

PEAK CHILD

INTERNAL POLICIES

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. There are many items covered in the External Policies that are important and relevant to Peak Child staff. Therefore the External Policies, as a whole, form part of the Internal Policies, and apply to all Peak Child staff. Peak Child staff are required to be familiar with the Internal Policies and are therefore by default also required to be familiar with the External Policies of Peak Child.
2. To avoid repetition, when this document refers to a staff member interacting with the Principal, if the staff member is the Principal, it should be read as the Principal interacting with the Owners.
3. Peak Child adheres to all legal requirements of running a business and is governed by all relevant legislation including the Labour Relations Act, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Employment Equity Act, and the Acts' Codes of Good Conduct.

B. OUR VISION AND VALUES

4. The Peak Child Vision
To provide quality, affordable, private, Early Learning in a high-care environment, to children in emerging middle-income families living in South Africa, in pre-schools situated close to parents' places of work.
5. At Peak Child we value most highly (**RELICCT**):

- a. **R**especting each other.
- b. **E**mpowering our staff, Peak Children and their parents.
- c. **A**ctively **L**istening to each other, asking questions, being honest and speaking up.
- d. **C**ontinually **I**mproving
- e. **M**aking decisions by **C**onsensus using mutually agreed principles and processes.
- f. **N**ot avoiding **C**onflict, but moving towards it with a positive attitude that we will resolve it together through conversations.
- g. **T**rusting each other that we are working in the best interests of the organisation at all times.

C. PEOPLE POLICIES

Working hours

6. Peak Child operates a working schedule not exceeding 45 hours per week, or 9 hours per day. An hour lunch break each day is included in the total time.
7. Normal school staff hours are structured on a rotating shift basis, typically with an “early shift” and a “late shift”. The various Peak Child pre-schools have different opening and closing hours, for example 6:30am to 5:30pm, or 7:00am to 5:30pm. Although a shift system is the default, provided that there are sufficient staff in attendance at opening and closing times, the Principal may, at her sole discretion, agree different working times with the staff.
8. All staff need to be available to attend the pre-school on several Saturdays a year, primarily for Peak Child training sessions, school functions, and Peak Child marketing events. No overtime will be paid on these occasions but staff will be entitled to additional annual leave in lieu of the number of hours worked on the Saturday. The timing of this additional leave will be agreed with the Principal.
9. Any staff member who arrives for work more than 2 hours after their shift starts will be required to take a half day’s annual or unpaid leave.
10. Any staff member who arrives more than 5 hours after their shift starts will be required to take a full day’s annual or unpaid leave.

Onboarding staff members

11. The People Manager will conduct an initial induction with all new members of staff including interns and learnerships. This will cover Peak Child’s Internal and External Policies.
12. Beyond the initial induction the Principal should then ensure that new staff are introduced to all staff members and made familiar with the school’s processes, approach to teaching and learning, and classroom practices.

Leave

Annual Leave

13. You will be entitled to the number of working days leave as set out in your employment contract. This is subject to the Basic Conditions of Employment in the relevant Act.
14. Annual leave will accrue monthly at a rate of the number of days annual leave to which you are entitled divided by 12.
15. Your Manager will endeavour to accommodate your individual requests for leave, but the final timing and granting of leave will rest with Peak Child. Full-time staff are required to take leave over the December/January holidays for the period when Peak Child pre-schools are closed.
16. A request for Annual Leave must be made via WhatsApp to your manager at least seven days before you are planning to take leave. Staff will not be entitled to apply for a half day annual leave. They will however be able to take a full day’s leave and split it across two half days. The Principal must request leave from the Operations Manager. School Management Team members are to request leave from the Directors.
17. Annual leave accrued in a calendar year must be taken within 6 (six) months of the end of that calendar year within which it accrues. Leave not taken within 6 (six) months of the end of the calendar year will be forfeited without compensation. Certain Central Services staff may be required to work some days during the Peak Child December / January school holiday.
18. In their first year of employment, staff who are permanently or contractually employed on or after 1 June might start the following calendar year with a negative leave balance. The reason for this is

that annual leave accrues at 1.5 days per month and there is compulsory leave taken in December and January which may be more than what they have accrued from their starting date. In this case annual leave will need to be carefully managed while the annual leave balance is negative.

19. If a staff member is absent without leave or does not produce a medical certificate when required, the employer is not allowed to automatically record this as annual leave and therefore these days absent have to be recorded as unpaid leave. The employee may request for the unpaid leave to be converted to annual leave if they have annual leave remaining.

Sick Leave

20. The right to sick leave is conditional on your incapacity to tender services consequential on illness or injury that is not sustained by negligence or malicious conduct that reasonably places your capacity to perform at risk.
21. You will be entitled to a maximum of thirty (30) working days paid sick leave in each 36-month cycle provided that in the first 6 months of employment sick leave will accrue on the basis of 1 day for every 26 days worked.
22. In the event of your being absent from work, you are required timeously to advise your manager, at the latest, an hour before your shift starts on the morning of your first day of sick leave, indicating the likely duration of your absence.
23. Any staff member who leaves work, due to illness, having worked for less than 2 hours must take a full day's sick leave. Any staff member who leaves work, due to illness, having worked for more than 2 hours must take a half day's sick leave. The Manager has discretion for cases where the staff member leaves within 2 hours of the end of their shift.
24. Any absence from work may necessitate the provision of a medical certificate in line with prevailing legislation. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997 says that an employer may ask for a medical certificate if the employee has been absent from work for more than two consecutive days or on more than two occasions during an eight-week period. If the employee does not produce a medical certificate then the employer is not required to pay the employee for the days they were absent. For clarity, absences on a Friday and the following Monday constitute consecutive work days.
25. A sick leave form must be submitted on the online form by the Principal.
26. Routine visits to a clinic or hospital to collect chronic medication do not count towards sick leave and must be taken as annual or unpaid leave. However, providing that a doctor has requested you to visit the clinic/hospital to do a physical check up to ensure that your medication is still appropriate, and providing that you provide a signed sick note on these occasions, two visits per year can be counted as paid sick leave (assuming that you have a positive sick leave balance).

