**TRING STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL**

**Employment Policy and procedure**

**Employment and staffing**

(Including vetting, contingency plans, training and development)

**Policy statement**

We provide a staffing ratio in line with the 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. We 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**

*Ratios*

* To meet this aim we use the following ratios of adult to children:
* children aged two years of age: 1 adult: 4 children \*; and
* Children aged three to five years of age: 1 adult: 8 children.
* We only include those aged 17 years or older within our ratios where they are competent and responsible. We may also include students on long-term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and apprentices (aged 16 or over), where we deem them to be suitably qualified and experienced.
* A minimum of two staff/adults are on duty at any one time.
* We use a key person approach to ensure that each child 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. The key person is available to discuss and consult with the parents in pre-school and also during our parent consultation evenings.
* 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 work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
* All staff have staff code of conduct documents and roles and responsibility documents which set out their individual staff 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 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 Protections of Freedoms Act (2012) for the vetting and barring scheme.
* We are all subscribed to the DBS Update Service and we will 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 employment of 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.
* We require that all staff and volunteers keep their DBS check up-to-date by subscribing to the DBS Update Service throughout the duration of their employment with us.
* 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.
* 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 any relevant information which may lead to the disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of their children. In the event of disqualification, that person’s employment with us will be terminated.

*Changes to staff*

* We inform Ofsted of any changes to our Registered Person.
* When staff leave pre-school, we ensure that property belonging to pre-school such as polo shirts, id badges and keys are returned to us. We would also change passwords to the email accounts and drop box to ensure that staff can no longer access them.
* When committee members leave pre-school, we ensure that property belonging to pre-school such as the printer is returned to pre-school prior to them leaving.
* We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which includes a duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service if a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been if they had not left preschool first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm. The pre-school leader or chairperson will also inform Ofsted, Herts Safeguarding Children’s board and if applicable the police.

*Employment/Recruitment Procedure*

* We will advertise job vacancies at pre-school, on the web and on local notice boards. If this doesn’t result in any applicants then adverts can be placed in local papers.
* Interested applicants will be sent an application form and job description and given a date to return completed application form by.
* Pre-School Leader and Chair will review all application forms. Unsuccessful applicants will be written to thanking them for applying but they were unsuccessful this time but that their details will be kept on record for any future recruitment.
* Short listed applicants will be invited to visit the pre-school for a specified session to observe. They will be also be invited to an interview and asked to bring original copies of their proof of identity, National Insurance number indicating their right to work in the UK and qualification certificates. The interview will be conducted by at least the Chair and Pre-School Leader. All applicants will be asked the same questions.
* The successful applicant will be offered the position in writing, subject to the receipt of references, DBS checks and the completed staff information form. Where possible the references will include a work related one. The staff information form includes a question on the applicant's health and whether they have or have ever had a drink or drugs problem. A probation period of 3 months is given. The salary will be advised by the Treasurer and a contract issued. When the references are received, DBS check completed and probation period completed full employment will be confirmed in writing.
* References will be requested in writing on letter headed paper with the permission of the successful candidate. The reference form will be sent with a copy of the job description. A minimum of 2 references will be required.
* The candidate may start working for the pre-school while their references are being checked and DBS check being processed but will not be left alone with any children until their DBS has been approved.
* The unsuccessful applicants will be written to thanking them for applying but that they were unsuccessful this time.

*Training and staff development*

* Our Pre-school Leaders and Deputy all hold a Level 3 qualification. One of the preschool leaders has completed an EYITT course and holds Early Years Teacher status. As of July 2023, one member of staff has almost completed Level 3 training and one member of staff is due to commence Level 3 training in September 2023. We currently have 5 permanent staff members of staff at preschool. All of these staff are first aid qualified and have attended safeguarding training; these are renewed every 3 years. During busy periods we have a temporary member of staff, (ideally with a minimum of level 2 qualification.) This member of staff will go through the same interview, induction and DBS checks as permanent members of staff.
* We provide regular in-service training to all staff - whether paid staff or volunteers - through the Pre-school Learning Alliance, Herts for Learning, Herts Safeguarding Children’s Board and other external agencies.
* Our setting budget allocates resources to training.
* We provide staff induction training in the first months of employment. This induction includes our Health and Safety Policy, E-Safety and Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy. Other policies and procedures will be introduced and the new member of staff signs each individual policy once they have read and understood them. We use an induction checklist which the pre-school leader and new staff member sign as each task is covered and understood by the new staff member.
* We support the work of our staff by pre-school leader having regular meetings with each staff member to provide supervision and support, to discuss any concerns and issues they may have as well as discussing training and development.
* 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 which may affect their ability to care for children, we ensure that they seek further medical advice. Our staff will only work directly with 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 safely, kept out of the reach of children at all times, either in the member of staff’s bag in the cupboard which is kept closed during the session or the kitchen which no children enter at any time.
* If we have reason to believe that a member of 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*

* Our staff take their holiday breaks when the setting is closed. Where staff 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 contract of employment.
* We have contingency plans to cover staff absences, as follows:

In the first instance of a staff member is absent other staff members are asked to swap days or cover for them. If a staff member is unable to the cover staff are approached to see if they are able to work. If cover is not available the adult/child ratios are checked for the days concerned to see if we are within the ratio limits with the reduced numbers of staff.

