

# Little Bears Pre-school

## Safer Recruitment and Induction Policy

### Statement of Intent

Our preschool is committed to offering high quality learning through play and fun. Staff are the most important feature of this, so we aim to ensure that our staff are highly skilled, and work together in complementary ways as a creative, supportive team. Safeguarding and equality will be major considerations in appointing to vacant posts. Recruitment will comply with statutory guidance, good practice, and the preschool's policies on Admission, Equality, and Safeguarding Children.

### Planning for Recruitment

New staff may be needed when current staff leave, temporarily (eg, maternity, long-term illness) or permanently (eg, resignation, retirement), to fill new posts or to employ Bank staff to cover staff illness or absence due to training etc.. Posts may be full time or part time or 'zero' contracted.

#### 1. Schedule for Appointment.

The Manager and CIO should agree on a realistic timetable for recruitment. This should allow time for drawing up the specifications, for advertising the post, for the application process, for taking up references, for the interview, and for pre-employment checks.

#### 2. Job Description and Person Specification.

The Manager and CIO should discuss what the new staff member would be expected to do, and on what terms they would be employed. A full job description and person specification should then be drawn up, specifying: the duties and responsibilities of the post (including management responsibilities), the person to whom the post-holder reports, together with the terms of employment (hours, pay, duration, length of probationary period, etc). The person specification should specify the qualifications, abilities and personal characteristics sought in a successful applicant. The description must be approved (and amended) by the CIO, as employer.

Under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, applicants may not be discriminated against on the basis of *protected characteristics*: age, disability, race, religion/belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, or pregnancy/maternity. It is illegal to discriminate against candidates either directly or indirectly, on the basis of real or perceived characteristics, or even by association.

#### 3. Application Form.

The application form should be checked to ensure that it accords with any changes in legislation – in particular, that it doesn't ask discriminatory questions, and that it (or accompanying paperwork) demands all legally required information or declarations.

All applicants will be required to provide specific information relevant to safeguarding.

- All posts are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; applicants should provide details of any convictions, cautions or bind-overs (including 'spent' ones).

#### 4. Selection Panel.

One member of the CIO should oversee the recruitment process and chair a selection panel or delegate this to an appropriately qualified member of the team. The CIO should appoint the panel, shortlist and interview candidates and make an appointment on its behalf. At least one member should be trained in Safer Recruitment. The panel should include someone with Group 3 safeguarding training (usually the SDO) to

ensure safeguarding issues are fully addressed, and the Manager. If an administrator is under employ and isn't on the panel, they should be available to advise on practical and employment issues. Every effort should be made to ensure a representative balance.

## **Advertising**

All vacancies will be advertised as widely as budget allows: ordinarily, this would include the preschool's own website, the local paper, posters in shop windows, Job Centre Plus.

- The advert should include the job title, amount of hours, qualifications needed and pay rate. It should give some indication of the character of the preschool, and include a statement of commitment to safeguarding and conditionality on enhanced DBS disclosure (with barred lists check). Contact details should be given for enquiries, as well as a closing date for applications and the interview date.

## **Selection**

All applicants will be sent an application form, a job description, a person specification, a copy of our Safeguarding policy and this policy.

### **1. Shortlisting.**

Once all application forms are received, the selection panel will meet to discuss all applications and to compile a shortlist for interview. All panel members should be involved in the shortlisting process.

- For safeguarding reasons, no applicant should be shortlisted without completing an application form. Those who send in only a CV and covering letter should be issued an application form and asked to complete it.
- The declaration of a conviction, caution or bind-over ('spent' or not) shouldn't exclude an applicant from a shortlist unless it is recent or persistent, and relevant to working directly with children.

### **2. Invitation to Interview.**

Those applicants selected for the shortlist should be invited by the Chair/Administrator, by letter, to attend the interview. The letter should confirm the date and time, and give directions to the venue. It should give an indication of who's on the interview panel, and inform candidates of what will be involved in the process (eg, session with the children and formal interview). It should also inform them that their references will be taken up, and offer the opportunity to arrange with staff to visit the preschool informally before the interview day.

