

Employment and Staffing

(Including Suitability, Contingency Plans, Training and Development)

Policy Statement

We meet the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensuring that children have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality. Our staff are appropriately qualified and we carry out checks for criminal and other records through the Disclosure and Barring Service or other appropriate body in accordance with statutory requirements.

Procedures

Staff are deployed to meet the care and learning needs of children and ensure their safety and well-being.

There are effective systems in place to ensure that adults looking after children are suitable to do so.

There is a complaints procedure and staff, and volunteers know how to complain and who they complain to.

There is a whistleblowing procedure for all staff, students and volunteers to raise any concerns they may have.

Ratios

- To meet this aim we use the following ratios of adult to children:
 - children aged two years of age: 1 adult : 4 children; and
 - children aged three to seven years of age: 1 adult : 8 children.
- A minimum of two staff/adults are on duty at any one time.
- At least one Paediatric First Aider will be on site at all times when children are present.
- We use a Key Person approach to ensure that each child has a named member of staff with whom to form a relationship and who plans with parents/carers for the child's well-being and development in the setting. This approach is described in our Settling In and the Role of the Key Person Policy.
- We hold regular staff meetings to undertake curriculum planning and to discuss children's progress, their achievements and any difficulties that may arise from time to time.
- Only those staff aged 17 or over are included in ratios. Staff working as apprentices (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios if the setting manager is satisfied that they are competent and responsible.
- The setting manager deploys staff to give adequate supervision of indoor and outdoor areas, ensuring that children are usually within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing of staff at all times.
- In open plan provision, staff are positioned in areas of the room and outdoors to supervise children and to support their learning.
- Staff inform colleagues if they have to leave the room for any reason.
- The setting manager may direct other members of staff to join those outside, if the numbers of children warrant additional staff.
- Staff focus their attention on the children at all times whilst having a wider awareness of what is happening around them.
- Staff allow time for colleagues to engage in 'sustained shared interaction' with children and do not interrupt activities led by colleagues.

Vetting and Staff Selection

- We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- All staff have job descriptions which set out their staff roles and responsibilities.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by our imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.
- We use Ofsted guidance on obtaining references and enhanced criminal record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for staff, committee members, and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children. This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for the vetting and barring scheme. A member of staff or committee member, who is awaiting DBS approval, is never allowed unsupervised access to the children, until approval has been given.
- Subscription to the Update Service for DBS is required for all staff and committee members per Ofsted guidelines. Staff are expected to apply for, continuously renew and pay for the Update Service subscription themselves each year within the specified timeframes. Committee members are expected to continue to renew their subscription each year - this is currently free of charge, but if a charge is requested in future committee members will be expected to pay this fee themselves.

- Failure to renew the Update Service leading to a DBS becoming invalid or unusable per Ofsted guidelines, will require staff to reapply for a new DBS at their own cost as soon as possible.
- Committee members are expected to pay the cost of their own DBS themselves.
- We keep all records relating to employment of staff, committee members and volunteers, in particular those demonstrating that checks have been done, including the date and number of the enhanced DBS or CRB check.
- Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children – whether received before or at any time during their employment with us.
- All staff are expected to read and follow all our policies and our code of conduct.

Disqualification

- Where we become aware of any relevant information which may lead to the disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children. In the event of disqualification, that person's employment with us will be terminated.

Changes to Staff

- We inform Ofsted of any changes in the person responsible for our setting.

Training and Staff Development

- Our Playgroup Leader and Deputy hold at a minimum the CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Pre-school Practice or an equivalent qualification and a minimum of half of our staff hold the CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Pre-school Practice or an equivalent or higher qualification.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff - whether paid staff or volunteers - through the Early Years Alliance (formally the Pre-school Learning Alliance) and other external agencies.
- Our setting budget allocates resources to training.
- We provide staff induction training in the first two weeks of employment. This induction includes our Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy. Other policies and procedures will be introduced within an induction plan.
- We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings and appraisals.
- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.