All staff members who hold a level 3 qualification cover each other so that if one of them is absent there is at least one person with level 3 or qualification is working. If none of them is able to cover then the chairperson would be phoned for advice on whether pre-school can remain open on that particular day(s).

*Disqualification*

* We expect staff and the registered provider to disclose to pre-school any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting). During the 1:1 meetings with the pre-school leader staff are routinely asked if they or any person living in their house has any such convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings and the answer to this question is documented in the meeting notes. The provider will give Ofsted the following information when relevant; details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006. The date of the order, determination or conviction of 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 and a certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction). This information will then be passed on to Ofsted as soon as possible and within 14 days of the date of pre-school becoming aware of the information.
* In the event of the disqualification of a registered provider or member of staff or of a person living in the same household as the registered provider or member of staff, or a person employed in that household, the provider must not continue as an early year’s provider nor be directly concerned in the management of the provision. Where a person is disqualified, pre-school would not continue to employ that person in connection with the early year’s provision. Where pre-school becomes aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of an employee preschool would take relevant action to ensure the safety of the children and this would include barring access to the premises. The pre-school leader and staff may also be disqualified if they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified, or because they live in the same household where a disqualified person is employed. Staff are asked this question during their 1:1 meeting with the pre-school leader and the replies are documented.
* The provider will also notify Ofsted of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children on the pre-school premises. The disqualification of an employee could be an instance of a significant event. If a registered person or member of staff is disqualified, they may, in some circumstances, be able to obtain a ‘waiver’ from Ofsted.

.

*Disciplinary action*

 where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Independent Barring Board administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

* In the event of the disqualification of a registered provider or member of staff or of a person living in the same household as the registered provider or member of staff, or a person employed in that household, the provider must not continue as an early year’s provider nor be directly concerned in the management of the provision. Where a person is disqualified, pre-school would not continue to employ that person in connection with the early year’s provision. Where pre-school becomes aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of an employee preschool would take relevant action to ensure the safety of the children and this would include barring access to the premises. The pre-school leader and staff may also be disqualified if they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified, or because they live in the same household where a disqualified person is employed. Staff are asked this question during their 1:1 meetings with the pre-school leader and the replies are documented.

*Single central record*

Pre-school maintains a Single Central Record of all staff which includes proof of identity, qualifications, vetting process followed, National Insurance number, references and medical information, contract of employment details including start date. This SCR is available for inspection by Ofsted upon request.

*\*From September 2023, the Department for Education announced an optional change to childcare ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-old children. All other child care ratios remain the same. It is our intention at Tring Stepping Stones Preschool to remain working to a ratio of 1 adult to 4 two-year old children unless exceptional circumstances occur in which case, we may on occasion need to adopt this optional policy of 1:5.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Tring Stepping Stones Pre-School |  |
| Held on |  |  |
| Date to be reviewed | **July 2024** |  |
| Signed on behalf of the management committee |  |
| Name of signatory |  |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) |  |

Review March 2012 – added section about referring to ISA if staff have been dismissed (as notified by Herts consultant)

September 2012 review- added a statement saying that staff meet monthly with the pre-school leader to discuss any issues/concerns.

September 13 review- changes to staff qualifications.

November 2013 - Disqualification and Single Central Record added, CRB changed to DBS

August 2014 – removed ISA reference above and replaced with DBS information, updated in line with Safeguarding policy re: disqualification and revised EYFS Sept 2014 Safeguarding Vulnerable groups reference added, also added bit about apprentices being included if pre-school believe them to be competent and responsible

January 2015 Added about medication, DBS update service and changed details about appraisals and 1:1 and current staff qualifications

January 2016, staff qualifications and a sentence about temporary member of staff. “During busy periods we have a temporary member of staff, ideally with a minimum of level 2 qualifications. This member of staff will go through the same interview, induction and dbs checks as permeant members of staff.”

January 2017- no changes

January 2018- we are all subscribed to the update service

June 2019 - We only include those aged 17 years or older within our ratios where they are competent and responsible. We may also include students on long-term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and apprentices (aged 16 or over), where we deem them to be suitably qualified and experienced.

July 2020- 5 staff members

May 2022- taken out asking parents to help when staff are absent and that we contact ofsted for advice on closing. Have said we call the chair person.

July 2023 – Amended and updated staff training levels.

**Signed by staff indicating they have read and understood policy:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Staff name** | **Staff signature** |
| Lucy Brittain |  |
| Nicola Poulton |  |
| Nicola Reynolds |  |
| Kim Smith |  |
| Jo Davis |  |
|  |  |