
- The range and type of activities and experiences provided for children, the daily routines of the setting, and how parents and carers can support learning at home.
- How the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- The name of their child's key person and the role of the key person.
- A telephone number through which parents and carers can contact the nursery in an emergency during session times.
- The nursery's policies and procedures, including this policy and the Parent Code of Conduct Policy. All policies must be made available to parents and carers on request.

5.2 Information Parents and Carers Must Share

In order to plan effectively for each child's individual needs, the nursery requires the following information from parents and carers before or at the point of enrolment, and must be notified promptly of any subsequent changes:

- The child's full name, date of birth, home address, and emergency contact details. Where possible, the nursery will hold more than two emergency contacts for each child, in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025.
- Details of any medical conditions, allergies, intolerances, or special health requirements. In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, this information must be obtained before the child is admitted.
- Dietary requirements and preferences, and the child's current stage with solid food introduction where relevant.
- Where a child has a known allergy or intolerance, the nursery will work with the family and, where appropriate, relevant health professionals to develop and maintain an allergy action plan before the child is admitted. This plan must be signed by the parent or carer, kept up to date, and shared with all staff who work with or around the child, in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025.
- Information about the child's existing routines, interests, likes, and dislikes, and any factors affecting their wellbeing or behaviour.
- Details of anyone with parental responsibility for the child, and any court orders affecting the child's care or contact arrangements.
- Names and details of all adults authorised to collect the child.
- Any change in the child's circumstances, home life, or health that may affect their time at nursery.

5.3 Confidentiality of Information

All information shared by families will be treated with respect and in accordance with the nursery's Confidentiality and Information-Sharing Policy. Staff must not share a family's personal information with other parents or carers. Information will only be shared with third parties where required by law, where there is a safeguarding concern, or with the explicit consent of the relevant parent or carer.

Section 6 — Communication with Families

6.1 Day-to-Day Communication

- Key persons must maintain regular, warm, and informative communication with families about their child's day, activities, and wellbeing.
- The nursery's designated communication platform is the primary channel for sharing observations, progress updates, and operational information.
- Staff must ensure that day-to-day verbal communication at drop-off and collection is welcoming and informative, while recognising that these are not always the most appropriate moments for detailed or sensitive conversations.
- Where a parent or carer wishes to discuss a concern or a more complex matter, the key person or Manager should arrange a mutually convenient time for a proper conversation.

6.2 Written and Digital Communication

- All written communications from the nursery must be clear, accessible, and professional.
- The nursery must acknowledge written communications from parents and carers within two working days and provide a full response within five working days, wherever possible.
- Where a parent or carer has communication needs that require adjustments — for example, due to literacy difficulties or English not being their first language — staff must take reasonable steps to ensure information is accessible to them.

6.3 Attendance

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, the nursery has an Attendance Policy that is shared with parents and carers. Parents and carers must report absences in accordance with that policy. The nursery will follow up on unexplained or prolonged absences promptly, as set out in the Attendance Policy.

6.4 Safe Use of Digital Communication

- The nursery uses Famly as its designated communication platform. Parents and carers are asked to use this platform in accordance with the following guidance:
- Personal or sensitive information about a child's health, welfare, or home circumstances should be shared through Famly's direct messaging function, or in person or by telephone — not posted in general group spaces.
- Parents and carers must not share photos, videos, or identifying information about other children through any nursery-linked digital channel.
- The nursery will not use Famly or any other digital platform to communicate information that has a safeguarding dimension. Any information of this nature will be shared in person, by telephone, or in writing, as appropriate to the circumstances.
- Parents and carers are responsible for keeping their Famly login credentials secure and must notify the nursery immediately if they believe their account has been accessed by an unauthorised person.
- All information shared through Famly is handled in accordance with the nursery's Confidentiality and Information-Sharing Policy and UK GDPR obligations.

Section 7 — Progress Sharing and Development Reviews

7.1 Ongoing Progress Sharing

- The key person must share regular, meaningful observations and assessments with each child's family, explaining what the child has been learning and how they are progressing in relation to the areas of the EYFS.
- Information sharing about a child's progress must be a two-way process: staff must actively seek parents' and carers' views on the child's development at home and take this into account in their planning.
- The nursery will provide both formal and informal opportunities for families to discuss their child's learning and development throughout the year.

7.2 Progress Check at Age Two

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, the nursery must conduct a written progress check for every child between the ages of two and three. This check must:

- Be completed in partnership with parents and carers, incorporating their views and knowledge of the child.
- Identify the child's strengths and any areas where progress is less than expected.
- Be shared with parents and carers and discussed with them.
- Where relevant, be shared with the child's health visitor to support the Integrated Review and to inform any additional support that may be needed.

