



KINGSWAY PLAYGROUP & PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE

STAFFING & EMPLOYMENT POLICY

PERSONNEL

At Kingsway Playgroup & Pre-School Centre we aim to have a high quality staff team that act at all times in the best interests of children's safety and welfare. To achieve this we have a range of policies to support the recruitment, development and retention of staff.

The playgroup's policies in respect of personnel are governed by the following:

- The best interests of the children, their welfare, safety, care and development
- The statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- The individual needs of the children, including maintaining continuity of care
- Compatibility between all members of staff and the building of a good team spirit
- Consideration of the advancement of each member of staff both by internal and external training to help them achieve their maximum potential
- Equal pay for work of equal value
- Compliance with the current legislation including the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and all current legislation governing discrimination.

We will ensure:

- The provision of a person specification and job description for every member of staff prior to an interview
- All interviews follow our recruitment procedures to ensure safe and fair and non-discriminatory recruitment occurs
- The provision of a statement of terms and conditions and contract for every member of staff in employment (contract to be received by new employee on the first day of employment)
- Prior to commencement of employment, the successful applicant shall be provided with an offer letter (conditional on an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance and satisfactory references) with the induction procedure and any details of other information relevant for their first day of work
- New members of staff will access copies of all the policies and procedures and we will ensure their understanding and adherence to these over an induction period. They will receive induction training including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues
- All staff receive effective supervision including support, coaching and training to promote the best interests of children. Staff are also provided with ongoing training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves
- We promote staff well-being (see Well-being for Staff Policy) and foster team working through regular meetings and team events/outings
- Discrimination or harassment of any member of staff relating to sex, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief and disability will not be acceptable. This includes unwanted verbal or physical third party harassment by those not employed by the playgroup.

SAFE RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

At Kingsway Playgroup & Pre-School Centre we are 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.

We follow this procedure each and every time we recruit a new member of staff to join our team.

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 2021
- 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 playgroup or is still under investigation. Please refer to the child protection/safeguarding policy for further information.

Advertising

- We use job sites and social media sites to advertise for any vacancies
- We ensure that all recruitment literature includes details of our safe recruitment procedures which include an enhanced DBS check and at least two independent references for every new employee. We also have 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 a pre-set specification
- All shortlisted candidates receive a job description and a request for identification prior to the interview
- The manager decides the most appropriate people for the interview panel. There will be at least two people involved and both are involved in the overall decision making
- 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 playgroup. The questions are value based and will ensure the candidate has the same values as the playgroup with regards to the safety and welfare of the children in their care
- 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 playgroup interacting with the children, staff and where appropriate parents
- The interviewing panel will then select the most suitable person for this position based on their knowledge and understanding of the early years framework as well as the needs of the playgroup
- Every candidate will receive communication from the playgroup stating whether they have been successful or not.

Starting work

- 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 taken up BEFORE employment commences. This may be verbal initially and then followed up with a written reference which will form part of their personnel file
- 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
- 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 playgroup and they will not have unsupervised access to any child or their records before this check comes back clear. Further to this, the new starter will not be allowed to take photographs of any child, look at their learning and development log or change the nappy of any child without an up-to-date enhanced DBS check (whether supervised or not)
- An additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) will also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad
- The playgroup 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. The playgroup will not retain copies of the disclosure itself once the employment decision is taken
- There may be occasions when a DBS check is not clear but the individual is still suitable to work with children. This will be treated on an individual case basis and at the manager's/owner's discretion taking into account the following:
 - seriousness of the offence or other information
 - accuracy of the person's self-disclosure on the application form
 - nature of the appointment including levels of supervision
 - age of the individual at the time of the offence or other information
 - the length of time that has elapsed since the offence or other information
 - relevance of the offence or information to working or being in regular contact with children.
- If the individual has registered on the DBS system since 17 July 2013, managers may use the update service with the candidate's permission instead of carrying out an enhanced DBS check
- New starters are required to sign (either application form, contract or separate form) to state that they have no criminal convictions or any other reasons that disqualify them from working with children or unsuitable to do so
- All new members of staff will undergo an intensive induction period during which time they will read and discuss the playgroup policies and procedures and be assigned a mentor who will introduce them to the way in which the playgroup operates
- During their induction period all new staff will receive training on how to safeguard children in their care and follow the Safeguarding Children/Child Protection policy and procedure, emergency evacuation procedures, equality policy and health and safety issues
- The new member of staff will have regular meetings with the manager and their mentor during their induction period to discuss their progress, support required and/or further training and professional development opportunities.

