Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Suitable People

Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles.

2.1 Employment

Policy statement

Stowey Bears Pre-school meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the current Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers. We ensure that staff, committee members, volunteers and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children are suitable for their role, appropriately qualified where required, and subject to robust safer recruitment, identity, reference, right-to-work, qualification, disqualification and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in accordance with statutory requirements.

Procedures

Vetting and staff selection

We operate a safer recruitment process for every appointment, including a clear job description, application form, scrutiny of employment history and gaps, identity and right-to-work checks, verification of relevant qualifications, at least two suitable references wherever possible, and an interview process that explores the applicant's suitability to work with children.

- We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- All our staff have job descriptions, which set out their 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 disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex, age, marriage or civil partnership. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by us imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.
- We follow the requirements of the current Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework and Ofsted guidance on checking the suitability of staff, volunteers and others who will have regular contact with children. This includes obtaining appropriate references, completing identity and eligibility checks, verifying qualifications where relevant, and ensuring that those in regulated activity have a satisfactory enhanced DBS check with children's barred list check before they work unsupervised with children or are counted in ratios.
- Where an individual is subscribed to the DBS Update Service we carry out a status check of their DBS certificate, after checking their identity and viewing their original enhanced DBS certificate to ensure that it does not reveal any information that would affect their suitability for the post.
- We keep a single central record of recruitment, vetting and suitability checks for staff, volunteers and committee members as appropriate. This includes identity checks, qualifications, references, right-to-work checks, DBS certificate date, level and unique reference number, barred list information where applicable, Update Service status checks where used, and the setting's suitability decision.
- Where staff or volunteers subscribe to the DBS Update Service, we seek written consent, view the original enhanced DBS certificate and complete status checks at recruitment and at regular intervals during

employment. Where the Update Service is not used or a status check is not possible, we will complete a new DBS check when required.

- Staff, volunteers and committee members are required to tell the manager or nominated individual immediately about any conviction, caution, court order, reprimand, warning, police investigation, allegation, disqualification matter, change in health, medication or other circumstance that may affect their suitability to work with or be in regular contact with children.
- We obtain consent from our staff and volunteers to carry out on-going status checks of the Update Service to establish that their DBS certificate is up-to-date for the duration of their employment with us.
- Where we become aware of information that may affect a person's suitability, including possible disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 or safeguarding concerns, we will take immediate action to protect children. This may include risk assessment, suspension from duties, seeking advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), notifying Ofsted where required, making a referral to the DBS where the legal threshold is met, and ending employment or volunteering arrangements where appropriate.

Notifying Ofsted of changes

- We notify Ofsted, within required timescales, of changes to our registered person, nominated individual, committee members or manager, and of any significant event, allegation, serious incident or suitability concern that may affect the welfare of children or the suitability of a person connected with the setting.

Training and staff development

- We ensure that our manager, deputy and staff meet the qualification, training, experience and staff-to-child ratio requirements set out in the current EYFS statutory framework. We check qualifications against current Department for Education criteria and ensure that unqualified, newly appointed or agency staff are deployed safely and supervised appropriately.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff, including paid staff and volunteers, through recognised training providers and relevant external agencies. Training includes safeguarding, child protection, whistleblowing, safer recruitment awareness, paediatric first aid where required, health and safety, behaviour support, equality and inclusion, and any updates required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.
- Our budget allocates resources to training.
- We provide staff with a structured induction during their probationary period. This includes our safeguarding and child protection procedures, whistleblowing procedure, code of conduct, behaviour policy, health and safety arrangements, medication procedures, child absence procedures, emergency plans, confidentiality and information sharing, and the staff member's responsibility to disclose anything that may affect their suitability.
- We support staff through regular supervision, wellbeing discussions and annual appraisals. Supervision provides opportunities to discuss safeguarding practice, training needs, workload, conduct, suitability, confidential concerns and any support required to fulfil the role safely and effectively.
- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.

Staff taking medication/other substances

- If a member of staff is taking medication or has a medical condition that may affect their ability to care for children safely, we require them to inform the manager and, where appropriate, seek medical advice. Staff will only work directly with children where we are satisfied that their ability to look after children is not impaired.
- 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, illegal drugs, misused medication or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for children, they will not work directly with children or be counted in ratios. The manager will take appropriate safeguarding, employment and regulatory action.

Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

- Staff normally take holiday breaks when the setting is closed. Any term-time leave must be agreed in advance by the manager and will only be approved where staffing levels, qualification requirements, paediatric first aid cover and EYFS ratios can be maintained.
- Where a staff member needs time off for any reason other than sickness, training or emergency leave, this must be agreed with the manager with as much notice as possible.
- Sick leave is monitored and action is taken where necessary, in accordance with the individual's contract of employment.
- We have contingency plans to cover staff absences, as follows:

    - In the absence or sickness of a staff member, the manager or another suitably checked and qualified member of staff will cover to ensure that ratios, supervision and paediatric first aid requirements are maintained.
    - If more than one member of staff is absent, we will use approved cover staff who have completed the required suitability checks. If safe staffing levels cannot be maintained, we will reduce numbers, contact parents, or close the setting until safe ratios and supervision can be restored.

This policy was adopted by	Stowey Bears Pre-school	*(name of provider)*
On		*(date)*
Date to be reviewed	Reviewed annually	*(date)*
Signed on behalf of the provider	*Rachel Penny*	
Name of signatory	Julia Jameson	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chairperson	

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Employee Handbook (2012)
- Recruiting and Managing Employees (2011)