7.3 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Where the nursery has concerns about a child's development, or where a child has been identified as having SEND, the key person and SENCO must:

- Discuss concerns with the child's parents or carers as early as possible.
- Work collaboratively with parents and carers, and with any relevant external professionals, to agree on appropriate support.
- Keep parents and carers informed of any referrals made or support put in place.
- Ensure parents and carers are central to all decision-making about their child's support, in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Section 8 — Parental Involvement in Learning

Little Acorns Montessori actively encourages families to be involved in their child's learning and in the life of the nursery. We recognise that involvement takes many forms and will look different for different families.

8.1 Learning at Home

- Staff must provide regular suggestions and guidance to families on how they can support and extend their child's learning at home in a way that is consistent with the Montessori approach and the EYFS.
- The nursery's communication platform will be used to share observations, learning stories, and ideas for home activities.
- Staff must take an interest in what children are doing and experiencing at home and use this information to enrich provision within the nursery.

8.2 Family Events and Opportunities

The nursery will, wherever practicable, offer opportunities for families to:

- Attend settling-in visits before their child starts at nursery.

- Visit the nursery to share a skill, interest, or cultural tradition with children.
- Attend nursery celebrations, performances, and community events.
- Participate in Stay-and-Play sessions or similar opportunities to observe and join in with their child's nursery experience.
- Contribute to the nursery's ongoing self-evaluation through surveys, questionnaires, and informal feedback.

8.3 Cultural and Individual Inclusion

- Staff must demonstrate active respect for the cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds of all families, going beyond awareness to ensure diversity is visibly reflected in the life of the nursery.
- Nursery activities, displays, resources, and celebrations must reflect the full diversity of the community across all three settings.
- In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the nursery is committed to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice in all family engagement. Staff must recognise that previous negative experiences of services, including experiences of racism or discrimination, may affect a family's confidence in engaging with professionals, and must respond with sensitivity and a commitment to building trust.
- Where a family's first language is not English, the nursery will take reasonable steps, including translation or interpreter support where possible, to ensure communication is accessible.
- Staff must take account of individual family circumstances, including working patterns and access needs, when scheduling opportunities for involvement.

Section 9 — Raising Concerns and Complaints

Little Acorns Montessori welcomes concerns and feedback from families and is committed to addressing them promptly and fairly.

9.1 How to Raise a Concern

All concerns should be raised through the following channels:

1. Speak directly with the child's key person or a senior member of staff at a mutually convenient time. Concerns raised at drop-off or collection may not receive the attention they deserve.
2. If the matter is not resolved informally, request a meeting with the Manager.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, refer to the nursery's Complaints Policy for the formal escalation process.

9.2 Nursery Response to Concerns

- The nursery will respond to all concerns with respect, fairness, and a genuine commitment to resolution.
- Where a concern relates to a child's welfare or has a safeguarding dimension, it must be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The nursery will not tolerate conduct that is threatening, abusive, or harassing. All parents and carers are reminded of the standards set out in the Parent Code of Conduct Policy.

Section 10 — Transition and Settling In

Transitions — including the initial settling-in period, movement between rooms within the nursery, and the transition to school — can be significant moments for children and families. Little Acorns Montessori is committed to supporting families through all transitions.

10.1 Starting Nursery

- Before a child starts, the key person must make contact with the family to begin building a relationship and to gather the information needed to plan for the child's individual needs.
- Settling-in visits must be offered to all new children and families, with the programme agreed between the family and the nursery.
- Families must be given information about the nursery's routines, key persons, policies, and the EYFS before or at the point of the child's enrolment.

10.2 Moving Rooms and Transitions to School

- Where a child is moving to a different room within the nursery, the key person and receiving room's key person must communicate with the family about the transition, its timing, and what it will involve.
- Where a child is preparing to transition to a Reception class or other early years setting, the nursery must liaise with the receiving setting and share relevant developmental information, with the knowledge and consent of parents and carers.
- The nursery must discuss with parents and carers how the child's learning and progress can be supported during and after the transition.

Section 11 — Funding and Fees

The nursery will provide clear written information to families about fees, payment arrangements, and funded childcare entitlements at the point of enrolment and whenever terms change.

11.1 Funded Childcare

- The nursery will support eligible families in accessing funded childcare entitlements, including the universal and working parent entitlements.
- Responsibility for confirming and maintaining eligibility for funded hours rests with the parent or carer. Parents and carers must complete all required applications and reconfirmations by the deadlines set by the nursery and the government.
- Parents and carers must inform the nursery immediately of any change that may affect their funding eligibility.
- Where funding is not granted or is withdrawn due to a missed deadline, change in eligibility, or failure to reconfirm, the parent or carer will be responsible for paying the full fees for the relevant period. The nursery cannot backdate or guarantee funding where requirements have not been met.
- The nursery will remind families of upcoming deadlines where possible, but responsibility for compliance remains with the parent or carer.