Ongoing support and checks

- All staff are responsible for notifying the manager in person if any there are any changes to their circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children (staff suitability status will also be checked through an annual 'staff suitability questionnaire'). This includes any incidents occurring outside the playgroup. Staff will face disciplinary action should they fail to notify the manager **immediately**
- The playgroup manager or owner will review any significant changes to an individual's circumstances that may suggest they are no longer suitable to work with children and take appropriate action to ensure any unsuitable or potentially unsuitable employee does not have unsupervised contact with children until the matter is resolved. Please see the Disciplinary Policy for further details
- Every member of staff will have a formal appraisal every year with the manager. This will provide an opportunity for the manager and member of staff to discuss training needs for the following six months as well as evaluate and discuss their performance in the previous six months
- The manager and deputy will be responsible for any support the staff team may have between these reviews. This includes mentor support, one-to-one training sessions, ongoing supervision, work-based observations and constructive feedback
- The playgroup will provide appropriate opportunities for all staff to undertake professional development and training to help improve the quality of experiences provided for children.

SUITABILITY OF STAFF

At Kingsway Playgroup & Pre-School Centre we are committed to ensuring that all staff, including students, volunteers and any agency/supply staff are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role in order to work with or be in regular contact with children. We have effective systems in place to ensure that this includes making a decision about suitability, as part of the recruitment process and monitoring continued suitability, as part of regular staff and/or student supervision.

The playgroup manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff and students have an enhanced check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and that the results of such a check are assessed as part of a decision on suitability. Where possible staff will have the checks completed prior to starting employment. However, if there are delays in checks coming through, as a last resort staff may work in the playgroup before these checks are completed but they must be supervised at all times by staff who already hold an enhanced check and the check has been applied for.

All playgroup staff will be informed of any staff awaiting enhanced DBS clearance.

Staff awaiting these checks will **never**:

- Be left unsupervised whilst caring for children
- Take children for toilet visits unless supervised by staff holding an enhanced check
- Change nappies
- Be left alone in a room or outside with children
- Administer medication
- Administer first aid
- Take photographs of any children
- Be involved in looking at a child's learning and development log, but can contribute to it
- Have access to children's personal details and records.

While adhering to the above list, we recognise that it is vital that the staff member awaiting an enhanced disclosure is made to feel part of the team and we support them in participating fully in every other aspect of the playgroup day.

We recognise that the enhanced DBS disclosure is only one part of a suitability decision and playgroup management will ensure every individual working with a child goes through a vigorous recruitment and induction procedure (as laid out in the safe recruitment policy). We will also ensure they receive continuous support, training and supervision from management in order to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment for all children in the playgroup. We act on any information that comes to our attention that suggests someone may no longer be suitable for their role.

All students will also receive an interview to ensure they are suitable for the playgroup and an induction process to ensure they fully understand and are able to implement the playgroup procedures, working practices and values. All students will be fully supervised to ensure they receive the appropriate support, training and information they may require.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

At Kingsway Playgroup & Pre-School Centre we value our staff highly. We believe that ongoing personal and professional development is essential for the delivery of high-quality learning and development opportunities for children in their early years

The overall quality of our playgroup is underpinned by our staff having the appropriate qualifications, training, skills, knowledge, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Every staff member is given the opportunity to further develop their training, knowledge and skills through a comprehensive and targeted programme of professional development. High-quality professional supervision is also provided, this provides each staff member with support, coaching and training and promotes the interests of children. Each meeting is planned based on individual performance related targets, consistent and sharply focused observation and evaluations of the impact of staff's practice.

