



Recruitment, Selection and Suitability of Staff Policy

25th September 2026
Review Date: September 2027

1. Introduction

At Acorn Childcare Centre we are vigilant in our recruitment procedures aiming to ensure that all people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role. We are committed to ensuring that all staff, including students, volunteers and any agency or supply staff are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role in order to work with, or be in regular contact with, children.

- 1.1 We have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners and any other person who may have regular contact with children are suitable, as part of the recruitment process as well as monitoring continued suitability, as part of regular staff and/or student supervision.
- 1.2 The appointment of all employees will be made on merit and in accordance with all legal requirements relating to safer recruitment set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Keeping Children Safe in Education and accompanying regulations, including our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010
- 1.3 We will ensure that people are treated solely based on their abilities and potential, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, age, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background, or any other inappropriate distinction.
- 1.4 We will ensure compliance with the Data Protection regulations and the more stringent requirements contained within the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The GDPR encompasses the core principles of the DPA and provides more onerous responsibility and accountability for fair and transparent processing. Please refer to the Safeguarding children and child protection policy for further information.

2 Advertising

- 2.1 All vacant posts will be advertised to ensure equality of opportunity and encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. This will normally mean placing an advertisement externally. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient, suitably qualified internal candidates, or employees are at risk of redundancy, vacancies

may be advertised internally before an external advertisement. In these circumstances, the shortlisting panel may decide that certain parts of the recruitment process may be omitted but all candidates will be subject to a formal interview, the satisfactory reference requirements and any other necessary checks.

- 2.2 The advert will include the level of DBS check required depending on the role being recruited for and whether the role will involve regulated activity.
- 2.3 The advert will specify whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020, which means certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed to employers. If they are disclosed, they will not be taken into account.
- 2.4 All adverts state the requirement for a certificate of good conduct where applicable, in addition, for teaching posts, a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked.
- 2.5 Within the advert the applicant will be provided with the Centre's policy and practice in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- 2.6 In accordance with EYFS & Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Centre will consider carrying out an online search as part of the due diligence on shortlisted candidates. Where an online check will be carried out, this will be indicated in the advert and/or recruitment pack. Any search will be confined to information that may reasonably be relevant to safeguarding or the applicant's suitability to work with children and will be conducted in line with UK GDPR.

3 Information for Applicants

3.1 All applicants for all vacant posts will be provided with:

- A job description outlining the duties of the post and an indication of where the post fits into the organisational structure of the nursery
- A person specification may also be provided. This will also include a statement on behalf of the nursery's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- An application form (CVs will not be accepted)
- An Information pack containing:
 - Reference to the nursery's Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Reference to the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
 - DBS and other pre-employment checks required
 - The closing date for the receipt of applications
 - An outline of the terms of employment, including salary

4 Short Listing and Reference Requests

- 4.1 The manager decides the most appropriate people for the interview panel. There will be at least two people involved in the overall decision making.
- 4.2 The shortlisting panel will use an agreed shortlisting form. The criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants based on the essential and desirable criteria for the post. The shortlisting panel will agree the candidates to be called for interview.
- 4.3 The shortlisting panel will take up at least two references on each short-listed candidate. If a candidate for a post working with children is not currently working with children, a reference will be sought from the most recent employment working with children to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving. One reference will be from the applicant's current employer. Reference requests will ask the referee to confirm:
- The referee's relationship with the candidate
 - Details of the applicant's current post and salary
 - Performance history
 - All formal time-limited capability warnings which have not passed the expiration date
 - All formal time-limited disciplinary warnings, where not relating to safeguarding concerns, which have not passed the expiration date
 - All disciplinary action where the penalty is "time expired" and relate to safeguarding concerns
 - Details of any substantiated allegations or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children
 - Whether the referee has any reservations as to the candidate's suitability to work with children. If so, the nursery will ask for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the candidate may be unsuitable to work with children
- 4.4 References are the "property" of the shortlisting panel and strict confidentiality will be observed. Employer testimonials or 'bearer references' i.e., those provided by the candidate and/or marked 'to whom it may concern' will not be accepted. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied. The shortlisting panel will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend of the candidate. References will be verified, and any discrepancies will be discussed with the candidate at interview. Electronic references will be checked to ensure they originate from a legitimate source.
- 4.5 References will be checked against information on the application; any discrepancy/issue of concern noted to take up with applicant at interview. The school will contact referees to clarify where information is vague or insufficient information is provided.
- 4.6 On receipt, equality monitoring information must be separated from applications.
- 4.7 If the field of applicants is felt to be weak, the post may be re-advertised.

4.8 Where the nursery has carried out an online search on shortlisted candidates as part of the due diligence, any concerns which arise may be discussed with the applicant at, or prior to, the interview stage.

4.9 All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. For example:

- If they have a criminal history
- Whether they are included on the barred list
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted
- If they are known to the police and children's social care
- Whether they are disqualified from providing childcare (Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018)
- Any relevant overseas information

4.10 Applicants will be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate will be asked to physically sign a hard copy of the application at the point of interview.

5 Interviews

5.1 The format, style and duration of the interviews are matters for the Manager to decide in consultation with any SLT involved in the process, but the following will be adhered to:

5.1.1 Briefing:

All candidates will be given relevant information about the nursery to enable the candidate to make further enquiries about the suitability of the advertised job.

5.1.2 The formal interview:

Before the interviews, the selection panel will agree on the interview format including any other assessment methods. The questions asked will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how each candidate meets the requirement of the job description and the person specification, and each candidate will be assessed against all the criteria for the post. The same areas of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no questions which would discriminate directly or indirectly on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will be asked.