Maternity Leave and Unemployment Insurance Fund

27. You will be entitled to take off 4 consecutive months of unpaid Maternity leave, from up to 2 weeks prior to the due date of your child.
28. Employees may take maternity leave 1 month before their due date, or earlier or later as agreed if required for health reasons.
29. Employees may not go back to work within 6 weeks after the birth unless their doctor or midwife confirms, in writing, that it is safe to do so.
30. An employee who is pregnant or nursing may not do work that is unsafe for her or her child.
31. Employees on maternity leave have the right to claim from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) in terms of Sections 14, 24 and 36 of the Unemployment Insurance Act. Employees must apply and will be paid at the labour centre of their choice. The Unemployment Insurance Act and Unemployment Insurance Contributions Act apply to all employers and employees, but not to:

32. employees working less than 24 hours a month for an employer;
33. learners;
34. public servants;
35. foreigners working on contract;
36. workers who get a monthly State (old age) pension; or
37. workers who only earn commission.
38. You cannot claim if you get benefits from:
 39. the Compensation Fund for an occupational injury or disease; or
 40. any other unemployment fund; or
 41. have been suspended from claiming because of fraud.
42. Employees must apply at least 8 weeks before their child is born. Employees can claim UIF for 17 weeks. Employees who miscarry in the third trimester or have a stillborn child can claim for six weeks.
43. Employees must fill in the application forms and, together with other required documents, hand it in at a labour centre.
44. No tax is payable on the benefits.

Paternity Leave

45. Male employees can take ten consecutive days' unpaid leave on the birth of their child. They can also take additional Annual Leave, as long as this is agreed with their Principal.

Family Responsibility Leave

46. Full time employees may take 3 (three) days of paid family responsibility leave during each annual leave cycle (12-month periods from date of employment). Family responsibility leave expires at the end of the annual cycle. You may take family responsibility leave:
 - when your child is born;
 - when your child is sick;
 - in the event of the death of your:
 - i. spouse or life partner*
 - ii. parent or adoptive parent*
 - iii. grandparent*
 - iv. child or adopted child*
 - v. grandchild*
 - vi. sibling*
47. Peak Child may require reasonable proof of the birth, illness or death for which a worker requests leave. Generally, this leave must be applied for in advance and should be in cases of emergency.

Study Leave

48. Study Leave is a privilege, and not a right. Study Leave must be applied for with your Principal and the Peak Child Owners, using the standard Peak Child application process.
49. The default is that studying should be done after hours, or on weekends, and Study Leave during working hours would only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
50. All full time employees of Peak Child are entitled to 6 days paid study leave per year. The place of study must be an accredited and recognized institution and relevant to the position they hold at Peak Child. Study Leave needs to be applied for, in writing, to the Head of People and will be granted on

approval thereof or given at the discretion of the Peak Child owners. Study Leave cannot be carried over from one calendar year to the next. A letter of enrolment at the institution of study must be given to the Head of People before the course commences. In the case where a staff member is unable to attend the course for whatever reason, they are required to be present at work or take annual leave for the days missed.

Unpaid Leave

51. There is some flexibility to take Unpaid Leave during the year. All Unpaid Leave must be authorised by your Principal, who has the right to refuse Unpaid Leave.
52. If you are absent without leave on any work day this will be recorded as unpaid leave. You can appeal to have this unpaid leave converted to annual leave if you have annual leave remaining but the decision will be at management's discretion.

Absence due to circumstances beyond the school's or a staff member's control

53. Should a staff member be unable to arrive at school either on time or at all, due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. flooding or transport strikes) it is recognised that this is not their fault nor is it Peak Child's fault.
54. Labour Law says that this type of absence should not result in remuneration for the day(s) that are missed. Peak Child also believes that giving staff a "free" day's leave is unfair on the people who did manage to get to work.
55. Where these circumstances occur, staff must make the Principal aware of the situation an hour before their shift starts.
56. The absence from work will either be treated as (a) annual leave, or (b) unpaid leave. Staff members will have the option to choose. If no annual leave is available the days off will default to unpaid leave. If the staff member has not informed their Principal what type of leave they are taking, then the default will be to Unpaid leave.

Applying for leave

Annual leave and unpaid leave

57. The staff member WhatsApps their manager with request for leave.
58. The manager checks with the leave Administrator if the staff member has annual leave available.
59. The manager approves or declines the leave via WhatsApp to the staff member.
60. The manager fills in the online Peak Child leave form.
61. The Finance Manager verifies unpaid leave with the Head of People / Director responsible for HR before processing the payroll for the month.

Sick leave

62. The staff member alerts their manager that they are ill and when they will be back.
63. If the manager suspects that the staff member is running low on Sick Leave, they should contact the Administrator – HR, to check how much Sick Leave is remaining.
64. The manager fills in the online leave form.
65. Staff receive their leave summaries for checking on a monthly basis.

Locum policy

66. We are trying to get the balance right between making sure that you have enough staff each day and not spending money on locums when we do not need them. Our schools are all different so we can't have a policy that fits all situations, but please use the following as a guideline:
- Schools with 80 to 90 children and 12 to 14 teaching staff should be able to cope when there are 2 staff missing. When there are **3 or more** staff are missing, the Principal should request a locum.
 - Our new schools, with around 20 children and 6 teaching staff may need a locum if just **one** staff is missing.
 - Schools with 30 to 70 children may need a locum if two staff are missing.