### **3. References.**

All references should be taken up for all shortlisted candidates, and used to inform questions at interview. If for any reason one of the references for a preferred candidate is unavailable at the time of interview, any offer of employment should be strictly conditional on this reference proving satisfactory.

## **Interview**

Panel members should try to minimise the use of any prior personal knowledge they may have of candidates.

### **1. Interview.**

At interview all applicants should be asked the same set of core questions, though panel members may follow up on responses, and on points of interest or concern in a candidate's application form or references.

- Any concerns related to safeguarding (eg, unexplained changes or gaps in employment) and behaviour management should be pursued, as a matter of priority.
- Any disciplinary action or allegation declared by the applicant's professional referee should be explored in detail, and a determination made in terms of a risk assessment.
- No questions should be posed which potentially discriminate against candidates, unless they relate directly to something intrinsic to the job
- Any declared criminal convictions, etc, should only be raised if they relate to issues needing to be explored because of a relevance to the post.
- Time should be allowed for candidates to ask their own questions, to help them determine for themselves their suitability for the job.

## **2. Interaction.**

The panel should decide whether, as part of the interview process, the candidates will be asked to interact with children during a normal session. Observations of any such interaction should inform the decision-making process. Candidates should have been informed of such interaction beforehand, in the letter inviting them to interview.

## **Appointment**

The panel is authorised to reach a decision without the need to consult further with the full CIO.

### **1. Decision Making.**

The panel will need to give reasons for its decision, and these should be evidence-based.

- The panel may choose its own criteria for judgement as to the suitability of each candidate, provided these are based on the job description and person specification issued to applicants beforehand.
- The panel may choose its own way of reaching a decision but should give sufficient weight to the views of those who will work with the successful candidate most closely (eg, the Manager).
- In the absence of a clear frontrunner, the panel may choose to invite any or all shortlisted candidates for further interviews, or a more demanding exercise, or more extensive observation – whatever it deems likely to give it an objective basis on which to reach a decision. However, all candidates still under consideration should be treated with parity: offered the *same* opportunities and subjected to the *same* basis of judgement.

### **2. The Successful Candidate.**

Once the panel has reached its decision, the Chair should inform the successful candidate of the outcome by telephone. This should be followed by a letter confirming the offer, and giving the reasons for the panel's decision; this should be written by the Chair/Administrator, informed by the panel's discussion. In each instance, the chair should emphasise that the offer is conditional on the receipt of satisfactory employment and vetting checks (eg, enhanced DBS disclosure with barred lists check).

If no candidate is ultimately judged to be suitable, the post should be re-advertised, casting a wider net.

### **3. The unsuccessful Candidates.**

All unsuccessful candidates should be informed by the Chair/Administrator in writing, explaining why they were not chosen and offering the chance to discuss these reasons further if required.

## **Conditions of Employment**

All appointees will be required to complete statutory employment checks, as well as providing the preschool with relevant information and documentation.

### **1. Statutory Checks.**

Appointees must, by law, undergo safeguarding checks prior to employment, designed to minimize the risk of unwittingly putting children into harm's way.

#### **a. DBS Disclosure.**

Posts working closely with children are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All appointments are conditional on enhanced DBS disclosure (with barred lists check) proving adequate. The administrator/Chair will initiate this, and perform all requisite identity checks.

- If the disclosure reveals any convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings, or police information, it is the responsibility of the CIO, as employer, to decide whether these are sufficiently serious, recent and relevant for the job offer to be revoked. The CIO should seek advice from Ofsted, and minute all discussions. If it decides to revoke an offer, it should justify this in writing to the applicant without delay. Prior convictions, cautions or bind-overs ('spent' or not) should only give cause to revoke an offer if they are recent or persistent, and relevant to working directly with children. However, an offer should be automatically revoked if the applicant failed to disclose these on the application form; this does not apply to police information, where the panel should use its discretion. (See the CRB Code of Practice: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk).)
- If the applicant has been barred from working with children on the lists administered by the Disclosure and Barring Service, the job offer will automatically be revoked and their application form handed to the police. (It is a crime for someone barred from working with children to work or volunteer with groups that work directly with children, or to try to do so.)
- It is an offence for DBS disclosure data to be passed to anyone who doesn't need it in the course of their duties. Information should be stored securely, and destroyed after six months if no longer needed.
- The preschool will ask to inspect the appointee's original DBS disclosure certificate, and take a note of its details, but *may not* photocopy or retain a photocopy of it.

