

Staffing, Student and Volunteer Policy

Statement of intent

We provide a staffing ratio in line with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to ensure 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 Barring Service in accordance with statutory requirements.

This setting recognises that qualifications and training make an important contribution to the quality of the care and education provided by early year's settings. As part of our commitment to quality, we offer placements to students undertaking early year's qualifications and training; this includes those studying a wide range of levels and qualifications. We also offer placements for school pupils on work experience.

Staffing

- To meet this aim, we use the following ratios of adult to child:
 - Children aged two years of age: 1 adult : 5 children.
 - Children aged three - seven years of age: 1 adult: 8 children.
- We use a key person system to ensure that each child has a named member of staff with whom to form a relationship and who plans with parents for the child's well-being and development in the setting. The key person meets regularly with the family for discussion and consultation on their child's progress.
- 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.
- 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.
- Our setting Management Team hold two BA Hons and an early Years Teacher Status between them. All other staff hold relevant qualifications as stated within the EYFS Statutory Framework.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff - whether paid staff or volunteers - through the Pre-school Learning Alliance, Young in Herts and external agencies.
- Our setting budget allocates resources to training.
- We provide staff induction training in the first week of employment. This induction includes our Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Children Policy. All other policies and procedures will be introduced within the 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.
- We use Ofsted guidelines on obtaining references and criminal record checks through the Disclosure Barring Service for staff and volunteers
- Individual records are kept on the premises containing the names and address of staff members, volunteers and Management Team. This also includes information about recruitment, training and qualifications. This information is kept securely.

Recruitment

- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice, as laid out in the Equality of Opportunity Policy
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the job, regardless of age, gender, culture, marital status, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by us imposing conditions or requirements which are not justifiable

Staff Induction

- Staff induction training begins on the first day of employment and is completed as soon as possible.
- A new staff checklist ensures that all areas of induction are completed
- All new members of staff will be given a set of pre-school policies to become familiar with and they will take part in a fire drill in their first term
- A DBS check must be carried out in advance of employment
- Relevant training will be discussed and organised
- All new staff will be allocated a mentor for support and guidance
- A staff contract will be signed by both parties at the end of a satisfactory trial period, which is normally one month

Staff Sickness

- If a member of staff is unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, they must telephone the work number from 7.30am onwards on the first day of absence and speak to Claire. They should give the reason for their absence and, where possible, an expected return date.
- If they know they will be absent the following day, they must state this on the call in the morning or call again by 3.00pm and speak to Claire. If Claire is unavailable, they must speak to Zoe.
- Staff must continue to keep the Pre-school informed of their expected return date and notify Claire or Zoe if this changes by phone call. In exceptional circumstances where they are unable to speak to Claire or Zoe, they must make contact as soon as reasonably practicable.
- For sickness absences of 7 calendar days or less, staff must complete a self-certification form on their return to work.
- If sickness continues for more than 7 consecutive calendar days, staff must provide a fit note from an appropriate healthcare professional.
- Staff may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) in accordance with current government regulations and statutory requirements.
- All sickness absence will be recorded and, where necessary, information may be shared with payroll to ensure payments are processed correctly. Sickness information will be treated confidentially.
- Following sickness absence, staff will normally have a return-to-work discussion with the Manager to confirm the absence, ensure they are fit to return and identify any support or reasonable adjustments required.
- Staff who have diarrhoea or vomiting must not return to work until 48 hours after the last episode, in line with current public health guidance.
- The Manager will arrange cover where possible. If the required adult-to-child ratios cannot be maintained, the Pre-school may need to close the affected session.
- Sickness absence will be monitored using the Bradford Factor to identify patterns of absence. Scores are reviewed over a rolling 12-month period:
 - 50+ – informal discussion
 - 200+ – formal meeting

- 400+ – further action, which may include formal procedures
- The Bradford Factor will not be used in isolation. Individual circumstances will always be considered, including pregnancy, disability and other agreed exceptional circumstances, and reasonable adjustments will be considered where required.
- Failure to follow the sickness reporting procedure without a reasonable explanation may result in the absence being treated as unauthorised and may lead to disciplinary action.
- Our aim is to support staff wellbeing while maintaining safe staffing levels and the safety and wellbeing of the children.

Medical Appointments

- Staff are encouraged to arrange routine medical, dental, or other appointments outside of their normal working hours wherever possible.
- Where this is not possible, staff must request time off in advance from the Manager and provide confirmation of the appointment (for example, an appointment letter, text message, or NHS app confirmation).
- Time off for routine medical appointments will normally be unpaid unless otherwise agreed by management.
- Emergency or hospital appointments will be considered on an individual basis.

Frequent or Persistent Absence

- The preschool recognises that occasional sickness absence is unavoidable. However, absence levels will be monitored to ensure they remain reasonable and do not impact the safe and effective running of the setting.
- Where a pattern of frequent or persistent short-term absence is identified, the Manager may arrange a meeting with the staff member to discuss:
 - The reasons for absence
 - Any underlying health concerns
 - Possible support or reasonable adjustments
 - Attendance expectations
- Where necessary, concerns may be addressed under the preschool's disciplinary or capability procedures, in line with organisational policy.
- The preschool aims to support staff wellbeing while ensuring that staffing levels remain sufficient to maintain high standards of care and safety.

Students are welcome in the preschool on the following conditions:

- We require students to meet the 'suitable person' requirements of Ofsted and have a DBS check carried out.
- We require schools placing students under the age of 17 years with the setting to vouch for their good character.
- We supervise students under the age of 17 years at all times and do not allow them to have unsupervised access to children.
- Students who are placed in our setting on a short term basis are not counted in our staffing ratios.
- Trainee staff employed by the setting may be included in the ratios if they are deemed competent.
- We take out Employers' Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance, which covers both trainees and voluntary helpers.
- We require students to keep to our Confidentiality Policy.
- We co-operate with students' tutors in order to help students to fulfil the requirements of their course of study.
- We provide students, at the first session of their placement, with a short induction on how our setting is managed, how our sessions are organised and our policies and procedures.

- We communicate a positive message to students about the value of qualifications and training.
- We make the needs of the children paramount by not admitting students in numbers that hinder the essential work of the setting.
- We ensure that trainees and students placed with us are engaged in bona fide early years training, which provides the necessary background understanding of children's development and activities, or to have an interest in exploring the opportunities available in early years as a career.
- Students required to conduct child studies will obtain written permission from the parents of the child to be studied.
- Any information gained by the students about the children, families or other adults in the Pre-School must remain confidential.

Volunteers

- Our pre-school welcomes parents and carers to volunteer their time to help at the pre-school.
- No volunteers will be left alone with any children or will be involved in any aspects of intimate care.
- Offers of volunteering from the wider community will be looked at on a case-by-case basis and acceptance will depend on the qualification and skills of the individual and any support the individual may need.
- The needs of the children will always be paramount and any potential effects on the smooth running of the pre-school will be considered.
- For regular volunteers a short induction on how our pre-school is managed, how our sessions are organised and our policies and procedures will take place during the first session.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-school Broadwater.

Adopted on 29th March 2016 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 9th September 2026 by Z. Munford