Overtime and work on weekends and public holidays

67. Peak Child does not want staff working more than their stipulated contractual hours. We believe that it is vital for staff to be present and engaged with the children, and this becomes difficult if overtime hours are worked. Peak Child does not pay overtime.
68. All staff need to be available to attend the pre-school by mutual agreement on several Saturdays a year, primarily for Peak Child training sessions, school functions, and Peak Child marketing events. No overtime will be paid on these occasions but in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Peak Child will grant an employee 90 minutes' paid Annual Leave for each hour of overtime worked on a Saturday.
69. If staff work on a Saturday, then the staff member needs to complete a Peak Child "Weekend and Holiday Work Form" which can be found at www.peakchild.co.za/forms. Note that this form needs to be completed within 48 hours of having worked on the Saturday.

Performance reviews

70. Performance Reviews must be done for each Peak Child employee, once a year. The timing for Performance Reviews depends on which age group of children you work with in schools, or is between August and October if you are part of the Central Services team. A summary of the Performance Review must be handed to the staff member, who must acknowledge that it is an accurate reflection of the conversation. A signed copy of the Performance Review must be given to Human Resources to be saved in OneDrive in the employee's digital HR file.

Remuneration

Salaries

71. Remuneration is reviewed once per annum approximately one month before the anniversary of your full-time start date and any applicable increases will apply from the anniversary of your state date.
72. Salary increases are not guaranteed and are dependent on the financial performance of Peak Child, and the performance throughout the year of the staff member.

Bonuses

73. Peak Child does not pay a 13th cheque.
74. Good performance may be rewarded with a bonus, which, if due, will be paid with the December salaries.
75. Bonuses are not guaranteed and are dependent on the financial performance of Peak Child, and the performance throughout the year of the staff member.

Staff loans

76. Peak Child does not provide staff loans. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Training and development

77. Training and development are core to the Peak Child culture. Various training sessions and courses will be offered during the year. Some of these courses will be compulsory. Peak Child will try to do as much of the training as possible during school hours, but training can also occur on a Saturday.
78. Any staff member who participates in any training related their role needs to complete a "Form to log training hours" which can be found at www.peakchild.co.za/forms

Dress code

79. Peak Child requires that employees, including staff on learnerships and internships, dress neatly and pre-school appropriately at all times. As representatives of this company, staff need to adhere to the dress code policy and to use common sense and sound judgement when it comes to selecting their work attire. When in doubt, aim for being smarter. To assist you, here are a few broad guidelines to follow:
 - All clothing should be clean, ironed and in good condition. Please refrain from wearing clothes that have stains, tears, rips or holes, even if it is the current fashion.
 - Work clothes should be casual professional, which means that they should not be revealing of legs or cleavages - no short skirts, no shorts, no skimpy low cut tops, no see through leggings, pants or t-shirts.
 - Staff are to wear Peak Child shirts every day. Staff receive 3 free t-shirts when they join Peak Child. On colder days, a long sleeve t-shirt may be worn under the Peak Child t-shirt or a jersey over the top.
 - Our preference is for staff to wear dark trousers or trousers that do not show marks as easily during the day.
 - Please keep your nails trimmed and neat. No long false nails.
 - Simple jewellery is allowed but not that which can hook onto or scratch children.
80. All employees should maintain an acceptable level of bodily hygiene to ensure that interactions with other staff and clients remain positive and pleasant.

Cell phones

81. Staff using their personal cellphones when they should be caring for children is a major issue for Peak Child.
82. Prior to the start of their shift all staff members (including the Principal) must place their phones in the pre-school's cellphone lockbox which will be locked by the Principal until 12.30pm.
83. From 12.30pm onwards the Principal can hand phones out for use during each staff member's lunch hour. All phones must then be handed in again at the end of the staff member's lunch hour and at the latest by 2.30pm.
84. Each staff member's cellphone will then remain locked in the lock box until their shift ends at which point they can request the Principal/Person in charge of the pre-school to unlock the box and give them their phone.
85. Cellphones will need to be fully charged before coming to school as they may not be charged on the school premises.
86. The Principal/Person in Charge should have the school cellphone attached to a lanyard on their person at all times. This cellphone is used primarily for enrolled children's parents to contact the school, complete the daily GROW app requirements, conduct education research and for taking Marketing photographs.

87. The school cellphone must always be charged and will be linked to the pre-school's Wi-Fi. If the Wi-Fi is not working then the Principal can request Central Services purchase data and airtime to cover the period it will be offline.
88. If there are emergency reasons for staff needing to be contacted, then a message should be sent to the school cellphone. The staff member can then agree with the Principal to get her phone to make the call so that we don't have the school cellphones engaged on calls.
89. If a Senior Management Team member needs to phone someone at the school, then they can phone the school cellphone.

Tobacco, alcohol, illegal substances, medication, and sexually explicit materials

90. The use of tobacco or alcohol on the premises is prohibited.
91. The use or possession of illegal substances or sexually explicit materials on the premises is prohibited and is a dismissible offence.
92. It is a dismissible offence for a staff member to report to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal substance.
93. Peak Child can, on the basis of reasonable suspicion, insist on a drug test of any staff member, contract worker or locum. In addition, Peak Child has the right to perform random drug tests.
94. If a staff member is on medication that may impact their cognitive abilities they must inform their manager. If the manager deems that the side effects of the medication prevent the staff member from performing their job, the Principal may, at her sole discretion, ask the staff member to return home. Where applicable, the staff member and Peak Child will seek a professional medical opinion on the ability of the staff member to continue working whilst on the medication.

Food and drinks at school

95. Peak Child staff members are not allowed to eat the food that is provided for the children, and they are not allowed to eat any leftover food that the children have not eaten. All leftover food must be thrown away in terms of Health Authority requirements.
96. Only cold water or cool drinks in clear bottles can be taken into classrooms. All hot drinks are to be drunk in the Staff Room away from children. You may take a 15 minute coffee break in the morning and afternoon if you so wish, however, this time will then be taken off your one (1) hour lunch break. Morning and afternoon coffee breaks can be taken in consultation with the Principal, and only if there are enough teachers at work on that day to cover your absence from the classroom.
97. Hot water for mixing formula is to be brought into the classroom in a flask and not directly from a boiling kettle. Formula and hot water are to be mixed over a cupboard or changing table."

