

Staffing Policy

1.1 Employment

Steps Pre-School, in conjunction with the employer St Stephen's Church, meet the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring that our staff and volunteers are appropriately qualified, and we carry out checks for criminal and other records through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in accordance with statutory requirements.



Procedures

Vetting and staff selection

- 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 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 our imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.
- We follow the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Ofsted guidance on checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children. This includes obtaining references and ensuring they have a satisfactory enhanced criminal records check with barred list(s) check through the DBS. This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) and the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) for the vetting and barring scheme.
- 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 all records relating to the employment of our staff and volunteers; in particular those demonstrating that suitability checks have been done, including the date of issue, name, type of DBS check and unique reference number from the DBS certificate, along with details of our suitability decision.
- Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children – whether received before, or at any time during, their employment with us.
- Where we become aware of any relevant information which may lead to the disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children. In the event of disqualification, that person's employment with us will be terminated.

Notifying Ofsted of changes

- We inform Ofsted of any changes to our Registered Person and/or our manager.

Training and staff development

- Our Manager and Deputy Manager hold the CACHE Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce or an equivalent qualification and at least half of our other staff members hold the CACHE Level 2 Certificate for the Children and Young People's Workforce or an equivalent or higher qualification.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff - whether paid staff or volunteers.
- Our budget allocates resources to training.

- We provide our staff with induction training in the first week of their employment. This induction includes our Health and Safety Policy and Child Protection Policy for Early Years Settings. Other policies and procedures are introduced within an 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 have a duty of care to ensure any adults caring for the children are suitable to do so, and that staffing arrangements ensure the children are well supervised, kept safe and have their needs met. A safe recruitment process must be followed when recruiting adults to work for Steps, ensuring that background checks are carried out on all new employees, and that they have the appropriate references, qualifications, knowledge and experience for their role.

Staff taking medication/other substances

- If a member of staff is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, we ensure that they seek further medical advice. Our staff will only work directly with the children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.
- 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 our staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for children, they will not be allowed to work directly with the children and further action will be taken.

Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

- Staff take their holiday breaks when the setting is closed. Where a staff member may need to take time off for any reason other than sick leave or training, this is agreed with the Manager with sufficient notice.
- 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 individual's contract of employment.

Code Of Conduct

- All members of staff are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a professional, courteous, helpful, warm, and consistent manner.
- Members of staff are expected to display knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, multi-cultural issues, and a commitment to treating all children as individuals and with equal concern and respect.
- Members of staff will have regard for wearing appropriate clothes and shoes when working with children and with awareness of health and safety issues.
- Mobile phones are allowed on the settings premises but must not be used outside of the kitchen/staff area.
- The manager will ensure that space is made during the working day for staff to take regular breaks, ensuring that no staff exceeds the legal limit of six hours consecutive work without a break.
- Under no circumstances should any arguments or disagreements between members of staff occur in the presence of children or parents/carers.
- No smoking, vaping, alcohol or drug use is allowed on the setting premises.
- No bullying, swearing, harassment or victimisation will be tolerated on the settings premises.
- Offensive behaviour such as sexist or racist language or harassment will not be tolerated.
- All staff are expected to always treat everybody respectfully and inappropriate behaviour may lead to disciplinary action.

1.2 The Role of the Key Person and Settling-in

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting. Our aim is to make the setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child must have a key person. These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.
- We allocate a member of staff as a key person before each child starts
- The key person is responsible for:
 - ◆ Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
 - ◆ Completing relevant forms with parents, including consent forms if not already completed.
 - ◆ Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental
 - ◆ Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
 - ◆ Acting as the key contact for the parents.
 - ◆ Developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
 - ◆ Having links with other carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend Steps Pre-School we provide information within our Parent Registration pack.
- During the term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting
- We allocate a key person to each child and their family before they start to attend the setting;
- When a child starts to attend the key person is responsible for settling the child into the setting and will devise a strategy with the parents, to make this a less traumatic experience for the child
- We acknowledge that some children will settle more readily than others
- We ask parents to be available to pick up their child early within the first few sessions if we feel it is in the best interest of the child
- If a child has a particular comfort object then we recommend that this is brought into preschool during their first few sessions. We will use it if we feel that a child cannot be comforted without additional support
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example the child looks for the key person when they arrive, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with

them. The child is also familiar with other staff, where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities

- We record a child's first development tracker once they have completed their first term.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in.
- The progress check aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents have a clear picture of their child's development.
- Within the progress check, the key person will note areas where the child is progressing well and identify areas where progress is less than expected.
- The progress check will describe the actions that will be taken by us to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s).
- The key person will plan activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and will support parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.

1.3 Staffing

We provide a staffing ratio in line with the Safeguarding and Welfare 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 we carry out checks for enhanced criminal records and barred list checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service in accordance with statutory requirements.

To meet this aim we use the following ratios of adult to children:

- Children aged two years: 1 adult : 4 children:
 - ◆ at least one member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification; and
 - ◆ at least half of all other staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.
- Children aged three years and over: 1 adult : 8 children:
 - ◆ at least one member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification; and
 - ◆ at least half of all other staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.
- The number of children for each key person takes into account the individual needs of the children and the capacity of the individual key person to manage their cohort.
- A minimum of two staff/adults are on duty at any one time; one of whom is either our manager or Deputy Manager.
- All staff are deployed according to the needs of the setting and the children attending giving adequate supervision of indoor and outdoor areas, ensuring that children are always within sight *or* hearing of staff at all times.
- Our staff, students and volunteers inform their colleagues if they have to leave their area and tell colleagues where they are going.
- Our staff, students and volunteers focus their attention on children at all times and do not spend time in social conversation with colleagues while they are working with children.
- 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.

Approved on behalf of the PCC, at the SRG meeting on 28 th April 2025		(date)
Signed on behalf of the PCC		
Name of Signatory	Rev Mark Barker	
Role of Signatory	Chair	
Date to be reviewed:	February 2028	