



Community Agreement

At Wildwood Nature School, a key element of our ethos and something that is vital for achieving our well-being aims is the development of a vibrant, nurturing community that supports the children, staff and parents of the school.

This is a really important document for Wildwood, as it sets out some of the ways that we aim to develop this community. It is very much a working document, rather than a periodically reviewed policy, and something we will add to as good ideas come along. It is also a collaborative effort and will always reflect input from all members of the school community.

The document also aims to provide a clear outline of the expectations Wildwood Nature School has for all of the members of our family community so that our ethos is upheld at all times. The *Community Agreement* is designed to be supportive and aims to help families understand the expectations of them when joining the Wildwood community, and to ensure that everyone within the community feels respected, supported and welcome.

All new families and staff are asked to sign this agreement to show they accept and fully understand this approach and the expectations that come with it.

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1. Family involvement

We want Wildwood Nature School to be a school where families are a part of their children's learning and experiences. The specific ways in which parents and other members of the family can participate in their child's school life are detailed below. Please be aware that certain boundaries must be in place to ensure that family involvement does not impact upon children's learning or teachers' ability to do their jobs.

- *The community room:* We have a dedicated space for parents/family members to be together within the school. This is a space to relax, talk, have tea or coffee, or even do a bit of work. Once you have dropped off your child in the morning, you can spend time in the community room with other parents. However, once you have dropped off your child, please do not go into the main hall or look through the windows in the doors. It is important that parents respect the boundaries and children's space and only enter when they have been explicitly invited. (This doesn't apply when settling your child at the start of the year/term.)
- *Activities:* We also invite parents/family members in to share their gifts, passions, celebrations or traditions with the children. It is so valuable for children to see their own parents/family members engaging with school in this way. And it is also such a powerful tool for everyone to learn about the wide range of cultures, religions and backgrounds that exist within this community. Parents must plan and book in a date and time to come in for these types of activities to make sure that it works with what the children are learning and their schedule.
- *Trips:* We will often ask for parent helpers when we go on trips so that we have additional support e.g. if we are taking the tube to go into central London. We will give as much notice as possible, and we ask parents to confirm in advance whether they will be able to attend.

2. Our ethos

Creating a safe and secure community founded upon the principles of respect and compassion is one of our values at Wildwood Nature School. For this community to reflect those values, every member of that community must commit to respecting each other, communicating with care and demonstrating compassion in all interactions.

As parents/carers, you are role-modelling to your children how to be in the world; it is important for them to see that the most important adults in their lives (their parents and teachers) treat each other with respect and compassion. This not only supports their well-being, but provides them with a blueprint of how to operate in the world, now and in the future.

3. Roles & responsibilities

Everyone at Wildwood Nature School has a shared interest in ensuring the children's well-being, development and learning. However, parents and teachers have different strengths and responsibilities and it is important to be aware of those, as well as the areas where we may need to rely on each other's expertise.

Without a doubt, parents/carers have the deepest knowledge about their own child and are the first, and most important teacher, in their life. Teachers at Wildwood are aware of this and will always seek parents' opinions and ideas when wanting to know more about a child, or make important decisions.

The teachers' responsibility at Wildwood is to ensure that *all* the children meet their potential. There can sometimes be tension between parents wanting the very best for their own child and the teachers' responsibility to all of the children. Teachers will always do their best to meet each individual child's needs, but it is important to be aware that there may be times where compromise is required to find a best fit for everyone.

It is vital for parents to understand that while they are the experts on their own child, our teachers are the experts when it comes to child development and pedagogy. They have studied these topics for years and all of them have many years (if not decades) of experience teaching lots of different children. So when teachers present an idea for how best to support your child, or raise a concern, they are doing so from a place of deep, professional knowledge and understanding.

4. Conduct towards others

In creating this special community of parents, children and teachers at Wildwood, we must all remember that every interaction has the potential to positively or negatively affect the fabric of this community. When communicating with any child or adult at Wildwood Nature School, every member must agree to:

- Treat each individual with respect;

- Honour any differences of opinions, values and beliefs by showing openness and curiosity;
- Avoid tones of voice or language that could be deemed discriminatory, aggressive or rude;
- As much as possible, use the guidelines of Nonviolent Communication (Giraffe language) when communicating - a parent workshop will be offered each year so that families can learn more about this peaceful approach to communicating;
- Address any concerns directly with the person/people it relates to, rather than discussing things behind anyone's back;
- Try to extend the most generous interpretation to the intentions, words and actions of others;
- Respond to others with support and nonjudgement if they ask for help or support;
- Recognise if you have made a mistake, apologise and make amends;
- Not share information or experiences that are not yours to share;
- Everyone is treated equally regardless of whether they have a free place or paying fees;
- Be honest, brave and vulnerable - recognise that this is a community where we can share our strengths as well as a place to share our struggles and ask for help if needed.

We want this community to be a shared space for the children, parents, other family members, teachers and founders. We do not want to create any barriers between the family community and the staff/founders - an us vs. them (families vs. school) scenario that is so common in many schools.

If a parent has a concern about something that is happening at school, they should rest in the knowledge that *any* concern will be listened to and taken seriously.

Apart from scheduled termly child-parent-teacher meetings, each child's key person will be available most days to talk about anything. The co-heads and founders will also be regularly available for any feedback, input or to discuss any issues, both formally and informally.

We encourage any parent to talk directly to a member of the team as soon as they are worried about something, whatever the nature of that worry – either by speaking to someone directly or by emailing or calling to arrange a chat.

5. Online safety, mobile phones & social media

Given the widespread usage of the internet and social media, and the potential risks for children (unsuitable content, cyber bullying, exploitation and abuse), it is important that all families adhere to the following guidelines to keep everyone safe:

- Read our *Online Safety Policy* and *Mobile Phone Policy*, available on our [website](#);
- Read [Camden's guidance on online safety for children](#);
- Do not use mobile phones while spending time with the children at the school. Parents visiting the school must move away from the children if they wish to use their mobile phone;
- All of the guidelines in *Section 3. Conduct towards others*, apply when communicating via digital media i.e. emails, text or whatsapp messages, or any other online communication;
- It is unacceptable to use social media in a manner that would generally be accepted as a hostile attempt to hurt, upset or embarrass another person, or groups of people, associated with the school;
- In personal social media use, never refer to any child or member of staff at the school in a way that can identify them;
- Ensure that any photographic images of school events that include other children are for personal use only and will not be published on the internet or social networking sites.

Agreement review

Agreement created: June 2023

Last reviewed:

Last modified: April 2024

Next formal review date: June 2025