

PARENTS' HANDBOOK

Welcome to First Bridge Centre.

We are very excited that you have joined our centre and cannot wait to start welcoming you to sessions. There is always a lot to take in when starting anything new, lots of questions, lots of new terminology and often some uncertainty about what you should and should not do and we hope this handbook will help answer many of your questions and help you navigate your first few days with us.

This handbook is intended to give you an overview of the policies, and parent commitments and contractual obligations associated with our day-to-day operation. For more detail on any of them please see our website.

Our Head Teacher will arrange a call to discuss any questions you have about starting at First Bridge Centre, but in the meantime, we ask that you read, sign and return a copy of this Parent Handbook to your Head Teacher before your first session to confirm your understanding of the information below. Please initial and date each section as you go through.

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1. YOUR COMMITMENTS

Please make every attempt to keep your child's scheduled appointment, your child will benefit the most from our services if he/she attends 100% of the scheduled appointments.

It is your responsibility to get your child to and from their sessions in time for the session to start FBC cannot provide team members to support with this.

Parents will drop their child off with sufficient time before the session starts (8.50 -9.00 am and 12.50 -1.00pm), and will collect promptly at 12.00.or 4.00. After these times, late charges will apply.

Parents/caregivers are expected to participate in treatment sessions as often as the treating BCBA determine necessary and communicate this recommendation to the family.

Parents/caregivers will learn how to embed their child's individual goals (designed and taught by our team) within the family's daily routines. Intervention plans will be communicated to parents/caregivers on a regular basis.

2. CENTRE OPENING HOURS AND TERM TIMES

2.1 Centre Opening Hours

Our centre's opening hours are Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm. Our days are split into:

- Morning Sessions 9am – 12pm - 3-hour sessions
- Afternoon sessions 1pm – 4pm - 3-hour sessions

If your child is attending a full day 9am – 4pm your child will receive an additional hour for the supervised lunch session. This session is not charged unless your child requires a specialised feeding programme because of the feeding issues they experience. This will be determined by your child's BCBA.

All Saturday sessions will take place at home until further notice.

2.2 Term times and holidays

FBC provide services for 48 weeks a year. We are closed, and do not charge for:

- a week over the Easter holidays,
- the last two weeks in August
- Christmas holidays from Christmas Eve though to first business day in January.

We do not charge for Bank holiday closures. Exact closure dates will be sent out each September and are available on our [holiday calendar](#) on our website.

We follow a three-term structure, with exact dates defined by our closure periods, however in general the terms are:

- Spring: January to April
- Summer: April to August
- Autumn/Winter: September to December

Our main clinical model is based on the centre-based therapy, as this is the most beneficial evidence-based model available following the latest research. We will also offer a home-based programme if our Clinical Lead concludes that this is the most beneficial therapy model for your child. This will be decided in your child's assessment or reassessment. Following your assessment visit, your child's therapy plan will be discussed in detail with the Clinical Lead and thereafter, your child's BCBA will discuss the best therapy schedule for your child's needs.

3. CENTRE SESSIONS – PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

For more information on what to expect from our individualised programmes please see our First Bridge Centre ABA Guide.

3.1 Staffing Ratios and Group Sessions

Staffing ratios are 1:1 for all individual clinical intervention services. Group intervention services typically utilize a 1:2 or 1:3 staffing ratio unless otherwise specified.

When a child demonstrates readiness to enter a group learning environment, FBC will recommend group services to the family.

3.2 Session times

Please ensure you arrive in time for your session – programmes are designed to start promptly at 9.00 or 1.00 and any delay in starting could impact the success of the planned programmes.

Should you be late in arriving at the centre to collect your child. Late charges will apply. These are listed below and will be added to your next invoice.

- £15 for the first ten minutes
- £15 per every further 10 minutes or part thereof that the child remains uncollected.

If the centre cannot contact you or nominated emergency contacts within an hour of the arranged collection time, we will contact the local authorities. For more information, please see our Child Collection Policy.

3.3 What to bring

Please ensure that all children's belongings are clearly labelled with their name.

As some activities may result in messy or expressive play, we ask that you provide a change of clothes in your child's bag.

Children will spend time outside each day and we therefore ask that you provide suitable outside wear appropriate to the season.

We will provide all material and toys to support your child's programme and we ask that you do not bring in any personal toys from home unless specifically requested by the therapist.

