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**Employment and Staffing Policy**

**Our Aim:**

To meet the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring that our staff and volunteers are appropriately qualified, and that 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*.* Fowlmere Playgroup welcomes 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.

All our staff at Fowlmere Playgroup have job descriptions, which set out their roles and responsibilities. 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 and have a rigid safer recruitment process in place. 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.** It is also a requirement that employees of Fowlmere Playgroup subscribe to the DBS Update Service so that with your consent we can 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. Safer recruitment of staff will be over seen by Lindsey Crow (secretary & committee safeguarding named person)and Jasmine Redrup (manager of Fowlmere Playgroup) who have attended safer recruitment training.

For individual’s already subscribed to the DBS Update Service Fowlmere Playgroup 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.

Fowlmere Playgroup keep all records relating to the advertising/interviewing process for 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.

**Our 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:

Fowlmere Playgroup will inform Ofsted of any changes to our Registered Person (trustees/director(s)/owner(s) our provision) and/or our manager.

*Training and staff development*

 Our manager currently holds a Cache Level 4 qualification as an Advanced Early Year’s Practitioner, our Deputy manager holds a relevant/recognised Level 3 Early Year’s qualification and we aim to ensure all other staff hold at least a recognised Level 2 Early Year’s qualification or higher where possible.

Fowlmere Playgroup provides regular in-service training to all our staff - whether paid staff or volunteers - through the Pre-school Learning Alliance and external agencies. The manager of the setting supports the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings (written termly and verbal half-termly) and appraisals (annually). The chairperson of the committee will ensure supervision of the manager is undertaken too.

We provide our staff with induction training in the first 6 months of their employment as part of their probation period. This induction includes our Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy. Other policies and procedures are introduced within an induction plan.

**Fowlmere Playgroup 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 the children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly. **For staff members that need their medication on site they will be responsible** for storing this securely and ensuring that it is 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.

Ratios

We will ensure that a minimum of two staff/adults are on duty at any one time and that we follow the legal requirements of the required amount of adults to children dependent upon their age and needs.

**Children aged two years of age: 1 adult: 4 children (or optional 5 at staff’s digression announced in updated Early Years Framework September 2023)**

**Children aged three to 4 years of age: 1 adult: 8 children**

Our manager deploys our staff, students and volunteers to give adequate supervision of indoor and outdoor areas, ensuring that children are always within sight *or* hearing of staff at all times. Higher ratios will be in place when on outings/trips in the local community.

The maximum children that can attend per session is 20 due to space requirements. We regularly review availability for children and more staffing may be arranged to meet the demand for childcare that we are experiencing on sessions where lower numbers of staff are in place.

Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

Our staff take their holiday breaks **ONLY** 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 our manager and/or our committee with sufficient notice.

Where our staff are unwell and take sick leave in accordance with their contract of employment, we organise cover to ensure ratios are maintained and that good quality provision is still available to the families of Fowlmere Playgroup. Sick leave of staff members is monitored and action is taken where necessary, in accordance with the individual’s contract of employment.

Contingency plans to cover staff absences include…

* Approaching other staff members to see if they are able to cover periods of absences
* Arranging bank or agency staff
* Committee members volunteering to cover periods of absences

When leaving site during a work day due to sickness or returning to work after absence, the manager and employee are required to complete a self-certification (sickness) form, which will be passes to the treasurer. We aim to do all we can to remain open but there are times when this is unavoidable such as when the premises are required for a Funeral or any unforeseen circumstances.

Student Placements:

We aim to provide for students on placement with us, experiences that contribute to the successful completion of their studies and that provide examples of quality practice in early years care and education. We also offer placements for school pupils on work experience. We co-operate with students' tutors in order to help students to fulfil the requirements of their course of study. All students will be provided with a short induction on how our setting/sessions are managed/organised and what to do in emergency situations.

We require students on qualification courses to meet the Suitable Person requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and have a satisfactory enhanced DBS check with barred list check(s) or for students under the age of 17 that their schools or colleges can vouch for their good character.

We make the needs of the children paramount by not admitting students in numbers that hinder the essential work of the setting and recognise that these needs may mean that we are NOT always able to offer opportunities of student placements into our setting.

**Fowlmere Playgroup supervise students under the age of 17 years at all times and do not allow them to have unsupervised access to children.**

Students and apprentices, over the age of 17, who are undertaking a level 3 qualification may be considered to be counted in the ratios if our manager deems them to be suitably qualified and experienced.

This policy was adopted by ………. Fowlmere Playgroup…………….

On …………….. 7th Jan 2019 ………………..

To be reviewed …………….. Jan 2025……………………

Signed on behalf of the provider ……………………………………………….

Name of signatory …………K. Holwell……(chairperson)……

Reviewed ……….Feb 2020…………. ……….Jasmine Redrup……………

 **…………Feb 2021…………. ………..Jasmine Redrup……………**

 **…………Feb 2022…………. ………..Verity Smith…………………**

 …………Jan 2023………….. ………..Verity Smith………………….

 ……….Jan 2024……….. ………..Verity Smith…………