#### **b. Notification to Ofsted.**

If the appointee is to work as manager, their details will be communicated to Ofsted.

Please note:

Ofsted require that all DBS applications submitted on or after 1 September 2014 must join the DBS update service and give their consent to Ofsted re-checking the status of their DBS certificate at least every six months. If a re-check shows that a DBS status has changed it is a requirement to obtain a new DBS certificate.

#### **c. Verification of Qualifications.**

The appointee should provide certificates for all relevant qualifications (eg, NVQ2 or 3, CACHE diploma, EYPS, First Aid, Food Hygiene, Group 2 or 3 Safeguarding). A photocopy of these will be kept in their

personnel file. The preschool has a duty to verify all qualifications essential to the job; seeing the original certificates is usually sufficient, but if in doubt the administrator or Chair should check their authenticity with the awarding bodies.

### ***Verification of Eligibility.***

If the appointee is not a UK national, the preschool must verify their eligibility for employment in the UK (eg, as a citizen of a European Economic Area country). Proof of Right to Work is required in any and all cases.

## **2. Preschool Documentation.**

Appointees should also provide the administrator/Chair with all information relevant to their employment by the preschool.

### ***a. Personal Details.***

The appointee should complete a form for the administrator/Chair with their personal details, including proof of identification, emergency contact numbers, and other pertinent information.

### ***b. Health Questionnaire.***

The appointee should complete one or both of the following health questionnaires:

(i) *The Preschool Health Questionnaire*, giving details of appropriate health-related issues: eg, allergies, disabilities, known medical conditions. (Answers to these questions may not legally be used as a basis on which to revoke the offer of employment, unless they reveal a condition which an Occupational Health professional advises would make it impossible for the appointee to do the job properly, even with all the 'reasonable adjustments' required by the Equality Act 2010.)

(ii) *Ofsted Health Declaration form HDB*, required for 'the manager of the day-to-day running of the childcare provision'. This should be completed by the applicant and passed to their GP, who should then forward it directly to Ofsted.

### ***c. Written Terms and Conditions.***

The appointee should read and sign their employment Written Terms and Conditions, which should be provided within the first three months of employment. Queries about its content should be directed to the administrator or CIO Chair.

### ***d. HMRC Forms.***

The appointee should provide the administrator with a P45 form from their last employer. If they have no P45, they should complete a P46 form and return it to the manager/administrator.

## **3. Probationary Period.**

All appointments are subject to a probationary period, details of which are found in the employee's Terms and Conditions and will only be confirmed if management are confident the applicant is competent in their work and can be safely entrusted with children.

## ***Induction***

All new staff should go through an induction process with the management.

### **1. Policies.**

All applicants will receive an electronic copy of the preschool policies as part of their induction (unless a hard copy is specifically requested), and they should confirm that they have read and understood these policies

and will abide by them if appointed. Each employee should be made aware that the setting's policies and procedures form part of their Written Terms and Conditions and by accepting and signing their contract they are also signing to abide by said procedures.

## **2. Procedures.**

The Manager/Chair should explain the preschool's administrative and financial procedures to the appointee. This should include pay and sick leave arrangements, and fire drill and emergency plan protocols.

## **3. Safeguarding.**

The SDO should explain the preschool safeguarding procedures, and ensure that the appointee undertakes online Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children training (Group 2), as required.