Parents should provide sufficient nappies and wipes for any children that are not toilet trained,

3.4 Packed lunches and edible reinforcers

Please ensure that your child has an individually named suitable water bottle.

Please provide a simple snack for your child for each session that they will be attending

If your child is staying for a full day, please ensure you provide a suitable packed lunch.

Some of our children may have severe nut allergies so please do not provide foods that may contain nuts.

We cannot heat food on site.

Your therapist will inform you if you need to provide edible reinforcers for your child's programme. You should check with your therapist at the end of each session to see if these need to be replenished.

3.5 Napping at centre

Due to the intensive nature of our therapy napping is not part of our routine. However we do appreciate that for some of our younger clients this may be required. If your child is regularly having a morning or afternoon nap please speak to your Head teacher to discuss the requirements. At First Bridge centre we provide sleep mats, sheets and blankets if needed.

Naps will be allowed for 15 mins without interruption and will be logged on Family. During this time, the ABA therapist will remain in the room with the child and will work on the child's programme. After 15 minutes the child will be gently woken up and will continue with programming. If, at that time, the child continues to require a longer nap (i.e., the child is difficult to rouse or distressed by waking) they will be given an additional 15 minutes while the ABA therapist continues to work on the child's data, program materials, program binder, etc. The child will then be woken at the end of the 15 minutes and therapy will resume.

If the child continues to require a longer nap, the family will be called to come and pick up their child.

4. HOME TREATMENT SESSIONS - PRACTICAL INFORMATION

For more detailed information on what to expect in home-based sessions please see our First Bridge centre ABA Guide.

4.1 Home Treatment Session Times

If we are providing home-based therapy sessions, these will follow our centre hours of

- Morning Sessions 9am – 12pm
- Afternoon sessions 1pm – 4pm

If your child is having a full day of home services, our therapists will not be present for the lunch time hour 12pm-1pm, therefore you are not charged for this hour.

During home-based sessions, a caregiver of 18 years of age or older must be always on the premises.

4.2 Parent / Guardian commitments

During home-based sessions, a caregiver of 18 years of age or older must be always on the premises.

During community sessions, a caregiver must be always in line of sight. Home-based sessions must occur in a smoke-free environment.

During Home based sessions First aid may not be given by therapists.

If the child is not toilet trained, FBC therapists should check with the caregiver prior to the start of session to ensure the nappy is clean and dry. FBC therapists will check the child's nappy regularly during session and ensure that this is changed. FBC do not provide nappies for home-based sessions.

Our team members will be required to complete the data sheets and track the child's progress for the session completed, 15 minutes before each session' end. To achieve this, we ask that a care giver is present to take over the care of your child promptly 15 minutes before the scheduled end of the session.

Once the therapists complete their data, they will organise your child's therapy materials for their next session so that the therapy can begin promptly. We kindly ask that all materials are left in that order to ensure that the therapists are not spending valuable time away from the session re-organising the materials.

4.3 Structuring your Home for Therapy

An Environmental Assessment will be conducted by First Bridge Centre staff prior to/early in-service provision to ensure we meet labour requirements for our employees.

When therapy is conducted in the home environment, FBC therapists will need designated areas that are permitted for conducting therapy. Therapy materials that are a part of your child's treatment program should also be kept in these environments.

FBC will provide the stimuli and therapy materials for your child's individual program. These materials will include toys that are highly preferred by your child. In order to maintain order and their reinforcement power, we ask that all therapy materials are kept out of the child's reach between the sessions.

Edible reinforcers may also be needed; however, these must be provided by you as required by the programme.

FBC materials delivered to each individual client's home are systematically allocated to your child from the FBC resource library, this is done after your child's team completes a preference assessment with you child and determines what materials will be necessary for their ongoing programs. We systematically update the list of resources allocated to your child at any given time.

We ask that our clients take care of these items as they will be returned to the library for the use by our other clients, when they are no longer deemed necessary for your child's program. In order to prevent breakage to these resources and to keep the order in which the resources are left by the therapists (to ensure that they can start their therapy sessions promptly), we will provide locked containers in which the resources will be stored. Each client's data folder will also be stored in this locked container as required by law as it contains confidential information on our clients.

If the materials are returned to FBC library in a damaged state or with parts missing, we will add the cost of these to an invoice issued to you at the end of the month to enable us to replace these materials.