11.2 Fees and Non-Payment

- Fees must be paid on time and in full in accordance with the nursery's terms and conditions.
- Parents and carers experiencing difficulty with payment must contact the Manager as early as possible. The nursery will seek to support where it can, but this relies on open communication.

- Ongoing non-payment without contact may result in further action in accordance with the nursery's terms and conditions.

Section 12 — Roles and Responsibilities

12.1 The Manager

- Has overall responsibility for the implementation, communication, and annual review of this policy.
- Must ensure all staff understand their responsibilities under this policy and are supported to implement it effectively.
- Is responsible for ensuring that the nursery's communication with families is of a consistently high standard.
- Must ensure that parent partnership is embedded in the nursery's self-evaluation and continuous improvement processes.
- Must ensure this policy is reviewed following any significant incident, change in guidance, or Ofsted inspection that identifies relevant recommendations.
- Must ensure that the nursery's approach to inclusion — including the engagement of families of children with SEND or additional needs — is subject to ongoing self-evaluation and continuous improvement, in line with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (November 2025), under which Inclusion is assessed as a separate evaluation area. Evidence of inclusive family engagement practice must be maintained and be available for inspection.

12.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Supports the Manager in ensuring that information sharing with families is compliant with safeguarding obligations and the nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Acts as the lead point of contact where a concern raised by a family has a safeguarding dimension.
- Must be consulted where there is uncertainty about whether or when parental consent is required before sharing information about a child.

12.3 The Key Person

- Is the primary point of contact for each assigned child's family and must build and maintain a positive, trusting relationship with that family.
- Must share regular, meaningful observations and assessments about the child's learning and development.
- Must listen to and act upon information shared by families about the child's home life, health, and interests.
- Must ensure that all information shared by families is treated with respect and in accordance with the nursery's confidentiality procedures.
- Must escalate concerns about a child's welfare or development to the Manager or DSL without delay.

12.4 All Staff

- Must read and sign to confirm their understanding of this policy upon induction and at each annual review.
- Must communicate with all families in a manner that is welcoming, respectful, and inclusive.
- Must maintain appropriate professional boundaries whilst building warm, supportive relationships with families.

- Must not share personal information about one family with another family.
- Must report any concern about a child's welfare, however minor, to the key person or DSL without delay.

12.5 Parents and Carers

- Must read this policy at the point of enrolment and sign the declaration confirming their understanding and agreement.
- Must share relevant information about their child with the nursery and keep this up to date.
- Must engage in two-way communication with the key person and nursery staff.
- Must conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the nursery's Parent Code of Conduct Policy.
- Must ensure that any adult collecting their child on their behalf is made aware of, and agrees to comply with, all relevant nursery policies.

Section 13 — Support for Families

Little Acorns Montessori recognises that families may sometimes be experiencing significant stress, difficulty, or hardship. We are committed to taking a compassionate and supportive approach wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

13.1 Early Help and Signposting

- Where the nursery identifies that a family may benefit from additional support, the key person or Manager will offer to discuss this sensitively with the parent or carer.
- The nursery can signpost families to relevant local support services in Bracknell Forest, including family support, mental health services, and children's centre provision.
- Any referral for early help will be made with the knowledge and consent of the parent or carer wherever possible, unless doing so would place a child at risk of harm.

13.2 Support Organisations

- Bracknell Forest Family Information Service — for information about local family support services.
- Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus) — free helpline for parents and carers: 0808 800 2222.
- Mind — mental health support and information: www.mind.org.uk
- Citizens Advice Bracknell — for advice on a wide range of personal, financial, and legal matters.

Section 14 — Policy Review

14.1 Scheduled Review

- This policy must be reviewed by the Manager and DSL at least once every 12 months.
- The review date is recorded in the Document Control Table at the front of this policy.
- Following each review, all staff must re-read and re-sign the policy.
- The updated policy must be shared with all current families upon re-issue.

14.2 Triggered Review

This policy must be reviewed immediately, outside of the scheduled cycle, in any of the following circumstances:

- Following a significant change in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, or the Ofsted inspection framework.
- Following an Ofsted inspection at which this policy is scrutinised and recommendations are made.
- Following a significant incident or complaint that reveals a gap in the nursery's approach to parental involvement.
- Following a significant change in the nursery's operational context or staffing structure.

14.3 Version Control

- Each revised version of this policy must be assigned a new version number and date.
- Superseded versions must be archived securely and retained for a minimum of three years.

Relationship Between This Policy and the Parent Code of Conduct Policy

These are two separate and complementary policies. This Parental Involvement Policy sets out the nursery's positive, collaborative partnership with families — covering communication, information sharing, key persons, development reviews, and family engagement. The Parent Code of Conduct Policy sets out the standards of behaviour required of all parents and carers, and the procedures that apply when those standards are not met. Both policies must be read and signed by parents and carers at the point of enrolment.

Role	Name	Date
Owner/Director	Jonathan Duffy	June 2026