Serious incidents involving children

98. In the event that a child sustains an injury that requires emergency treatment, please follow these steps. Assess injury and contact parents.

Emergency procedures for serious injuries to an adult or child

- Call ER24 on 084 124 immediately and state "I'm calling from Peak child we are a Corporate client".
- Answer all questions from the ER24 Contact Centre Agent.
- Have a staff member wait outside to show the ambulance where to find the child.
- Injuries to the head, neck or spine are almost always serious injuries.
- Call the parent/next of kin to let them know ER24 is coming and ask them if they have medical aid. If they do, then confirm the medical aid name and number.

- Keep the injured child or adult calm and comfortable and keep onlookers away from the situation.
 - Once ER24 has arrived, if a Peak Child staff member is injured then complete the WCL2 form attached to this page.
 - If the injured person is taken by ambulance then ask the ambulance crew which hospital they are going to.
 - Once the ambulance has left and if the parents/next of kin have not arrived then phone the parents/next of kin to let them know which hospital they are at.
 - Put an URGENT message on your school's Peak Child WhatsApp group explaining what has happened.
 - Within 4 hours of the accident happening fill out the Peak Child Incident Report Form which can be found at www.peakchild.co.za/forms
 - For any other injuries you should care for the injured person, call the parent/next of kin and complete the Incident Report Form.
99. Peak Child staff members should NOT use their own vehicles to transport children to hospital. The only situation where this is acceptable would be the highly unusual situation where you have followed all of the steps above and have not received emergency support from any of the entities mentioned.

Care of children

100. Please refer to the Peak Child External Policies – Child Care Discipline section for full guidance. Teachers should at all times handle children gently - physically, verbally and emotionally. To be clear, children should not be shouted at, smacked, pinched, bitten or handled roughly in any way.
101. It is important that babies and children be picked up under both armpits and not by the hands or arms. Lifting, pulling or grabbing a child by the arms can result in a common injury called “nursemaid's elbow,” also known as “pulled elbow” and may require medical attention.
102. During the settling in period for new children there will be children in our schools for whom English is not their mother tongue and/or where they understand no English at all. If the teacher is aware of their Within three months we would expect to see good improvement in the basic language.
103. Settling in routines need to be established.

Suspected child abuse

104. Unfortunately child abuse is a reality in our society. The staff at a pre-school will often be the first people to become aware of suspected child abuse and it is vital that we, as an organisation, deal with this issue as professionally as possible, and at all times remembering that the safety and care of the child is the most important factor. It is often the case that the pre-school is actually one of the safest places for the child to be.
105. This section sets out our understanding of the best practice process. However, in any incident, it is vital to inform the Principal, School Management Team and Owners as soon as possible, and to communicate with all relevant parties regularly other than the parents/guardians of the child. The School Management Team must appoint one of their number to work with the Principal on each specific case.
106. It is also very important to note that the parents/guardians must NOT be notified in the event of a suspected child abuse with their child until the matter has been investigated by the authorities. Once that has taken place only the relevant pre-school Principal/School Management Team member or an Owner can contact the parents in these situations until the matter has been resolved.
107. The official document to be completed is Form 22. Copies of this will be available at each pre-school. The Form can be completed by a Teacher, but it must be signed off by the Principal. The Form has the relevant telephone numbers of the Child Protection Unit and the Sexual Offences Unit. Additional forms can be collected from the nearest police station, or downloaded from the internet.

108. The completed form must be stamped with the school stamp and emailed to the relevant social welfare organisation (which will depend on where the pre-school is located).
109. It is best practice to also contact the Child Protection Unit at the nearest police station. Our understanding is that they take these issues extremely seriously, and will act quickly. However, it appears as though the Social Worker is the key individual to assist us through the process.
110. At all times it is vital to document the process, from when the suspected Child Abuse was first noticed, until when the case has been concluded.

Personnel recruitment criteria

111. Peak Child employs Principals, Teachers, Teacher's Assistants, Cooks/Cleaners, Managers, Administrative staff, Gardeners and Maintenance staff. The recruitment criteria are broadly similar for all staff.
112. Positions are advertised through relevant channels. From time to time we get unsolicited CVs, and these are kept for future use.
113. The CVs of applicants are assessed by our Human Resources department, who interview potentially suitable candidates.
114. Candidates who are successful in the Human Resources interview are then interviewed by the Peak Child Owners and/or School Management Team, where appropriate. Interviews are usually conducted at one of our pre-schools so that the candidate can be assessed when they interact with the children and Peak Child staff members.
115. If possible, we will arrange for individuals to whom we would like to offer the position to work under the supervision of Principal for a period of time.
116. Existing Peak Child staff members can apply for any open positions by sending their CV to people@peakchild.co.za. Peak Child will communicate new positions that become available on the Peak Child Staff WhatsApp group.
117. The Principal, in conjunction with the People Manager, can fill vacant roles in their school from existing staff in their school, without having to advertise the position within Peak Child. If there are no suitable candidates in the school then the Principal can request the People Manager to advertise the position internally (within Peak Child) and externally.
118. Human Resources will perform reference checks, including confirmation of qualifications.
119. An offer letter will be sent to the successful candidate, and if accepted, a contract will be drawn up and signed.
120. Human Resources will respond to the unsuccessful candidates.

Equal opportunity

121. Peak Child is an Equal Opportunity company. Any discrimination is unacceptable and must be reported directly to your Principal or the Owners if you feel any person in a position of authority is unfairly discriminating against anyone.

Building community and the Peak Child brand

122. Peak Child supports the right to Freedom of Speech, recognising that with freedom comes responsibility. The expression of a viewpoint must always be mindful of the hurt or offence it might cause, and of the consequences to the reputation and standing of Peak Child, especially insofar as it affects other people who have a legitimate relationship with and legitimate expectations of Peak Child. As a school forming young minds, we do not take partisan views or stand for political, religious or other dogma, and we expect employees to reflect the same tolerance and reserve in the public sphere.