## **4. EYFS Delivery.**

If the appointee doesn't hold at least a Level 2 qualification in Early Years work, the Manager should acquaint them with the principles and workings of the Early Years Foundation Stage. If the appointee is familiar with the EYFS, the manager will explain how it is delivered in the preschool, and how a child's progress is recorded on their Learning Journey.

## **5. Training Audit.**

The appointee should discuss with the manager any training they might need as a matter of priority, and agree with them a training schedule for continual professional development.

## ***Retention***

Staff are the most valuable resource of any preschool, and retaining experienced, professional staff is vital to the success of a setting. Frequent staff turnover, and continually recruiting and training new staff, affects the quality of care provided. The committee should support staff so as to guarantee a high level of morale and motivation, to ensure that all staff are encouraged and enabled to fulfil their potential, and to make our Preschool a rewarding and enjoyable place for both children and staff.

## **Volunteers & Students**

The preschool welcomes the involvement and assistance of volunteers of various types: parents on the volunteer rota, adults from the wider community (eg, the parents of former preschool children), or students on placement. Volunteers enrich the environment for staff and students alike, and generally find the experience rewarding.

### **1. Regular Volunteers.**

Anyone volunteering on a *regular* basis will be subject to basic safeguarding protocols. 'Regular' is defined in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 category of 'regulated activity': *frequent* (once a week or more) or *intensive* (four or more times in a 30-day period).

#### **a. Enhanced DBS Disclosure.**

Regular volunteers and long-term placement students (aged 16+) are only eligible for enhanced DBS disclosure (with barred lists check) if they engage in unsupervised activities in the preschool. However, as we are a small rural preschool best practice dictates that we DBS check all regular volunteers and long-term placement students.

### ***b. References & Interview.***

All volunteers should complete an Application Form. This includes signing the statutory declarations and providing the names and addresses of two referees (unrelated to them) able to give satisfactory references on their character and comment on their interaction with children. Where a volunteer is well known to staff, a staff member may act as one of the referees. All references will be taken up. Potential volunteers will be subject to interview by the Manager and the SDO (or someone else with Group 3 Safeguarding training).

### ***c. Induction.***

Regular volunteers should undergo an induction process to ensure familiarity with preschool policies and procedures; this should include instruction on preschool safeguarding procedures by the SDO.

### ***d. Probationary Period & Working Agreement.***

Regular volunteers are subject to a six-week probationary period. At the end of this time, they should meet with the manager to discuss any concerns each has. They should also finalise a working agreement, specifying the reasonable expectations of all concerned.

### ***e. Training.***

If appropriate, volunteers will be required to undertake some elements of training (eg, paediatric First Aid, online Group 2 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children training, Health & Hygiene certificate).

## **2. Infrequent Volunteers.**

Where people volunteer infrequently (less than once a week) – eg, parents on rota, or those accompanying staff and children on an outing, or helping at an event – such measures are unnecessary. Infrequent volunteers should be known by the staff (eg, a child's parent, carer or relative).

## **3. Students.**

Those on intensive, short-term placement (eg, two weeks) should be vouched for in writing by their educational institution, but long-term placement students (aged 16+) should also, if eligible, provide an enhanced DBS disclosure (with barred lists check), and be instructed on preschool safeguarding procedures by the SDO in their induction.

## **4. Limitation of Duties.**

The preschool is responsible for the actions of its (regular) volunteers even where it is unaware, or disapproving, of these actions. Volunteers should understand the conditions in which the preschool operates, not least in terms of equality, behaviour management, the EYFS, and safeguarding.

## **Data Protection**

A record of each stage of the selection process, together with supporting documentation for each candidate, must be kept for 6 months from the date of selection. Information disclosed by applicants must be handled sensitively and confidentially during the recruitment process, archived separately in a secure cabinet and disposed of after 6 months in line with the Data Protection Act guidance.

## **Recruitment Complaints**

Complaints surrounding recruitment should be directed to the chair of the selection panel in the first instance. The chair of the selection panel will investigate and make a formal written response to the complainant within 10 working days of the complaint being received.

Approved.....: ( CIO Chair's signature)

Adopted on ..... Review Date .....