Some of our clients prefer to retain the toys and materials for their personal use at home after these materials are no longer used in therapy sessions. If this is something that you prefer to do, we can also issue an invoice for such materials and leave the resources at your home after these are no longer used in therapy.

It is important to keep the home therapy environments clean, comfortable and free from distraction to maximise attention and learning. We appreciate that there may be other family members, siblings and family pets present at the home during the therapy sessions. In order to maintain the efficacy of your child's treatment, we ask that day-to-day disruptions are kept to a minimum. Your clinical team will share additional recommendations for structuring your home during the initial stages of treatment.

5. ATTENDANCE AND CANCELLATIONS

5.1 Contacting Us

Please inform the head teacher if you know your child will be absent from any of your sessions. If a child does not arrive for a scheduled session and we cannot contact the parents, we will follow our absent child policy.

In the event that you have a home-based therapy session, we ask for an 18 hours' notice for any cancellations though if you can inform us earlier, however we do realise that your child may fall ill overnight. In this case we appreciate you letting us know as soon as possible that your child's session should be cancelled.

For any issues with attendance please contact your centre on 02030 260 095. Our opening hours are 9am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday, but should you need to communicate a cancellation after hours we have a 24-hour voicemail and can accept messages.

Sessions cancelled by a family for any reason will not be refunded. If your child is unable to attend services, the staff members of our team assigned to work with your child will be continuing to update the resources/ materials necessary for your child's programme and graphing their data.

5.2 Rescheduling sessions

Whilst we are usually not able to reschedule sessions due to therapist availability and full occupancy, there may be some cases where this is possible. Please speak to your head teacher should you wish to try and reschedule a session, If this is possible, we are unable to allow more than one rescheduled session per month and within the same month

In rare circumstances due to therapist illness we may not be able to provide a scheduled session. Should this be the case, we will make every effort to ensure that your child receives therapy during their original scheduled time with another member of your child's team. We will do our best to provide appropriate cover if one of our team members is absent or ill. If this is not possible, we will try to schedule a replacement session. Any

cover or replacements of the team members will be determined in direct consultation with our Clinical Director and will be scheduled at their discretion. If a reschedule is not possible we will credit your following month's invoice for the cancelled session.

5.3 Holidays

Though we do not charge for our closure weeks, we will not be able to issue refunds for any holidays taken outside of our communicated holiday periods.

5.4 Sickness

If your child shows any of the symptoms below, they are considered sick and should not attend the centre or continue with their home therapy sessions. Your child may return to services if they have been clear of the symptoms for the required period set out below. For further detail please read our Sickness policy and our sickness traffic light.

- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea 48 hours
- Flu-like symptoms 24 hours
- Conjunctivitis 24 hours after starting drops

Sessions will not be refunded for absence due to sickness.

5.5 COVID 19

Please see our Covid policy for our most up to date processes.

If your child or anyone in your family who resides in the same household as your child experiences Symptoms of COVID 19:

- a persistent cough
- Fever of 37.8 degrees and above
- loss of sense of smell and/or taste

You should inform FBC immediately. Your child may not attend the centre nor will any therapist be able to attend home therapy session until the required isolation period is completed or a negative COVID test is returned to us.

In such cases, all members of the family must undergo immediate COVID testing (the results of which need to be shared with FBC) and if this confirms a positive COVID result, the entire family need to self-isolate for 10 days from when the first symptoms appeared.

During the isolation period, services must be suspended to keep your family and the members of our clinical team safe. These policies will be changed in keeping with government guidance as it is updated. As this is government mandated isolation that warrants the cessation of our services you will not be charged during your period of isolation due to COVID 19, following a positive COVID test.

6. CHANGES TO SERVICES

6.1 Additional Services

If you wish to arrange additional sessions, additional programmes such as feeding or toileting or parent training sessions, please speak in the first instance to your BCBA who will discuss the necessity and advantage of these. If agreed and if not a permanent change, you will be billed separately for these sessions or programmes the following month.

FBC is happy to provide the necessary reports and documentation you may need in order to seek funding support from the Local Authority via the Education Health and Care Plan. The preparation of such reports and any meetings required, including those with local authorities and other professionals reports will be billed at an hourly rate of £115.

If any at home service is agreed, these will be charged at regular fees plus additional travel time to and from home charged at therapists or BCBA hourly rate.

6.2 Reduction of Services

If at any time you wish to reduce your service hours you should first consult with the Clinical Lead. For any reduction of hours, FBC requires 60 days' written notice.