123. A core element of our philosophy at Peak Child is to build community through education. Staff members should not associate themselves publicly with anything that either is or looks like it is hate speech, racism, sexism or anything else that contributes to dividing society rather than building it up.
124. It is very easy for a member of the public to see the name of every permanent staff member of Peak Child online via our website. You are publicly associated with Peak Child when you join us. Publicly associating yourself with something envisaged by the previous paragraph therefore also associates the Peak Child brand with that.
125. If a Staff member associates themselves publicly with anything that either is or looks like it is hate speech, racism, sexism or anything else that contributes to dividing society rather than building it up, Peak Child could be exposed to an unnecessary reputational risk if the association could offend a member of the public or one of our key stakeholders, for example current/past/potential parents, current/potential Peak Child staff members, our landlords, our current/potential corporate partners/funders, service providers and regulators.
126. Publicly associating yourself with something would include, but not be limited to:
- Any images, words and audio/video recordings you post online on any social media or online communication media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Tik Tok etc.
 - Online profile pictures and status updates.
 - Showing your approval for any of the above by forwarding it or “liking” it.
127. While we respect and encourage innovative thought and robust debate internally, we do not allow different viewpoints to interfere with our collegial values and culture, nor to spill over to the public domain. Should any employee at any time feel that a public expression is called for, in a personal or organisational capacity, you are encouraged to consult with the leadership of your pre-school prior to exercising such a decision in the public domain. It goes without saying that no expression may in any way be reflected back to Peak Child, and that only the Directors are sanctioned to comment on behalf of Peak Child.

Sexual harassment

128. No form of sexual harassment will be tolerated at Peak Child. If a staff member believes that they are being sexually harassed by a fellow employee of Peak Child, a parent, a contract worker employed by Peak Child, or any service provider who is interacting with Peak Child on official Peak Child business, they should follow the process set out below.
129. In terms of this policy, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that:
- is repeated despite being declined
 - is personally offensive
 - fails to respect the rights of others
 - interferes with work effectiveness and productivity
 - creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment
130. Sexual harassment may include unwelcome conduct of a physical nature (ranging from touching to sexual assault) or verbal/non-verbal nature (suggestions, jokes, comments, gestures and advances).
131. Anyone who has suffered sexual harassment has the right to raise a grievance about it. An employee may choose an informal or formal approach to resolve their grievance. In an informal approach, the employee advises the perpetrator that the advances must cease. If this approach does not work, then it is necessary to embark on a formal procedure and a grievance should be lodged. Depending on the circumstances of each individual case, it may result in the perpetrator being disciplined.

If the employee is dissatisfied with the manner in which a complaint has been handled internally, the employee is free to pursue whatever legal avenues are available to them.

Grievance and disciplinary procedures

132. Peak Child follows the Disciplinary Procedure for Misconduct Provided by the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), which is based on the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

D. ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

133. The following staff members are responsible for administration at Peak Child:

- Governance level: Executive Directors

134. Management level: Operations Manager, Education Manager, People Manager, Maintenance Manager, Financial Manager, Administrators and Principals. The Administrators liaise with the Principals on a weekly basis to co-ordinate the ordering, payment, delivery and quality assurance of:

- Food supplies
- Cleaning materials and equipment
- Other groceries
- Educational equipment
- Stationery
- Laundry

Invoicing and payments

135. Invoices are collated by the Finance Administrator in weekly and/or monthly batches for joint approval by the directors.

136. Invoices of up to R2,000 must be approved by one of the Directors, before payment can be made. Invoices of over R2,000 must be approved by both of the Directors before payment can be made. Approval takes place by one Director approving the payment in the batch spreadsheet and emailing this to accounts@peakchild.co.za. The second Director then does their approvals and emails the finalised sheet to accounts@peakchild.co.za

137. Invoices are then captured into SAGE Accounting.

138. Once loaded into SAGE then the Finance Administrator loads the payment onto FNB and requests that the Directors jointly approve it.

139. If it is a new creditor or staff member then a Director must load it as a creditor or payee on FNB unless it is a once off payment and the amount is less than R5000, in which case the Finance Administrator can load the creditor/payee as a once off payment.

140. Both Directors are then required to release the payments and/or authorise new creditors' payment details.

141. Regular suppliers have accounts set up for Peak Child, for example food suppliers, utilities, maintenance materials and rent.

142. The Peak Child FNB card can only be used to purchase items that are for consumption for the school, for example, food, stationery, mattresses, cleaning material. Any unusual purchases with the FNB card must be pre-approved by the Owners. These include, but are not limited to, petrol and cash withdrawals. Approval requests for such unusual purchases can be done via WhatsApp.

Leads

143. Principals will conduct prospective parent tours which are scheduled by liaising with the Marketing & Sales Administrator. The Principal should let Central Services know the most appropriate tour times for her and the preschool.

144. At the end of a tour the Principal must give the prospective parent the standard Peak Child gift bag and must submit a Lead Tracker form with the parent and child information.

145. The Principal is responsible for the state of the school at all times but especially when tours are scheduled. Cleanliness, tidiness, morale and classroom management are critical elements of this responsibility. These are the first things a parent will experience and will guide their decision.

Marketing

146. The Principal should explore new avenues for marketing Peak Child in the surrounding community and should share these with the Central Services team. She should use all of the existing marketing tools at her disposal including: flyers (there must always be a supply of these), signage (in good condition), neighbourhood initiatives and associations (e.g. Community Improvement District).
147. Peak Child uses extensive online marketing platforms including Google Business, Google Maps, Google Ads, Facebook posts of our weekly activity cards, our monthly Newsflash and Peak Child school parent WhatsApp groups.