We ensure that **50%** of staff are qualified to Level 3 (or equivalent) or above in childcare and education or Early Years Educator. Other staff working at the playgroup are either qualified to Level 2 or undertaking training. Where necessary staff will be supported to achieve a suitable level 2 qualification in Maths and English (as defined by the Department for Education on the Early Years Qualifications List) for the completion of the Early Years Educator.

We strongly promote continuous professional development and all staff have individual training records and training plans to enhance their skills and expertise, which are based on discussions at supervision meetings and appraisal meetings. We have a training budget which is set annually and reviewed to ensure that the team gain external support and training where needed.

To facilitate the development of staff we:

- Coach, mentor, lead and offer encouragement and support to achieve a high level of morale and motivation
- Promote teamwork through ongoing communication, involvement and a no blame culture to enhance playgroup practice

- Provide opportunities for delegation based on skills and expertise to offer recognition and empower staff
- Encourage staff to contribute ideas for change within the playgroup and hold regular staff meetings and team meetings to develop these ideas. Regular meetings are also held to discuss strategy, policy and activity planning
- Encourage staff to further their experience and knowledge by attending relevant external training courses
- Encourage staff to pass on their knowledge to those who are less experienced and share knowledge from external training with small groups of staff within the playgroup
- Provide regular in-house training relevant to the needs of the playgroup
- Carry out regular six weekly supervision meetings with all staff. These provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues particularly concerning children's development or well-being including child protection concerns, identify solutions to address issues as they arise and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness. Staff appraisals are carried out annually where objectives and action plans for staff are set out, while also identifying training needs according to their individual needs
- Develop a training plan that sets out the aims and intended outcomes of any training, addressing both the qualification and continuous professional development needs of the playgroup and individual staff
- Carry out training need analyses for all individual staff, the team as a whole, and for the playgroup every six months
- Promote a positive learning culture within the playgroup
- Offer annual team building training
- Carry out full evaluations of all training events and use these to evaluate the training against the aims set to enable the development of future training programmes to improve effectiveness and staff learning
- Provide inductions to welcome all new staff and assign a 'work buddy' to coach, mentor and support new staff
- Offer ongoing support and guidance
- Offer varied information sources including membership of local and national organisations, resources, publications and literature to all staff.

SUPERVISIONS

At Kingsway Playgroup & Pre-School Centre we implement a system of supervision for all of our staff following their induction and probation period. Supervision is part of the playgroup's overall performance management system and promotes a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement. It encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues including the opportunity for staff and their managers to:

- Discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being, including child protection concerns
- Identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness
- Develop their own skills/training needs in order to progress in their role
- Discuss any concerns relating to changes in personal circumstances that might affect an individual's ability/suitability to work with children. (This should include any incidents resulting in a reprimand, caution or prosecution by the police, any court orders or changes to their health. These changes are recorded as a declaration on the individual member of staff's supervision form and appropriate action is taken, where applicable, in line with the safeguarding/child protection and disciplinary procedure).

The frequency of supervision meetings is six weekly according to individual needs. A template agenda is used in all meetings to ensure consistency across the playgroup. This clearly sets out who does what and the timeframe, i.e. what the manager is responsible for and what the practitioner needs to do.

There should always be something that a member of staff can discuss, e.g. a particular child's development, strengths or concerns. However, if there are times where staff may be struggling to identify areas to discuss in a supervision we will ask them to identify three things they have enjoyed about their job/done well since the last supervision and one thing they have least enjoyed/requires further improvement. They will be asked to complete this prior to supervision (as set out in their responsibilities).

There may be times when supervision may be increased for members of the team as and when needed, i.e. if they have particular concerns about a child or if they are going through personal circumstances at home, for new starters, staff returning after long-term illness, on request from staff.

It is the responsibility of the manager to plan time to ensure that all staff have supervisions.

At Kingsway Playgroup & Pre-School Centre supervision is carried out by the manager. If for any reason a supervision is cancelled a new date will be rearranged as soon as possible.

All members of staff responsible for carrying out supervisions are trained and supported prior to carrying these out.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that they are available for supervision meetings and that the necessary paperwork is complete. Information shared in supervision sessions is confidential. The supervision process will be evaluated through staff feedback and is used as part of the overall performance monitoring system at the playgroup.