

# Safe Recruitment of Staff



## Policy

At Stepping Stones Group, we are extremely vigilant in our recruitment procedures aiming to ensure that all people working looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role. We have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners and any other person who may have regular contact with children are suitable.

## Legal requirements

We abide by all legal requirements relating to safe recruitment set out in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)* and accompanying regulations including our legal responsibilities under the *Equality Act 2010*.

We also follow any requirements or guidance given by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in relation to carrying out checks and abide by the employer's responsibilities relating to informing the DBS of any changes to the suitability of their staff, whether this member of staff has left the nursery or is still under investigation. Please refer to the *Safeguarding Policy and Procedures* for further information.

**This policy operates in conjunction with the *Staff Employee Handbook*.**

## Procedures

### Advertising

- All job advertisements are placed by our HR team at our Central Support (CS) office.
- We use a variety of methods to advertise vacancies including, the government Find-A-Job portal, other reputable job sites such as Indeed, industry websites such as daynurseries.co.uk, Local Authority job portals and social media.
- We ensure that all recruitment literature includes details of our Inclusion and Equality Policy and Procedures and our Safer Recruitment of Staff Policy and Procedures, including an enhanced DBS check and at least two independent references for every new employee. We also include the requirement for an additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.

### Interview stage

- We shortlist all suitable candidates against pre-set specification and ensure all applicants receive correspondence regardless of whether they are successful in reaching the interview stage or not.
- All shortlisted candidates receive a Job Description, which includes a Person Specification, an Equal Opportunity Monitoring form, and a request for identification prior to the interview.
- The Nursery Manager (NM) decides the most appropriate people for the interview panel. For senior positions, a member of the CS Senior Management Team (SMT) will always be part of the interview panel.
- At the start of each interview all candidates' identities are checked using, for example, their passport and/or photo card driving licence. All candidates are required to prove they are eligible to work in the UK. The interview will also cover any gaps in the candidate's employment history.

- All candidates reaching the interview stage are questioned using the same set criteria and questions. These cover specific areas of childcare, including safeguarding the children in their care, planning suitable activities to enhance the child's development and their understanding of the legal frameworks applied to childcare and used in the nursery. The questions are value based and will ensure the candidate has the same values as the nursery with regards to the safety and welfare of the children in their care.
- Candidates will be given a score for their answers including a score for their individual knowledge and experience.
- Every shortlisted candidate will be asked to take part in a supervised practical exercise which will involve spending time in a particular age group in the nursery interacting with the children and staff.
- In addition, the NM will carry out an online search for every shortlisted candidate. This may help identify any incidents or issues publicly available online, which may be explored with the applicant at interview.
- The NM, with the support of the CS team, will then select the most suitable person for this position based on these scores and their knowledge and understanding of the early years framework as well as the needs of the nursery.
- Every candidate will receive communication from the nursery stating whether they have been successful or not. Unsuccessful candidates are offered feedback.

## References

- The successful candidate will be offered the position subject to at least two references from previous employment or, in the case of a newly qualified student, their tutor and a personal or professional reference. These references will be requested before employment commences. This may be verbal initially and then followed up with a written reference which will form part of their personnel file.
- Staff are never left unsupervised at any time until both references have been received in writing. Failure to provide satisfactory references will result in the offer of employment being withdrawn.

## Qualifications

All early years providers working with children from birth to 5 years old must follow the regulations on **EYFS** staff:child ratios. This is the number of qualified staff, at different qualification levels, an early years setting needs to have in order to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. These regulations are set out in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

Providers must make sure staff have the appropriate qualifications to count in the ratios,

- The successful candidate will be asked to provide proof of their qualifications, where applicable. All qualifications will be checked, and copies taken for their personnel files where applicable.
- The Department for Education (DfE) defines the qualifications that staff must hold to count in EYFS staff:child ratios. We use their early years qualifications lists to:
  - Check if a person's qualification meets the approved 'full and relevant' criteria for early years qualifications.

Practitioners who registered for a qualification **after** 1 September 2014 must hold a qualification that meets the 'Early Years Educator Criteria'.

## Health Questionnaire

- Prior to employment but after the job has been offered, a health check questionnaire will be given to the employee and its results will be taken into account in making an overall decision about suitability.
- A meeting will be held between the NM and new employee to find out as much as possible about any condition, how this may affect the individual, any medication they require plus any impact it may have on their suitability to work with children.
- Further advice may be taken where necessary to fully assess physical and mental fitness to carry out the role prior to employment commencing.
- The nursery reserves the right to take any further advice necessary in relation to a person's physical and mental fitness to carry out their role. Please see the **Absence Management Procedure** and **Employee Handbook** for more details about how the nursery manages employee health issues including access to medical records.
- Details of any health conditions relating to employees are recorded on an **Employee Health Detail Form** with details of any considerations for the workplace and how these will be managed.
- All members of staff are expected to update their **Health Questionnaire** on a termly basis to ensure management have up to date information and awareness of any changes that may require support or additional resources to aid them to carry out their day-to-day duties. This will also be discussed at staff supervisions and review meetings. Management may require this more regularly where health circumstances change.

