

Staffing Policy



Policy statement

- We provide a staffing ratio at least 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.
- We carry out checks for criminal and other records through the Disclosure and Barring Service in accordance with statutory requirements. We obtain references in accordance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- We provide an induction for all staff, volunteers and managers in order to fully brief them about the setting, the families we serve, our policies and procedures, curriculum and daily practice.
- Our setting recognises that qualifications and training make an important contribution to the quality of the care and education provided by early years settings. As part of our commitment to quality, we offer placements to students undertaking early years qualifications and training. We also offer placements for school pupils on work experience.
- We aim to provide experiences for students on placement with us that contribute to the successful completion of their studies and to provide examples of quality practice in early years care and education.

Staff to children ratios

- We aim to use the following minimum ratios of adult to children at every session:
 - Children aged two years: 1 adult : 4 children:
 - Children aged three years and over when one of the adults has a level 6 qualification, as defined in [Early Years Qualification Requirements And Standards](#) : 1 adult : 13 children
 - Children aged three years and over otherwise: 1 adult : 8 children
- Occasionally, due to staff absence, we may have a higher ratio of children aged two to adults but we will never have a ratio higher than that required under the Early Years Foundation Stage of 1 adult : 5 children.
- In addition, at every session,
 - at least one member of staff holds an Early Years Educator level 3 qualification or higher and, if obtained since 30 June 2016, has a paediatric first aid qualification in line with Early Years Foundation Stage requirements;
 - at least half of all other staff hold an Early Years Educator level 2 qualification and, if obtained since 30 June 2016, has a paediatric first aid qualification in line with Early Years Foundation Stage requirements; and
 - a minimum of two members of staff are on duty at any one time.

Vetting and staff selection

- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.
- 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 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, except where management responsibilities require the employee to be a practising Christian. All staff are expected to be sympathetic to the Christian Faith and supportive of the work of the Church. We will not place any applicants at a disadvantage by imposing unjustified conditions or requirements.
- We use Ofsted guidance on obtaining enhanced criminal record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”) for staff and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children. This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) for the vetting and barring scheme.
- We obtain references for staff and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children, in accordance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- We keep all records relating to employment of staff and volunteers, in particular those demonstrating that checks have been done, including the date and number of the enhanced DBS check.
- DBS checks are obtained by following the procedures of St Paul’s Howell Hill with St Barnabas Epsom, which are set by the Parochial Church Council.
- Staff are required 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.

Changes to staff

- We inform Ofsted of any changes in the person responsible for Little Fishes. The responsible person is the Little Fishes Operations Manager.

Training and staff development

- Our Operations Manager, Deputy Manager and any staff member acting as Setting Manager hold an Early Years Educator (level 3) qualification or higher and a minimum of half of our staff hold an Early Years Educator (level 2) qualification or higher.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff - internally or through the Pre-school Learning Alliance and external agencies.
- Our budget allocates resources to training.
- We have a written induction plan for all new staff and volunteers. The induction lasts at least two weeks and is carried out by the Operations Manager.
- The induction plan includes the following:
 - introductions to all staff and volunteers,
 - familiarising with the building, health and safety, and fire and evacuation procedures,

- ensuring our policies and procedures have been read and are carried out,
 - introduction to parents, especially parents of allocated key children where appropriate, and
 - familiarising them with confidential information where applicable in relation to any key children.
- During the induction period, the individual must demonstrate understanding of and compliance with policies, procedures, tasks and routines. Successful completion of the induction forms part of the probationary period.
 - We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings and appraisals.
 - We hold regular staff meetings to develop our practice, to discuss children's progress, their achievements and any difficulties that may arise from time to time.
 - We keep records of all formal training undertaken by staff.

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. 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 staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for children, they will be asked to leave immediately. Disciplinary procedures for staff will be initiated.
- Little Fishes is a no-smoking environment, both indoors and outdoors, therefore staff who smoke or use e-cigarettes do not do in the setting.


Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

- As we are a term-time only setting, 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:
 - We have bank staff who can cover regular staff when absent. They are required to work within the same policies and procedures as the regular staff, and have undertaken DBS checks and safeguarding training.
 - As most of our staff are part-time, we ask regular staff if they are willing to work additional days to cover colleagues' absences.

Student Placements

- We require students on qualification courses to meet the 'suitable people' requirements of Ofsted and have DBS checks carried out.

- We obtain references for all students in accordance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- We require students in our setting to have a sufficient understanding and use of English to contribute to the well-being of children in our care.
- We require schools placing students under the age of 17 years with the setting to vouch for their good character.
- We supervise students under the age of 17 years at all times and do not allow them to have unsupervised access to children.
- Students undertaking qualification courses who are placed in our setting on a short term basis are not counted in our staffing ratios.
- Trainee staff employed by the setting and students over the age of 17 may be included in the ratios at the level below their study level if they are deemed competent and responsible by Little Fishes management.
- We take out employers' liability insurance and public liability insurance, which covers both trainees and voluntary helpers.
- We require students to keep to our Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy.
- We co-operate with students' tutors to help students to fulfil the requirements of their course of study.
- We provide students, at the first session of their placement, with a short induction on how our setting is managed, how our sessions are organised and our policies and procedures.
- We communicate a positive message to students about the value of qualifications and training.
- We make the needs of the children paramount by not admitting students in numbers that hinder the essential work of the setting.
- We ensure that trainees placed with us are engaged in bona fide early years training, which provides the necessary background understanding of children's development and activities.

<i>This policy was adopted by:</i>	Little Fishes Pre-school on 17 September 2025
<i>next review date:</i>	July 2026
<i>Signed on behalf of the provider by</i>	 Alison Carr, Chair of Little Fishes Management Group

<i>Version control</i>	<i>Summary of changes made</i>
September 2024	new version from first principles
September 2025	updated to state references obtained in accordance with EYFS updated to refer to PFA qualification to be included in ratios