

Safer Recruitment and Suitability Policy

Policy Statement

At Little Stars Preschool we are committed to ensuring that all recruitment, selection and ongoing suitability procedures are conducted in a way that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. This commitment includes preventing unsuitable people from working with children, and ensuring that everyone who works in or on behalf of the Preschool is properly vetted, trained and supported.

This policy is written in line with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2026.

This policy is underpinned by and compliant with:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- All other relevant legislation, including equality, data protection, immigration, education and childcare regulations We will ensure that our processes reflect up-to-date safeguarding practice, including recognition of emerging risks (such as online harms, disinformation, AI enabled risks, children missing education, exploitation) as flagged in KCSIE 2026.

Aims

The aims of this Recruitment & Suitability Policy are to:

- Recruit and select individuals who are suitable to work with children and whose values align with our safeguarding and welfare commitment.
- Implement robust and transparent recruitment and selection procedures that actively deter, identify and exclude unsuitable individuals.
- Ensure compliance with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements relating to recruitment, selection, induction, ongoing suitability, record-keeping and safer working practices.
- Foster and maintain a culture of continuous vigilance and safeguarding awareness within the Preschool, so that the welfare of children remains central at all times.

Pre-Recruitment Procedures

Job Descriptions & Person Specifications

- All job descriptions will include a clear statement about the role's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare, and that the successful candidate will undergo safer recruitment checks.
- Person specifications will identify the essential and desirable criteria relating to skills, experience, attitudes (especially safeguarding attitudes), and qualifications.

Advertising & Application

- The advertisement for each role will state our commitment to safeguarding children and that we follow safer recruitment procedures.
- Applicants must complete a full application form which includes: full personal details, employment history (with no unexplained gaps), qualifications, a statement of suitability to work with children, and a declaration of any criminal convictions (subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended).
- The application form will clearly state that omissions or misleading information may lead to withdrawal of an offer or dismissal.
- At application stage, candidates will self-declare any criminal convictions, cautions, or relevant safeguarding incidents.

Shortlisting

- Shortlisting will be carried out by at least two people and will match candidate applications against the person specification (including safeguarding suitability).
- Short-list documentation will record reasons for inclusion/exclusion, to ensure transparency and to deter unsuitable candidates.

Selection Process

- The interview panel will include at least one person who has received accredited “Safer Recruitment” training. (KCSIE 2026 emphasises the importance of trained staff in safer recruitment).
- Interviews will be structured, covering both role-specific and safeguarding questions (for example: children’s welfare responsibilities, managing boundaries, online safety awareness, recognising signs of abuse/exploitation). Safer Recruitment Policy
- We may include practical tasks or scenario discussions relevant to the early years setting and safeguarding responsibilities.
- At interview, any gaps in employment will be challenged and verified; the candidate will be asked to explain any safeguarding-related matters.
- Following selection, a conditional offer will be made subject to satisfactory completion of all pre-employment checks (see Section 5).

Pre-Employment Checks

No candidate will be permitted to commence unsupervised work with children until all relevant checks and verifications are completed satisfactorily. These include:

- An Enhanced DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check including children’s barred list check (for those in regulated activity).
- Verification of identity, including photographic ID and proof of address.
- Verification of right to work in the UK (in line with immigration legislation).
- Verification of qualifications (where relevant for the role) and professional registration as required.

- At least two professional references, including the most recent employer, that comment on suitability to work with children, disciplinary history (where relevant) and confirm employment dates/role.
- Online/social media check: We will consider any publicly available online information about shortlisted candidates which may raise concerns about suitability (in line with KCSIE 2026 guidance on “other checks that may be necessary”).
- If a candidate has lived or worked overseas, we will obtain overseas criminal records checks or equivalent, and verify employment history/employer references from those jurisdictions (where applicable).
- Ensure that the candidate is not subject to any prohibition, direction, sanction or restriction issued by a regulatory or legal body (for example, teacher prohibition orders). • Record all checks, verifications and decisions in personnel records, including dates and who carried out the check.
- If for any reason an individual begins employment before all checks are completed, a risk assessment will be undertaken, they will work under supervision and access to children will be restricted until all checks are cleared.

Induction & Training

- All new staff, volunteers and agency/supply personnel will receive a robust induction programme covering: the Preschool safeguarding policy and procedures, child protection, safe working practices, staff code of conduct, online safety, boundaries, whistle-blowing procedures, roles of DSL/DDSL, and other relevant Preschool policies.
- The induction will specifically cover current safeguarding risks, including child sexual exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, online harms (including misinformation/disinformation, AI-based risks) — as flagged in KCSIE 2026.
- Ongoing training will be provided: all staff must receive refresher safeguarding training at least annually (or more frequently if new developments occur).
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies will receive specialist training in line with statutory guidance, and their knowledge and skills will be updated at least every two years (or more often as required).
- Records of induction, training attendance, updates and competencies will be maintained and reviewed.

Ongoing Staff Suitability

- All members of staff (including volunteers, supply staff) will be required to complete an annual suitability declaration, confirming that nothing has occurred in their personal or professional lives which might affect their suitability to work with children (for example: new convictions, disciplinary investigations, safeguarding concerns, changes in health affecting role, barring list inclusion).
- Staff must immediately inform management of any change in circumstances which could impact their suitability (for example being charged with a criminal offence, being subject to a safeguarding investigation, change in health or professional registration).

- The Preschool will maintain continual oversight of staff conduct and suitability — through regular one to one conversations, supervisions, appraisals, safe-working observations, and adherence to the staff code of conduct.
- Records of suitability monitoring and concerns will be retained in personnel files.

Record-Keeping and Data Protection

- We will keep detailed and secure records of all recruitment and vetting activity for each member of staff, volunteer or agency worker, including application forms, interview records, references, identity/qualification verification, DBS/barred list results, training records, suitability declarations, and any investigations or disciplinary actions.
- We will maintain a single central staff suitability record or spreadsheet which shows for each person: name, role, checks completed, dates, renewal dates (where applicable). This helps demonstrate overall compliance with statutory requirements.
- We will ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR when handling personal and sensitive data.
- Records will be retained for the legally required minimum period (for example, six years after employment ends where applicable) and disposed of securely when no longer needed.

Safe Working Practice & Behaviour Expectations

- All staff, volunteers and contractors must act in a professional manner, modelling safe practice, and adhering to the Preschool's Staff Code of Conduct (including boundaries with children, appropriate use of mobile devices and social media, online safety).
- The Preschool will ensure that staff are aware of and obey the safe working practices set out in statutory and non-statutory guidance (including but not limited to: not being alone with children in a room unless it is visible to others, not sharing personal contact details with children, not communicating with children via personal social media accounts).
- Staff must remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, online harms and wider safeguarding issues. They must immediately report any safeguarding concern (including concerns about another staff member) to the DSL or deputy.
- The Preschool will maintain a culture of transparency, challenge, reflection and continuous improvement in safeguarding practice.

Review / Version Control				
Review period - 3 years				
Version	Created	Reviewed	Initials	Changes
Safer Recruitment and Suitability policy v1.0	09/2026		DH SH AP	New policy