Procurement and storage of durable educational resources

148. All schools should have the correct durable educational resources at any point in time per the School in the Box. There are times when a Principal will want to request new durable resources which would usually be when the resource has broken and cannot be fixed by the Maintenance team; or when the number of children is growing in her school.
149. If the Principal believes the items in the School in a Box are wrong, she must discuss this with the Education Manager. If the Education Manager agrees, then the Principal can make a procurement request, noting that this has been discussed with the Education Manager.
150. The Education Manager must provide feedback to the School Management Team that the School in a Box must be changed.
151. A Principal can put in a procurement request if her school has never had an item in the School in the Box.
152. Durable Educational Resources are generally stored in the Resource Room, although, due to space constraints, some resources may also be stored in the classrooms, and some resources will be stored in the classrooms as they are being used that week.
153. Resources should be used in all classes on a age-appropriate rotational basis. This means that, every 2 weeks or so, the Class Teacher should return some of the resources to the Resource Room, sign them back in, and sign out new resources. The resources needed will often be linked to the theme, but sometimes it is just to ensure that the children have different puzzles, books, toys etc, every couple of weeks, and therefore do not get bored playing with the same toys.
154. The standard list of Durable Educational Resources is available on request. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the school is adequately resourced, according to this list.
155. The Principal must inform Central Services as soon as they become aware that a resource is broken (and can be fixed), is broken (and must be thrown away and replaced), or has gone missing.

Procurement of consumable educational resources

156. Central Services procures Consumable Educational Resources on a quarterly basis which are delivered to each school at the beginning of January, April, July and October.
157. If the Principal wants additional items then she should submit a Peak Child Procurement Form.

Procurement of groceries

158. Central Services procures food and groceries on a monthly basis based on the standard Groceries procurement list. These are delivered to each school at the beginning of each month.

159. The Principal must let Central Services know by 25th of the prior month if the school DOES NOT need any of the items on the standard order. For schools that are not yet full the Principal will have to request exactly what she wants to order using the template provided by Central Services.
160. If the pre-school runs out of any items within the month she should complete the Mid-Month grocery form.

T-shirts for adults and children

161. These are ordered as needed by the Principal using the Peak Child Procurement Form. Each child receives a free t-shirt on their first day at school. Parents can order additional t-shirts at cost price for their children through the Principal. The cost of these additional t-shirts will be added to their monthly statement. All staff members will receive three free t-shirts on their first day of work. Staff can purchase additional t-shirts at cost price by completing the Peak Child Procurement form.

Maintenance requests

162. The Principal must post on the Maintenance WhatsApp group any items that need repair or enhancement including a picture and a short description of what is required and where.

Expenses on personal bank cards

163. If a Peak Child expense is incurred on a personal bank card or with personal cash, an expense claim form must be sent to the Administration team for processing. One Owner must approve the expense if the expense is less than R2,000, and two Owners if it is more than R2,000.

Travel expenses

164. Peak Child staff who use their cars for Peak Child business can claim reimbursement for mileage driven. The travel must be pre-approved by an Owner on email or WhatsApp, and the final expense submitted on the standard Travel Expense Reimbursement form. The form must state the purpose of the travel, the location, and the kilometres travelled. Expenses will be reimbursed at a set Rand per kilometre based on the prevailing SARS allowable vehicle reimbursement rate. Please check with Central Services if you are unsure of the rate.
165. Travel expenses cannot be claimed for commuting from home to work.
166. Travel expenses can be claimed for traveling to another Peak Child pre-school, up to four times per month, if the staff member is on Peak Child business.
167. For a staff member needing to visit a school using their own transport, we will agree a geographic centre point to calculate travel distances to other locations. If a staff member does not work at a particular school, then the centre point will be the Peak Child Head Office. Staff members can claim for travel reimbursement for travel to any location further than 15km one way (per Google Maps) from the agreed centre point. Staff members can claim up to 8 travel claims per month but any travel claims over that number in a month need to be approved by one of the directors before the travel takes place. Staff members using their own transport must have a valid driver's licence.
168. Should a staff member be required to travel to a different city on Peak Child business, expense claims for the travel will be reimbursed by Peak Child. All travel costs must be approved by the Owners before they are incurred. If travel is done for Peak Child and other business, a pro-rata portion of the travel expense claims will be reimbursed. For example, if a Cape Town based employee makes a three-day trip to Johannesburg, and two of those days are for Peak Child business, two thirds of the car hire expenses can be claimed from Peak Child.

SARS

169. Peak Child is registered with SARS and is in good standing with the tax authorities.

170. Monthly payments are made for PAYE, UIF and Skills Development Levies.
171. Monthly EMP201 forms and annual IRP5 forms are submitted via SARS e-filing.

Management Accounts

172. The Finance Manager processes all payments, salaries and other entries in an accounting package at least weekly, and prepares monthly management accounts which are thoroughly examined in a monthly finance meeting with the Owners.
173. A set of annual financial statements is also generated for governance, CIPC, and SARS purposes.

Fee Collections

174. Parents are required to pay their school fees monthly in advance by the 1st of each month.
175. The bank account is monitored daily by the collections team for payments. A central payments database is updated when payments are made either directly into the bank account or in cash at the school.
176. We do not accept any cash payments as these are a security risk to our staff.
177. Parents receive a monthly statement printout or email showing whether or not they are up to date with their school fees.
178. The Administrator will initially follow up with late payments. Very late payments or non-payments will be escalated to the relevant pre-school Principal or an Owner for follow up.
179. From time to time parents overpay the school fees, particularly in the month after their child leaves Peak Child. In these circumstances the money must be refunded to the parent within 48 hours of the money being paid into our bank account. This allows us 24 hours to confirm that it is an overpayment, and to ensure that we have the parent's banking details, and 24 hours to set up and release the payment. Any delays from the time that we requested the bank details from the parent, and the parent providing them to us, does not count towards the 48-hour rule.

