

# 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. Respecting each other.
  - b. Empowering our staff, Peak Children and their parents.
  - c. Actively Listening to each other, asking questions, being honest and speaking up.
  - d. Continually Improving
  - e. Making decisions by Consensus using mutually agreed principles and processes.
  - f. Not avoiding Conflict, but moving towards it with a positive attitude that we will resolve it together through conversations.
  - g. Trusting 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 Head Teacher 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.

### Leave

#### **Annual Leave**

11. 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.
12. Annual leave will accrue monthly at a rate of the number of days annual leave to which you are entitled divided by 12.
13. 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.
14. 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 Head Teacher must request leave from the Principal. Principals are to request leave from the Directors.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. 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***

18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.
23. A sick leave form must be submitted on the online form by the Head Teacher.
24. 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***

25. 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.
26. Employees may take maternity leave 1 month before their due date, or earlier or later as agreed if required for health reasons.
27. 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.
28. An employee who is pregnant or nursing may not do work that is unsafe for her or her child.
29. 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:
  - employees working less than 24 hours a month for an employer;
  - learners;
  - public servants;
  - foreigners working on contract;
  - workers who get a monthly State (old age) pension; or

- workers who only earn commission.
30. You cannot claim if you get benefits from:
- the Compensation Fund for an occupational injury or disease; or
  - any other unemployment fund; or
  - have been suspended from claiming because of fraud.
31. 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.
32. Employees must fill in the application forms and, together with other required documents, hand it in at a labour centre.
33. No tax is payable on the benefits.

### ***Paternity Leave***

34. 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 Head Teacher.

### ***Family Responsibility Leave***

35. 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*
36. 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***

37. 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.
38. 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.
39. 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***

40. 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.
41. 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***

42. 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.
43. 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.
44. Where these circumstances occur, staff must make the Principal aware of the situation an hour before their shift starts.
45. 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 Head Teacher what type of leave they are taking, then the default will be to Unpaid leave.

### ***Applying for leave***

#### ***Annual leave and unpaid leave***

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

#### ***Sick leave***

- a. The staff member alerts their manager that they are ill and when they will be back.
  - b. 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.
  - c. The manager fills in the online leave form.
46. Staff receive their leave summaries for checking on a monthly basis.

### ***Overtime and work on weekends and public holidays***

47. 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.
48. 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.

49. 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](http://www.peakchild.co.za/forms). Note that this form needs to be completed within 48 hours of having worked on the Saturday.

## **Performance reviews**

50. 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**

51. 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.
52. 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**

53. Peak Child does not pay a 13<sup>th</sup> cheque.
54. Good performance may be rewarded with a bonus, which, if due, will be paid with the December salaries.
55. 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**

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

## **Training and development**

57. 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.
58. 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](http://www.peakchild.co.za/forms)

## **Dress code**

59. 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.
60. 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**

61. Teaching staff are not allowed to use their cell phones when they are teaching. Where available, cell phones must be locked in the cell phone lockers provided at the school. Cell phones can only be used during lunch breaks. Cell phones cannot be checked for messages outside of the times stipulated. As staff have different shift hours, for clarity, no devices can be with teaching staff between 7h00 and 12h30 or between 14h30 and 17h30, as these are core child care hours. Head Teachers may use the school device between 12h30 and 14h30, and staff can use their own phone for their lunch hour. Between 12h30 and 14h30 staff can use the school device for research only
62. Peak Child will buy a reasonable quality tablet/cellphone for each pre-school which can be used for emergency WhatsApps, education-based research, and for taking Marketing photographs. The device will be linked to the pre-school's Wi-Fi.

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

63. The use of tobacco or alcohol on the premises is prohibited.
64. The use or possession of illegal substances or sexually explicit materials on the premises is prohibited and is a dismissible offence.
65. It is a dismissible offence for a staff member to report to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal substance.
66. 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.
67. 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**

68. 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.
69. 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 Head Teacher, and only if there are enough teachers at work on that day to cover your absence from the classroom.



70. 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**

71. In the event that a child sustains an injury that requires emergency treatment, please follow these steps. Assess injury and contact parents. If a spinal injury is suspected, call Red Cross ambulance 021- 658-5111 immediately. Contact parents or guardian immediately. If the injury is to the neck or head or the child is struggling to breathe, is unconscious or losing consciousness, is having seizures, is shaking or is getting progressively worse then contact parent or guardian to immediately fetch child.
72. If the parent is unable to fetch the child, proceed to the next paragraph, after getting the following information. Ask parent if they have medical aid and a preferred hospital. If they have medical aid ask them for medical aid name and membership number. If they do not have medical aid, inform them that their child will be taken to Red Cross Children’s’ Hospital.
73. If while waiting for the parent to arrive or if the parent is unable to fetch the child, and the symptoms are getting progressively worse, then immediately call Red Cross Children’s’ hospital 24hr emergency unit 021- 658-5111.
74. If the symptoms are worsening and the ambulance is taking more than 15 minutes to arrive then call a paramedic by dialling 112 on a cell phone or 084-124 from landline.
75. Throughout the process ensure that you have stabilised the child and applied appropriate First Aid procedures. Make note of and if necessary, take name and number of anyone who witnessed the accident.
76. Maintain contact with parents whenever there is a change in the situation.
77. Within 1 hour of the accident happening phone or WhatsApp either a Principal, Head Teacher or Owner to let them know what happened and the current status. Within 4 hours of the accident happening fill out an online Accident Report which can be found at [www.peakchild.co.za/forms](http://www.peakchild.co.za/forms)
78. 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**

79. 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.
80. 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.
81. Settling in routines need to be established

### **Suspected child abuse**

82. 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.