Staff Uniform / Appropriate Clothing

We provide staff with a uniform, usually a polo top and/or t-shirt, a fleece and/or sweatshirt, or a tabard.

- All staff will be expected to wear the uniform provided.
- If uniform is not available, staff will be expected to wear their own suitable, appropriate clothing instead, with Health and Safety in mind, as well as consideration for working with small children. Dresses/skirts should not be worn and trousers/shorts should not be too long or too short. Tops should not be low cut. Footwear should also be appropriate, including flat soles and covered toes (sandals are not considered appropriate).

Staff Taking Medication/Other Substances

- If a member of staff is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, we ensure that they seek further medical advice. Staff will only work directly with the children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.
- Staff medication on the premises will be stored securely and kept out of reach of the children at all times.
- If we have reason to believe that a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for children they will not be allowed to work directly with the children and further action will be taken.

Managing Staff Absences and Contingency Plans for Emergencies

- Our staff take their holiday breaks when the playgroup is closed. Where staff may need to take time off for any reason other than sick leave or training, a request for holiday should be sent by email with sufficient notice to the Playgroup Leader, the Chair of the Committee and the Staff Liaison Officer, to be discussed and agreed. Staff can request up to 1 working week of unpaid leave at the discretion of the Playgroup Leader and Committee. Sufficient cover for any staff absence requests will need to be sought and found prior to time being taken off. Email addresses can be provided to staff members on request via the Playgroup Leader or our Administrator.
- Where staff are unwell and take sick leave in accordance with their contract of employment, we organise cover to ensure ratios are maintained.
- Sick leave is monitored and action is taken where necessary in accordance with their contract of employment.
- We have contingency plans to cover staff absences, as follows:

Other staff members or bank staff will work extra hours to cover staff absences. Alternatively, committee members, who have been CRB/DBS checked, also cover for staff absences, if necessary. We may also use suitable agency staff where necessary.

Staff Children

- Where members of staff have their own children with them at the setting, the age of the child must fall within the stipulated ages of the setting's Ofsted registration.
- Where members of staff are likely to be working directly with their own children, this is subject to discussion before commencement with the setting manager.
- Where it is agreed that a member of staff's child attends the setting, it is subject to the following:
 - the child is treated by the parent and all staff as any other child would be
 - the child will not be in the parent's Key group of children
 - the Key Person and parent will work towards helping the child to make a comfortable separation from the parent to allow the parent to fully undertake their role as a staff member of the setting
 - the Key Person will take responsibility for the child's needs throughout the day, unless the child is sick or severely distressed
 - time and space are made for the parent to breastfeed during the day, if that is their chosen method of feeding
 - the situation is reviewed as required, to ensure that the needs of the child are being met, and that the parent is able to fulfil his/her role as a member of staff

If it is the setting manager's child, then their line manager ensures the criteria above is met.

- Staff may bring their child into the playgroup during working hours providing their child is not unwell, to be looked after as part of the playgroup, under the following conditions:
 - as long as it is still covered by our insurance.
 - there is space within our usual child numbers for that day - we will not exceed our maximum daily intake (24).
 - there are enough staff to cover ratios for that day with the child included.
 - if the child is aged from over 2 to under 12, and within the stipulated ages of the setting's Ofsted registration.
 - in an emergency and/or where no other childcare is available for the child (staff must seek alternatives first).
 - if the setting has no other staff to cover that member of staff's absence.
 - all children must have emergency contact details recorded.Staff will be made aware that they are still required to work as normal and look after all children at the playgroup as a whole, and are not there just to take care of their own children (as stipulated by the Early Years Alliance).

Legal References

Protection of Children Act 1999

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Childcare Act 2006

Further Guidance

Recruiting Early Years Staff (Alliance Publication)

People Management in the Early Years (Alliance Publication)

Policy adopted: September 2011

Last reviewed: July 2024

Signed:

Name: Kerri Westlake

Position: Chair