

Staffing policy



We provide a staffing ratio at least in line with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that children have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality. Our staff are appropriately qualified and are encouraged to undergo regular training. We carry out DBS checks.

Procedures

- A minimum of two staff are on duty at any one time.
- We use a key person approach to ensure that each child (and parent) 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. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. 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.

Vetting and staff selection

- We use non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- All staff have job descriptions which set out their roles and responsibilities.
- We obtain 2 references (one from the prospective employee's most recent employer) and a DBS check before a member of staff is left on their own with a child and before they are employed.
- We keep all records relating to employment of staff and volunteers, including the date and number of the enhanced DBS check.
- We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings and appraisals.
- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing the most suitable staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.

Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

- Wherever possible, staff take their holiday breaks when the preschool is closed.
- Where staff may need to take time off for any reason other than sick leave, this is agreed with the manager with sufficient notice, to ensure suitable cover is arranged.
- 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 the contract of employment.

Induction of staff, volunteers and managers

We have a written induction plan for all new staff and volunteers, which includes the following:

- Introductions to all staff and volunteers.
- Familiarising them with the building, health and safety and fire procedures.
- Information about safeguarding (including DSP personal telephone numbers), which is re-visited during the induction process
- Ensuring our policies and procedures have been read and are followed
- Familiarising them with confidential information where applicable in relation to any key children.
- Details of the tasks and daily routines to be completed.

During the induction period, the individual must demonstrate understanding of and compliance with all policies, procedures, tasks and routines. They also need to demonstrate understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are encouraged to ask questions where uncertainty lies.

Successful completion of the induction forms part of the probationary period.

Student placements

- We require students on qualification courses to have DBS checks 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 undertaking qualification courses 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.

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- We take out employers' liability insurance and public liability insurance, which covers both trainees and voluntary helpers.
- We require students to adhere to all of our policies.
- We co-operate with students' tutors in order to help students to fulfil the requirements of their course of study.
- All student placements will undergo our usual induction process, although this may be at a slower pace, to ensure they understand their role within our setting
- 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

Staff supervision and appraisals

Introduction

High quality performance management is one of the most important elements in ensuring positive outcomes for children and their families. It also has a crucial role to play in the development, retention and motivation of our staff. Our supervision and appraisal process is designed to foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Purpose of supervision meetings

Supervision is a means to ensure staff are clear about what their job is, what the preschool wants them to do, and to be supported to do that job well. The meeting gives parties the formal opportunity to evaluate and review workloads and performance so that learning and development can take place and to identify performance shortfalls, encourage and motivate staff and initiate training or support.

Supervision is in addition to and does not replace the annual staff appraisals. Supervision and appraisal meetings are a two-way discussion between a staff member and the manager. For these meetings to be effective, each person must take equal responsibility for ensuring effective communication, co-operation and recognition for the value of supervision and appraisals.

The member of staff can expect:

- To receive effective and sensitive feedback.
- To be treated in an anti-discriminatory manner.
- To have their own feelings and opinions recognised.
- To be listened to.

Responsibility

The manager is responsible for ensuring that regular supervision meetings are conducted with every member of staff. The member of staff is responsible for ensuring that they meet the required standard for the job.

Process and Frequency

Staff performance management takes place once each term, in the form of 2 supervisions and one annual appraisal. However, if both or either parties deem it necessary to arrange more frequent supervision meetings, this can be arranged. The original copies will be kept in the staff file. Together, the manager and member of staff will agree on an action plan to be followed. Staff members are welcome to take notes throughout the meetings if they wish. Both parties sign the record to confirm its content.

To ensure that the confidentiality and identity of individual children is maintained within the supervision and appraisal records, no names of the children discussed will be used, only initials.

What is covered at supervision meetings and appraisals?

Supervision meetings and annual appraisals cover aspects of the job that are going well and areas where there is room for improvement alongside possible training and development requirements. Staff are also asked to confirm that there are no changes to their suitability and if there are any health or medication changes.

Confidentiality

Although the supervision and appraisal records are confidential documents, they may be accessed as part of:



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- A grievance procedure;
- A disciplinary procedure;
- An internal/external inquiry;
- A complaints procedure.

In addition to these formal meetings, there are also opportunities to raise concerns in our daily staff discussions and our regular formal staff meetings. It is important that staff members continue to raise concerns as they arise and not wait until their termly supervision meeting or annual appraisal

Staff grievances

Dealing with grievances informally

If you have a grievance or complaint to do with your work or the people you work with you should, wherever possible, start by talking it over with your manager. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

Formal grievance

If the matter is serious and/or you wish to raise the matter formally you should set out the grievance in writing to your manager. You should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive. Where your grievance is against your manager and you feel unable to approach him or her you should talk to another manager or the owner.

Grievance hearing

Your manager will call you to a meeting, normally within five days, to discuss your grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if you make a reasonable request.

After the meeting the manager will give you a decision in writing, normally within 24 hours.

Appeal

If you are unhappy with your manager's decision and you wish to appeal you should let your manager know. You will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within five days, and your appeal will be heard by a more senior manager (or the company owner). You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at this meeting if you make a reasonable request.

After the meeting the manager (or owner) will give you a decision, normally within 24 hours. The manager's (or owner's) decision is final.

Staff disciplinary procedure

Objectives and guiding principles

The objective of this procedure is to ensure the fair and consistent treatment of all employees and in particular of employees who become liable to disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of management to ensure that the reasons for which disciplinary action may be taken are explained to employees. An employee has the right to have a fellow employee or trade union representative present at any disciplinary hearing.