6.3 Termination of Services

You can end our services at any time by giving us not less than 60 days' written notice. FBC may use your deposit to cover any unpaid fees and upon termination the balance of your deposit will be returned to you within 14 days.

6.4 Discharging a child

On occasion there may be reason to discharge a child from FBC services. FBC considers a variety of factors when determining whether a discharge from services may be appropriate. The following instances may warrant a discharge from FBC therapy services:

- The child is functioning within normal limits for his or her age and demonstrates evidence that he/she will continue to acquire new skills under natural, non-therapeutic conditions.
- The child has met his long-term goals and objectives and there is no request for new goals.
- The child's attendance falls to a level which significantly negatively impacts any future progress and all solutions to improve attendance have been explored.
- The child's needs are such that they cannot be addressed by FBC clinical staff. In such cases, FBC will contact the family and assist in finding an appropriate placement for the child.
- Failure to comply with FBC policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook, including full payment for all services in a timely manner.

In all these situations the clinical team will work with you to agree a transition period which will be no less than 30 days.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 Your communications with us

Your main point of contact will be your Head Teacher and notifications through the Family app. If you have any issues you should contact them directly and they will answer your query.

For questions about your child's progress or development please contact your child's BCBA.

Please address all communications to the Head Teacher at your centre using the contact details below.

First Bridge Centre
Unit 17
2 Station Court
Imperial Wharf
Townmead Road
Fulham
SW6 2PY

For all queries please contact headteacher.iw@firstbridgecentre.com and one of our team will get back to you within 24 hours.

For sickness, cancellations and questions about your child's schedule, please call the centre on **02030 260 095** 8.00 am – 5.30pm Monday – Saturday or drop an email to headteacher.iw@firstbridgecentre.com

FBC therapists are not permitted by the BACB ethical conduct guidelines and the regulatory laws to provide their personal information and personal contact details (such as mobile numbers or personal email) to the family, as it creates a risk of confidentiality breach when using our child's sensitive health data.

In your Services Agreement you are agreeing not to:

- Ask for personal contact information from our team members.
- Solicit the services of a First Bridge therapist / consultant outside of their work with FBC.

7.2 Our communications with you

On a day-to-day basis your Head teacher will contact you using our secure Centre management App Family. When you join you will be sent a link to log in and through this app that you will get notifications, can contact our centre, and see how your child is progressing. We will also communicate any minor bumps or accidents that may happen through this app.

ABA Therapists/ Registered Behavior Technicians help carry out treatment goals developed by all clinical disciplines. Due to the nature of ABA therapy, it is important that they can focus on working with your child. Unlike the communication and updates you may have experienced in other nurseries or school settings, all communications with the parents need to happen with your child's head teacher and BCBA, not their therapists.

To support this approach, we ask that any questions are directed to the BCBA on your team or your head teacher rather than your therapist on the day.

Your BCBA and headteacher will be able to provide a much more comprehensive responses based on all the data and feedback that have access to rather than the specific detail of one therapist on one particular day.

In terms of our communication and feedback commitments to you we will provide the following:

- For in home sessions, an individual schedule will be emailed to you a week in advance. For home therapy sessions, should there be a change in therapist due to sickness we will inform you of that change as soon as possible.
- A brief update at the handover points of each session. We want to maximise our time with the child, so communication between staff and caregivers will happen at the beginning and end of a session only.
- All data and written reports will be kept in your child's binder. This will also include your monthly curriculum programme
- At most fortnightly, but most often weekly, supervision is provided. Feedback is provided in the form of supervision notes which are logged in our system and are also added to the child's binder for parents and other therapists to access.
- Once a month you will be invited to join the clinical team session where your child's progress will be discussed, and you will have an opportunity to ask further questions.
- Should you wish to arrange time to have a further discussion please speak to your Head teacher who will look for a suitable time.

In line with our Assessment policy ([link](#)) and Early years framework parents will also receive written copies of:

- Two-year-old check report
- End of EYFS report (age 5)
- Leaver's report

8. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As part of your commitment to our services please ensure that you have read and understood the following policies. The links below will take you to our full policy and all are available on our website.

- First Aid Policy
- Medical Policy
- Child Sickness Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- COVID 19 policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Parent's Handbook and will comply with its terms.

Signed by the Parent(s) / Guardian(s) named above:

Signed:

Signed:

Print Name:

Print Name:

Dated:

Dated: