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**Staffing and Employment Policy**

This policy outlines the procedures, expectations, and legal requirements regarding the recruitment, employment, and management of staff in a way that complies with UK regulations, ensures high-quality care for children.

This policy aligns with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework** and other relevant UK laws, such as the **Children Act 1989**, **Equality Act 2010**, and **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**.

**1. Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this Staffing and Employment Policy is to ensure the preschool is staffed with qualified, experienced, and suitable individuals who are committed to providing high-quality early years education and care. This policy applies to all staff employed by the preschool, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and voluntary staff.

**2. Legal and Regulatory Framework**

This policy complies with:

* **EYFS Statutory Framework (2021)**
* **Children Act 1989 & 2004**
* **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
* **The Equality Act 2010**
* **The Care Standards Act 2000**
* **Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)**

**3. Recruitment and Selection**

The preschool will implement fair and transparent recruitment practices to ensure the selection of staff who meet the highest standards.

* **Job Descriptions and Person Specifications**: Clearly defined roles with specific responsibilities and required qualifications.
* **Advertisement**: All positions will be advertised in a variety of mediums to ensure equal opportunities and attract a diverse pool of candidates.
* **Shortlisting and Interviewing**: We will shortlist applicants based on qualifications, experience, and suitability for the role. Interviews will assess candidates' ability to meet the needs of children in the setting.
* **References**: All shortlisted candidates will be required to provide two professional references (one must be from their previous employer). References will be checked prior to employment.
* **Right to Work Checks**: The preschool will ensure all staff have the legal right to work in the UK.
* **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks**: All staff will undergo an enhanced DBS check, including checks for any criminal convictions or safeguarding concerns. This applies to all staff, including volunteers, students, and any person in regular contact with children.
* **Staffing Ratios**: Staffing ratios will be maintained in line with the EYFS requirements to ensure the safety and well-being of children at all times.

**4. Induction and Training**

* **Induction Program**: New staff will undergo a comprehensive induction, which includes an introduction to the preschool's policies, safeguarding procedures, and the EYFS framework.
* **Ongoing Professional Development**: Staff will be encouraged to attend regular training and development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge. This includes safeguarding, first aid, and any relevant updates to EYFS or OFSTED guidelines.
* **Performance Reviews**: Staff will undergo annual performance reviews, where strengths and areas for development will be discussed. Regular supervision sessions will also be scheduled to ensure staff are supported and feel valued.

**5. Safeguarding and Welfare**

* **Safeguarding Training**: All staff will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction and ongoing professional development. This ensures that all employees are aware of how to recognise and report any concerns regarding child protection or welfare.
* **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**: The preschool will have a designated safeguarding lead who is responsible for overseeing all safeguarding matters.
* **Policy and Procedures**: The preschool’s safeguarding and child protection policies will be followed rigorously, with all staff expected to understand and adhere to these guidelines.

**6. Staff Conduct and Expectations**

* **Professionalism**: Staff are expected to demonstrate high standards of professionalism, including punctuality, respect for children and colleagues, and adherence to all preschool policies.
* **Equality and Diversity**: The preschool promotes an inclusive environment where all staff are expected to treat children, parents, and colleagues with respect, and embrace diversity.
* **Dress Code**: A clear dress code should be established to ensure staff appear professional, and clothing is appropriate for the working environment, particularly when working with children.

**7. Staffing Ratios and Qualifications**

* **Staff-to-Child Ratios**: The preschool will comply with the required ratios outlined in the EYFS framework to ensure children receive adequate care and attention. For example:
  + **1:5** for children 2 years of age
  + **1:8** for 3 and 4-year-olds
* **Qualified Staff**: At least one member of staff working directly with children must hold a full and relevant qualification at Level 3 or above.
* **Specialist Staff**: If required, staff may be employed to provide specialist services such as SEN support or additional language support.

**8. Equality of Opportunity and Diversity**

* The preschool is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all staff, applicants, and children. Discrimination of any kind based on age, gender, race, disability, religion, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.
* Recruitment and employment practices will adhere to the **Equality Act 2010**, promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace where every staff member is valued.

**9. Employee Well-being and Support**

The preschool recognises the importance of supporting staff well-being and work-life balance. Measures may include:

* Regular supervision and support for personal and professional development
* Access to employee assistance programs (e.g., counselling, advice)
* Flexible working arrangements, where feasible
* Paid time off for sickness and emergency leave, in line with employment contracts
* Clear procedures for reporting stress or burnout, with appropriate support offered

**10. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures**

* **Grievance**: Staff are encouraged to address any issues or concerns with their line manager in the first instance. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, a formal grievance procedure will be followed.
* **Disciplinary**: The preschool has a formal disciplinary policy that ensures that all employees are treated fairly. This may cover issues such as misconduct, breaches of policy, or performance concerns.

**11. Termination of Employment**

Employment may be terminated through resignation, retirement, or dismissal, according to the terms outlined in the staff member’s contract. Dismissal could occur in cases of serious misconduct, non-compliance with safeguarding policies, or failure to meet the preschool’s performance standards.

**12. Monitoring and Review**

This Staffing and Employment Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains compliant with OFSTED requirements, EYFS, and employment laws. Feedback from staff and parents will be considered as part of this review process.

**Conclusion:**

This Staffing and Employment Policy ensures that the preschool adheres to all regulatory requirements, maintains high staffing standards, and provides a safe, inclusive, and professional environment for both staff and children. The policy supports the delivery of quality education and care, while safeguarding the welfare of all children in the setting.

Latest update January 2025

Top of Form

Bottom of Form