83. This section sets out our understanding of the best practice process. However, in any incident, it is vital to inform the Principal/Head Teacher and Owners as soon as possible, and to communicate with all relevant parties regularly other than the parents/guardians of the child.
84. 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/Head Teacher or an Owner can contact the parents in these situations until the matter has been resolved.
85. 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.
86. 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).
87. 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.
88. 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**

89. Peak Child employs Principals, Teachers, Teacher's Assistants, Cooks/Cleaners, Administrative staff, Gardeners and Maintenance staff. The recruitment criteria are broadly similar for all staff.
90. Positions are advertised through relevant channels. From time to time we get unsolicited CVs, and these are kept for future use.
91. The CVs of applicants are assessed by our Human Resources department, who interview potentially suitable candidates.
92. Candidates who are successful in the Human Resources interview are then interviewed by the Peak Child Owners and/or Principals, 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.
93. If possible, we will arrange for individuals to whom we would like to offer the position to work under the supervision of the Head Teacher for a period of time.
94. Human Resources will perform reference checks, including confirmation of qualifications.
95. An offer letter will be sent to the successful candidate, and if accepted, a contract will be drawn up and signed.
96. Human Resources will respond to the unsuccessful candidates.

### **Equal opportunity**

97. 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 your Principal is unfairly discriminating.

### **Building community and the Peak Child brand**

98. 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.

99. 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.
100. 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.
101. 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.
102. 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.
103. 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**

104. 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.
105. 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

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).

106. 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.

107. 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**

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**

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

- Governance level: Executive Directors
- Management level: Financial Manager, Administrators, Principals, and Head Teachers

### **Procurement**

109. The Administrator liaises with the Principal 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

110. Certain purchases are done on a bulk basis at the start of each term to achieve a bulk discount price.

### **Invoicing and payments**

111. Invoices are forwarded by the Finance Manager, Administrator or Principal to the relevant Owner depending on the type of expense.

112. Invoices of up to R2,000 must be approved by one of the Owners, before payment can be made. Invoices of over R2,000 must be approved by both of the Owners before payment can be made. Approval takes place by completing the Peak Child Expense Claim form which can be found at [peakchild.co.za/forms](http://peakchild.co.za/forms).

113. Payments are then loaded online by the Finance Manager or Administrator and the Owners are both required to release all payments and authorise new creditors' payment details.

114. Regular suppliers have accounts set up for Peak Child, for example food suppliers, utilities, rent.

115. Each Principal has a Peak Child FNB debit card which can be used for small urgent grocery items and infrequent ad hoc purchases not available from our main suppliers. There are daily and monthly limits set on these cards.

116. 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.

### **Expenses on personal bank cards**

117. 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**

118. 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.

119. Travel expenses cannot be claimed for commuting from home to work.
120. 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.
121. For a principal managing more than one school we will agree a geographic centre point (not necessarily one of her schools) within her "close cluster of schools" to calculate travel distances to her other schools. She can claim for travel reimbursement for travel to any school further than 15km from the centre point of her close cluster. She can claim up to 8 travel claims per month but any travel claims over that number in a month needs to be approved by one of the directors before the travel takes place. Principals must have a valid driver's licence and a car OR cover the costs of travel themselves between their "close cluster of schools" and the Peak Child office if it is within 15km of the centre point of their schools.
122. 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**

123. Peak Child is registered with SARS and is in good standing with the tax authorities.
124. Monthly payments are made for PAYE, UIF and Skills Development Levies.
125. Monthly EMP201 forms and annual IRP5 forms are submitted via SARS e-filing.

## **Management Accounts**

126. 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.
127. A set of annual financial statements is also generated for governance, CIPC, and SARS purposes.

## **Fee Collections**

128. Parents are required to pay their school fees monthly in advance by the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.
129. 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.
130. We do not accept any cash payments as these are a security risk to our staff.
131. Parents receive a monthly statement printout or email showing whether or not they are up to date with their school fees.
132. The Administrator will initially follow up with late payments. Very late payments or non-payments will be escalated to the relevant pre-school Head Teacher or an Owner for follow up.
133. 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**

134. 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.
135. 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.
136. Any variances are investigated and corrected. The bank reconciliation function is processed again in order to ensure that there are no reconciling items.
137. 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**

138. 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.
139. 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.
140. The Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher should also set up a WhatsApp group for the teachers in their school.
141. Teachers may not set up WhatsApp groups with the parents, but they are permitted to communicate with individual parents by WhatsApp or SMS.
142. No staff member may talk to the media, or publish articles, without the express permission of the Peak Child Owners.

## **Capturing photographs and videos in Peak Child pre-schools**

143. 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.
144. 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**

145. 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.

146. Peak Child abides by the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act.

### **Staff children attending Peak Child schools**

147. 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.

148. 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 cooperative 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 Head Teacher (or the Peak Child People Manager if the Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher, 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 Head Teacher to mediate between the two relevant staff members to get a solution. If the Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher, 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.*

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Staff member signature

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Date

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First name and Surname of staff member

## E. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

### Business Continuity Policy

149. 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 these 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.
150. 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

151. 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).
152. 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 is 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 Principal.