No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated by the managers or owner. The employee may, however, be suspended with pay, pending investigation if it is considered necessary

The procedure

Certain procedures may initially be tackled by holding an informal counselling interview and may not necessitate formal disciplinary action within the procedure. In such cases a note will be placed on the individuals file noting that such an interview has taken place. More serious cases of misconduct or issues concerning capability to perform within job roles will be dealt with in the following manner:

Stage 1: In the first instance the employee concerned will be given a verbal warning. This warning will be recorded and a copy maintained in the employee's personnel file

Stage 2: If further action becomes necessary, a written warning will be given. This warning will be recorded and a copy maintained in the employee's personnel file

Stage 3: If the employee continues to fail to meet the required standards, a final written warning will be issued indicating that further behaviour of a similar nature within a specified time period could result in dismissal

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Stage 4: In the event of continued failure to meet the required standards, the employee will be dismissed and notice of termination of employment will be given as provided in the employee's terms of employment

Gross Misconduct

Certain types of behaviour are regarded as constituting gross misconduct, which, following investigation could lead to summary dismissal (instant dismissal) from employment. During any investigation, management reserves the right to suspend with pay. If an individual is dismissed for gross misconduct then dismissal will be without notice or payment in respect of arrears of contractual holiday pay.

Examples of what would constitute a gross misconduct include:

- Physical or verbal assault or abuse towards a child such as hitting or harsh disciplinary action (see also safeguarding policy)
- Theft or the unauthorised possession of property belonging to the setting, employees or families
- Assault on any employee or persons associated within the setting
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst on duty
- Serious or persistent breaches of safety rules
- Fraud including falsification of work records and expense claims
- Discrimination against a person on any grounds
- Failure to follow policies and procedures

Any conduct detrimental to the interests of the setting, or damaging to its public image, shall be a disciplinary offence

You are required to declare any court or police action against you whilst the setting employs you. Failure to do so could lead to dismissal

Allegations against staff

See Safeguarding policy

Whistleblowing policy

The whistle blowing procedure aims to help and protect both staff and children. By following the procedure you are acting to:

- prevent a problem getting worse,
- safeguard children and young people, and
- reduce the potential risks to others.

The earlier you raise a concern, the easier and sooner it is possible for the setting to take action.

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Fledglings Montessori Preschool is committed to the highest possible standards and recognises that its staff, students and volunteers are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the setting. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or they may fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The **Public Interest Disclosure Act** protects workers from detrimental treatment or victimisation from their employer if, in the public interest, they blow the whistle on wrongdoing. In accordance with that Act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, the setting actively encourages its workers with serious concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice or any adult's, volunteer or student's conduct to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the setting rather than overlooking a problem.

Objective

The aim of this policy and associated procedures is to establish an internal procedure that will encourage and enable staff, students and volunteers to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the setting's practice, (which do not meet the criteria for being dealt with as a complaint or grievance), in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the setting continues to work within best practice and safeguard children and young people.

Scope

Concerns that should be raised via the Whistle Blowing Policy may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other staff, students or volunteers, or about something that is perceived as:

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- unlawful
- failing to comply with the setting's policy and procedures
- poor practice
- improper conduct.

Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

All staff, students and volunteers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.

The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with all staff, students and volunteers.

The setting will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect workers when they raise a concern in good faith.

The setting will do its best to protect a whistle blower's identity when he/she raises a concern and does not want his/her name to be disclosed. However, if the concern raised needs to be addressed through another procedure, e.g. disciplinary procedure, the worker may be required to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence.

In some circumstances the setting may have to disclose the identity of the worker without his/her consent, although this will be discussed with the worker first.

Appropriate advice and support will be made available to staff, students and volunteers who raise concerns.

Those who raise concerns will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.

The setting will not tolerate malicious allegations, which may be considered a disciplinary offence.

Procedures

Procedures for reporting and investigating 'whistle blowing' concerns have been developed to ensure that: Staff or volunteers can raise concerns (no matter how small they may appear) internally as a matter of course, and receive feedback on any action taken.

Concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and appropriately.

Staff and volunteers are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

Staff and volunteers can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the setting response and seek external advice and guidance.

Issues raised are addressed via other procedures and policies as appropriate, e.g. safeguarding policy, grievance, disciplinary, health and safety.

Appropriate records are maintained for monitoring purposes.

Raising a Concern

Staff should raise concerns with the manager. Concerns should be raised in writing and include:

- reference to the fact that it is a whistle blowing disclosure
- the background and history of the concerns
- names, dates and places (where possible)
- the reasons why the worker is concerned about the situation.

Staff who feel unable to put concerns in writing, can telephone or meet the manager.

Who should you contact?

You should contact Clare or Marie in confidence on their personal mobile number, which is given to staff during induction.

Investigation

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. All matters raised (with the exception of allegations of abuse against a staff member / volunteer, or criminal or unlawful activity) will be investigated internally.

The appropriate person/s will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided **within ten working days**.

The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and whom to contact should the worker be unhappy with the response and wish to raise the matter.

If the investigation cannot be completed within the timescale above, the worker should receive a response that indicates:

- progress to date

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- how the matter is being dealt with
- how long it will take to provide a final response.

In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries (usually involving a meeting with the individual raising the concern), will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that raise issues that fall within the scope of other policies/procedures, will be addressed under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved at this initial stage simply, by agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern, without the need for further investigation.

If you do not feel that the complaint has been dealt with effectively or you still have concerns, you have a right to refer your concerns to Ofsted.

Allegations of abuse against adults who work or volunteer in the setting

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, we will follow our safeguarding procedure.

Useful contacts

Local Authority Designated officer (LADO)

01296 382070

Ofsted

0300 123 1231