## DBS

- All new starters, other than those who have registered for the continuous updating service (see below), will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This will be initiated before the member of staff commences work in the nursery and they will not have unsupervised access to any child before the result of this check is received and confirmed to be clear.
- If the individual has registered on the DBS system since 17 July 2013, NMs may use the update service with the candidate's permission instead of carrying out an enhanced DBS check.
- We cannot use a candidate's existing subscription if the candidate has changed their name (i.e., married / divorced) since the check was completed or have committed a crime, the candidate would need to apply for a new enhanced DBS check if any of these circumstances apply.
- Staff members not yet in receipt of a clear DBS check are not permitted to carry out any type of personal care such as nappy changing, toileting, cleaning of a child or administering medication whether this is supervised or not.
- An additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) should also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.

The nursery will record and retain details about the individual including staff qualifications, identity checks carried out and the vetting process completed. This will include the disclosure and barring service reference number, the date the disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it. These details will be recorded on a **DBS List**, which is stored in the nursery office and is available at all times. The nursery will not retain copies of the disclosure itself once the employment decision is taken.

There may be occasions where a DBS is not clear however the individual may still be deemed suitable to work with children. This will be treated on a case-by-case basis with the NM and members of the SMT at CS considering the following:

- The seriousness of the offence.
- The accuracy of the person's self-disclosure on the application form.
- The nature of the appointment including levels of supervision.
- The age of the individual at the time of the offence.
- The length of time that has elapsed since the offence.
- The relevance of the offence with regards to working or being in regular contact with children.
- Any other information relevant to the offence or a person's suitability.

## Staff Suitability

- At interview stage all candidates are required to complete the Cautions, Rehabilitations & Criminal Records section on their **Application Form** and fill in a **Staff Suitability Form** stating that they have no criminal convictions, court orders or any other reasons that disqualify them from working with children or make them unsuitable to do so.
- All employees are responsible for notifying the NM or a member of the SMT at CS if there are any changes in their circumstances which may affect their suitability to work with children. This includes any incidents which occur outside of the nursery. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual.
- An employee's ongoing suitability is periodically assessed during their termly **Supervisions** and then periodically throughout the year at **Supervision** reviews. However, staff must not wait for a review to disclose any changes to their suitability, this must be done immediately. Where a NM is made aware of any circumstance which may affect an individual's suitability, they must also question them immediately to assess this.
- Any changes to an individual's suitability must be discussed with a member of the SMT at CS and appropriate action taken where required. This may require the temporary suspension of an employee until a full investigation has taken place; this may include seeking advice from Ofsted, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the Disclosure and Barring Service, to evaluate whether they are still suitable to work with children.

## Disqualification

Where a person is disqualified from working with children, we will not employ that person in connection with the nursery. Where we become aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of our children.

We ensure that we meet our responsibilities under the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**. Where a member of staff is dismissed or would have been, had the person not left the setting first, because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the LADO will also be made.

Ofsted will be notified of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person employed by the nursery including the disqualification of an employee. If an employee is disqualified from working with children, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the date we became aware of the information or ought reasonably to have become aware of it if we had made reasonable enquiries as required under the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**.

In the case of any employee being disqualified from working with children the following information will be provided to Ofsted:

- Details of any order, determination, conviction, or other grounds for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the **Childcare Act 2006**.
- The date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose.
- The body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed.
- A certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction).

In some circumstances, individuals may be able to obtain a 'waiver' from Ofsted to enable them to work with children. It would be the responsibility of the individual concerned to obtain any waiver, following which their employment may be reconsidered however, this would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Induction and training**

- All new members of staff will undergo an intensive induction period during which time they will read and discuss the nursery policies and procedures and be assigned a mentor who will introduce them to the way in which the nursery operates.
- During their induction period all new staff will receive training on how to safeguard children in their care and follow the **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**, emergency evacuation and lock down procedures, **Inclusion and Equality Policy and Procedures** and health and safety procedures.
- New staff members will have regular meetings with the NM and/or their mentor during their induction period to discuss their progress, support required and/or further training and professional development opportunities.
- Every member of staff will have termly **Supervision** meetings with the NM or their Line Manager. This will provide an opportunity for them to discuss training needs for the following term as well as evaluate and discuss their performance in the previous term.
- The NM, Deputy and Senior Practitioners will be responsible for any support the staff team may have between these **Supervisions** and reviews. This includes mentor support, one-to-one training sessions, ongoing supervision, work-based observations, and constructive feedback.
- The nursery will provide appropriate opportunities for all staff to undertake professional development and training to help improve the quality of experiences provided for children.