Bank reconciliations

180. Bank statements are processed to the accounting system on a weekly basis, and are used to record school fees received and expenses paid using the Peak Child FNB bank account. The fees received are allocated to the relevant School Customer account (Receivables) and pre-school project code (001 – Central, 002 – Harfield, 003 – Arderne, 004 – Nimble, 005 - Melville). Similarly, expenses are allocated to a General Ledger Expense Account and further allocated by pre-school project code.
181. Once the Bank statement has been processed, the accounting system provides a Bank Statement Reconciliation function where the Month to be reconciled, as well the closing balance of the Bank Statement are entered. Any differences between the Closing balance of the Bank Statement value entered and the FNB General Ledger Bank Account per the accounting system are highlighted for review.
182. Any variances are investigated and corrected. The bank reconciliation function is processed again in order to ensure that there are no reconciling items.
183. At the end of each month, a PDF bank statement is downloaded and saved in OneDrive/PeakChildAccounts/Banks/FNB/statements/year/month. A Bank reconciliation report is downloaded and saved in the OneDrive/PeakChildAccounts Monthly Accounts/year/month folder in OneDrive.

Social media and communication

184. Peak Child uses several forms of electronic communication, mainly e-mail and WhatsApp, to communicate with our parents and staff. Peak Child also uses social media, like Facebook, to advertise our pre-schools.
185. It is easy for an organisation's reputation to be damaged by the mis-use of social media and electronic communication, and all staff members must be extremely careful when using such media including Twitter.
186. The Principal may set up broadcast only WhatsApp groups for parents in each class in their school. The Class Teacher can be an admin on these group and send messages. The Principal should also set up a WhatsApp group for the teachers in their school.
187. Teachers may not set up WhatsApp groups with the parents, but they are permitted to communicate with individual parents by WhatsApp or SMS.
188. No staff member may talk to the media, or publish articles, without the express permission of the Peak Child Owners.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems

189. Peak Child uses several systems to manage its administration. The primary systems used by school staff are:
 - The GROW app which is used for daily staff attendance, daily child attendance, tracking developmental milestones and reporting to parents of children in classes 3, 4 and 5.
 - Microsoft Forms – Staff members will need to use many forms which can be found at www.peakchild.co.za/forms
 - WhatsApp groups – these are used extensively to communicate with parents and with staff.
 - Each pre-school has a fast internet connection to ensure that these tools can be used. Staff are allowed to connect to the Wi-Fi on their private phones during their lunch breaks only.
 - Each pre-school has at least one dedicated cellphone with the WhatsApp groups loaded as well as the GROW app.

Capturing photographs and videos in Peak Child pre-schools

190. All staff members must be extremely careful if they take photographs or videos of the school children on a device. All staff are expected to respect the privacy of parents who have chosen to opt out of the right for Peak Child to take photos or videos of their children.
191. Before distributing in any manner any images or videos taken of children enrolled in a Peak Child pre-school, a staff member must positively confirm with a Peak Child Owner that the parents have granted the use for such distribution.

Confidentiality

192. Due to the nature of our Organisation, we deal with a lot of sensitive and confidential information relating to both the children and their parents/guardians. Peak Child staff need to be aware of this and to be extremely careful in how they store and communicate information that could be considered sensitive or confidential. If a staff member is unsure of what they can or cannot communicate they must speak to their Principal, or the Owners.
193. Peak Child abides by the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act.

Staff children attending Peak Child schools

194. One of the benefits for a staff member who works at a private school is that they are often given the opportunity to send their child to that school at reduced rates. However, in the early years of Peak Child doing so, it became apparent that this can cause tension at the school. This is often in the form of the parent thinking that their child's teacher (who is also a colleague), is not treating their child fairly. Or the teacher having issues with the child and taking this out on the parent, who may be their peer, or who may work for them. There is the additional issue that the child may want to spend time with their parent or the parent may keep checking in with their child. This disrupts both the parent's class, and the class that the child is in. Lastly, the child will probably be in their parent's class at some stage which could cause actual issues of the child being treated differently or of others perceiving that to be the case.
195. Peak Child permanent staff members can enrol their children at the school where they are based and pay 50% of that school's fees. Our hope is that there will not be any tension where this arrangement operates, but where there is, it should be able to be resolved by clear and agreed mechanisms including:
- **Peak Child External Policies:** Consistent enforcement of the Peak Child External Policies dealing with behaviour issues involving both children and/or their parents will help in mitigating the difficulties. For children, our External Policies state: "If, after various interventions, the problems persist, or if the parents are not cooperative in trying to sort out the problem, Peak Child may ask the parents to remove their child from the school." For parents, our External Policies state: "Peak Child reserves the right to withdraw a child or family from the school if it is decided that the relationship between the school, child and parent or guardian is not mutually beneficial. The most important factor is assuring the child is in an environment that best meets his / her needs." In addition, the External Policies also state: "Reasons for Mandatory Withdrawal from Peak Child include Physical or verbal abuse or intimidation by the parents, of a Peak Child employee." Our policies cover us if the behaviour of the child (due to their parent being at the school) or the negative behaviour of the parent (not being co-operative trying to sort of the problem, verbal abuse of a staff member etc). They allow us to ask a parent to remove the child in extreme cases described above, that cannot be resolved.
 - **Dispute resolution:** We are clear that having a parent of a child working at the school adds a potential complexity that doesn't exist with other parents. At the first instance of an apparent issue, the Principal (or the Peak Child People Manager if the Principal is the class teacher of the child) will have a meeting with both staff members (the parent, and the Class Teacher), to understand what the problem is, to try and resolve it, but also to clearly state that if it can't be resolved, the child will have to leave the school. If the issue is not resolved by the Principal, our People Manager will mediate the process to (a) try and mediate a resolution within 5 working days, or (b) if no resolution can be mediated, to propose to the Directors whether the child needs to leave the school. The Directors' decision on the matter will then be final.
 - **Additional signed undertakings by the staff member parent:** Due to the serious relational impact of this new proposal not working, we will require staff to acknowledge that having their child at their school has potential negative consequences, which we have experienced in the past, and therefore they need to sign up to additional conditions that other parents don't have to. The letter that a staff parent will sign appears at the end of this document.
 - **Maximum number of staff children at one pre-school:** From a financial perspective, we will limit the number of staff's children at a pre-school to 4, with a maximum of 2 per staff member. This will be done on a first come first served basis. Staff can, of course, always enrol their children at full fees.