The selection process for every post will include exploration of the candidate's understanding of child safeguarding issues. Questions will include:

- Finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children
- Exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role
- Probing any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking for the reasons for this
- 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 nursery interacting with the children, staff and, where appropriate, parents

The interview will also explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing include:

- Implication that adults and children are equal
- Lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children
- Inappropriate idealisation of children
- Indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions or pending prosecutions, other than those protected, that the candidate has declared and are relevant to the prospective employment.

The recruitment documentation will be retained for six months from the date of interview. Applicants have the right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. After six months all information about unsuccessful candidates will be securely destroyed.

6 Offer of Employment by the Selection Panel

6.1 The offer of employment by the selection panel and acceptance by the candidate is binding on both parties subject to:

- Verification of identity (including birth certificate)
- Verification of right to work in the UK
- Proof of relevant qualifications
- Satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure

- A Certificate of Good Conduct (if applicable) which may include EEA sanctions and restrictions
- Barred list check
- Teacher prohibition (if applicable)
- Section 128 check (if applicable)
- Pre-employment medical screening
- Satisfactory references
- Disqualification under the Childcare Disqualification Act 2006, as amended

The manager and SLT 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 nursery

The successful candidate will be informed, normally by offer letter, that the appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of these checks.

6.2 Unsuccessful candidates will be notified.

7 Personnel File and Single Central Record

7.1 Recruitment and selection information for the successful candidate will be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of their employment with the nursery including:

- Application form – signed by the applicant
- Interview notes – including explanation of any gaps in the employment history
- References – minimum of two
- Proof of identity (including birth certificate)
- Proof of right to work in the UK
- Proof of relevant qualifications
- Certificate of Good Conduct (where applicable) which may include for teaching positions, a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked
- Evidence of medical clearance from the Occupational Health service
- Evidence of DBS clearance and barred list check
- Offer of employment letter and signed contract of employment
- Disqualification under the Childcare Disqualification Act 2006, as amended (where applicable)

- 7.2 Retention of personal information for the successful candidate following the end of their employment will be in accordance with the nursery's Records Management Policy, which is compliant with relevant Data Protection Act. When retained documents have reached their data retention limit, they will be securely destroyed.
- 7.3 The nursery will destroy information obtained by a vetting exercise as soon as possible or within six months. A record of the result of the vetting or verification of the successful candidate will be retained on the employees file and the Single Central Record.
- 7.4 The nursery will normally collect personal information from you only where we have your consent to do so, where we need the personal information to perform a contract with/involving you, or where the processing is in our legitimate interests and not overridden by your data protection interests or fundamental rights and freedoms. In some cases, we may also have a legal obligation to collect personal information from you or may otherwise need the personal information to protect your vital interests or those of another person. The nursery will retain a record of consent as evidence that we have obtained consent to collect and process the data and that applicants have been advised of the purpose of the collection and processing.
- 7.5 You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time and can do so by informing the School's Data Protection Officer, except for those documents that are required for a statutory requirement.
- 7.6 The nursery will maintain a Single Central Record of employment checks in accordance with EYFS & Keeping Children Safe in Education.

8 Start of Employment and Induction

- 8.1 The pre-employment checks listed in paragraph 8.1 above must be completed before the employee starts work. Exceptions will only be made in circumstances where a risk assessment has been undertaken. Exceptions will never be made in the case of the barred list and teacher prohibition checks.
- 8.2 All new employees will be provided with an induction programme which will cover all relevant matters of nursery policy but particularly relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This will include the:
- how to safeguard children in their care and follow the Safeguarding children and child protection policy, Lock down policy, Inclusion and equality policy and health and safety issues.
 - Role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and deputies)

Copies of relevant initial policies will be provided to all staff at induction. All other policies and procedures are available to staff via Acorn Childcare Centre's website

<https://www.acornchildcarecentre.co.uk/page/?title=Policies+and+Procedures&pid=30>

- New staff members will have a probationary period for the first 6 months of work during which suitability for the position to which they have been appointed will be assessed. The nursery reserves the right to extend the probationary period if necessary. During the probationary period there will be regular interim reviews, structured monitoring and benchmarks, early intervention on issues and clear setting of expectations at the outset and when identifying areas for improvement along the way
- The new member of staff will have regular meetings with their phase lead during their induction period to discuss their progress, support required and/or further training and professional development opportunities.
- All members of staff will update a health questionnaire on an annual basis to ensure management have a good knowledge of any changes that may require support or additional resources to aid them to carry out their day-to-day duties. This will also be discussed at staff supervisions and review meetings. Management may require this more regularly where health circumstances change. There are more details about how the nursery deals with any health problems in the Absence management procedure
- The nursery will provide appropriate opportunities for all staff to undertake professional development and training to help improve the quality of experiences provided for children.

9. Students and agency

- All students will receive an interview to ensure they are suitable for the nursery and an induction process to ensure they fully understand and are able to implement the nursery procedures, working practices and values
- All students will be fully supervised to ensure they receive the appropriate support, training and information they may require
- We have a short induction prior to agency staff working with the children. It is our policy that all agency and supply staff are fully supervised and not left alone with children
- Students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios at the level below their level of study, if the provider is satisfied that they are competent and responsible.

Children on work experience placements

- A student aged 16 plus on work experience in the nursery is considered to be engaging in regulated activity
- The student would require the work experience provider, e.g. school or sixth form college, to complete a DBS enhanced check prior to their placement in the setting.

10 Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 This Policy & Procedure will be reviewed each year by the SLT team, or more often if necessary and will be available for prospective staff members on our website.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>September 2024</i> <i>Reviewed September 2025</i> <i>– SK</i> <i>Reviewed 30.9.26- LH</i>	<i>Lorna Hodgett</i>	<i>September 2026</i> <i>September 2027</i>