Dear XXX

We are pleased that, as a staff member, you have decided to enrol your child at Peak Child. Whilst we strongly support our staff providing their children with an excellent education, we have, in the past, experienced that having your child at the school where you work can cause tensions.

These tensions have taken the form of the parent thinking that their child's teacher (who is also a colleague), is not treating their child fairly. Or the teacher having issues with the child and taking this out on the parent, who may be their peer, or who may work for them. There is the additional issue that the child may want to spend time with their parent or the parent may keep checking in with their child. This disrupts both the parent's class, and the class that the child is in. Lastly, the child will probably be in their parent's class at some stage which could cause actual issues of the child being treated differently or of others perceiving that to be the case.

All of our parents sign up to our External Policies, and these cover how we deal with any behaviour issues with children and parents. However, as a staff member whose child attends your school, at a discounted rate of 50%, we require you to sign an additional acknowledgment of the potential issue, and how this could be resolved.

By signing this letter you therefore acknowledge the following:

- *Having my child at the pre-school where I work may cause tensions that don't apply to parents who don't work at the school.*
- *I will not interfere with how my child is being taught in another class and I will assist my child's class teacher in any way I can to ensure that there is minimal disruption due to the fact that I work at the school.*
- *There are processes that I, like any Peak Child parent, can follow if I have any concerns about my child or my child's teacher, and I am aware of, and will follow, the Peak Child External policies in dealing with these concerns.*
- *If there are any issues as a result of my child being at the school where I work, the first step will be for the Principal to mediate between the two relevant staff members to get a solution. If the Principal is the class teacher of my child, then the Peak Child People Manager will mediate the session.*
- *If the issues are not resolved by the Principal, our People Manager will mediate the process to (a) try and mediate a resolution within 5 working days, or (b) if no resolution can be mediated, to propose to the Directors whether the child needs to leave the school.*
- *I acknowledge that the Directors' decision on the matter will then be final and binding on me and my child.*
- *Should the Directors' decision be that I will not be able to keep my child enrolled at the school where I am based, even if I pay 100% of the fees, I understand that I will still be able to enrol my child at a different Peak Child pre-school at 50% of the standard fees.*

Staff member signature

Date

First name and Surname of staff member

E. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

196. Peak Child's main risk is to not be able to offer a care and education service to the children who are enrolled in our pre-schools. This risk is mitigated in the following ways:
- Peak Child has several pre-schools that are geographically diverse. Hence an event at one school (for example fire, flood, gas leak, disease) is not likely to impact other schools.
 - If one school is impacted, Peak Child is able to accommodate the children, on a short term basis, in one of our other pre-schools in nearby suburbs. Peak Child would also be able to rent spaces quite quickly (for example church halls) and get this pre-school ready in a short space of time while we restore the pre-school at risk.
 - If there is a short term staffing crisis at one school (for example localised taxi strikes) Peak Child has many staff whom we can deploy from our other schools. Peak Child also has a strong locum pool who would be able to step in if required.
 - The majority of Peak Child's Central Services tasks can be done remotely and all Central Services staff use laptops.
 - Peak Child employs an external ICT company (Binaryworks), who backs up all of our systems and data. Hence, we can rapidly re-create our databases following a cyber-attack, for example.
 - Peak Child has Business Continuity insurance which covers the company against income losses should a school have to close due to an emergency.
197. Peak Child has had to test Business Continuity a couple of times in the last few years, one being an existential threat (COVID, where our pre-schools were closed for several months) and two being short term crises (city-wide taxi strikes which make it very difficult for our staff to get to work). These crises demonstrated that our Business was robust in the face of short- and long-term crises.

F. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety policy

198. Health and safety at Peak Child is first and foremost proactive in hiring and training staff who are experienced in working with young children and certified as teachers.
- All school staff are First Aid certified (and attend a refresher First Aid course every two years).
 - The Cook / Cleaner has a daily cleaning checklist.
 - Peak Child provides 2 nutritious cooked meals daily that are designed by a professional nutritionist to ensure optimal nutrition (key to health) and food safety.
 - An integral part of the children's learning programme is health, safety and cleanliness (for example handwashing after toilet time and before every meal).
199. Secondly, Peak Child has developed processes and checklists that ensure our preschool environments are clean, safe, disease and pest free and have the tools for our staff to respond rapidly in emergencies.
- We have contracted ER24, a rapid responses paramedic service, to provide emergency response for all children and staff.
 - We have standardised approaches to emergencies involving adults and children including Workmen's Compensation reporting procedures.
 - Our fire equipment and signage are inspected and tested every year.
 - We conduct monthly fire drills in all our pre-schools.
 - Our School Management Team conducts detailed quarterly safety checks of all our pre-schools.
 - All staff are checked against the National Child Protection Register.
 - Rapid responses and communication to staff and parents for infectious disease control.
 - A sick bay in each school.
 - We have access to a network of professionals skilled in dealing with medical, social and behavioural issues.
 - Where serious incidents do occur, we have an online incident report form which is immediately completed and an email notification sent to the Management Team who then follow up with the Principal on the incident.
 - On a monthly basis, we purchase a standard set of health and hygiene supplies (for example cleaning agents and cleaning equipment).
 - Staff are encouraged to take care of their health and undergo regular medical checkups. When the health clinic nursing sisters visit our pre-schools for the children, they make allowance for voluntary HIV and TB testing for the staff. We have compulsory annual health, hygiene and disease prevention training for all staff, run by the Operations Manager.