

## **29. Personnel Policy**

At La Petite Academy 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 procedures to support the recruitment, development, and retention of staff. Our personnel policy refers to our rules of conduct to support the relationship with employees in the attainment of the nursery objectives.

The nursery'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
- 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 be shown how to access 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 and that they continually improve
- We promote staff well-being (see Well-being policy) and foster team working through regular staff meetings and team events and/or outings
- Discrimination or harassment of any member of staff relating to sex, race, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief and disability is not acceptable. This includes unwanted verbal or physical third-party harassment by those not employed by the nursery.

### **Recruitment of Staff**

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.

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.

Carol Daly (Manager), Jodie Hursthouse (Assistant Manager) and Seren Brown (Room Leader/Acting Assistant Manager) have undertaken NSPCC Safer Recruitment training and at least one of these people will be on every selection panel and will have trained the other members of the panel in advance.

Every time we recruit a new member of staff, including Bank Staff, to join our team, we follow these procedures:

#### **1. Legal requirements**

- We abide by all legal requirements relating to safer 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 2010

- We also follow any requirements or guidance given by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in relation to carrying out checks. We abide by the employer's responsibilities by informing the DBS of any changes to the suitability of our staff, whether this member of staff has left the nursery or is still under investigation. Please refer to the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy for further information.

## **2. Advertising**

- We use reputable newspapers, job sites, social media sites, websites and the local job centre to advertise for any vacancies (e.g. Indeed)
- We ensure that all recruitment literature includes details of our equal opportunities policy and our safer recruitment procedures, including an enhanced DBS check and at least two independent references for every new employee. We also include the requirement for an additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.

## **3. Interview stage**

- We shortlist all suitable candidates against pre-set specification and ensure all applicants receive correspondence regardless of whether they are successful in reaching the interview stage or not
- All shortlisted candidates receive a job description, a person specification, an equal opportunity monitoring form and a request for identification prior to the interview
- The manager decides the most appropriate people for the interview panel, depending on the seniority of the advertised post. There will be at least two people involved in the overall decision making
- Wherever possible three people will be involved in the interview so that there is no 'deadlock' in 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 nursery. The questions are value based and will ensure the candidate has the same

values as the nursery with regards to the safety and welfare of the children in their care

- Candidates will be given a score for their answers including a score for their individual experience and qualifications
- The interview panel will record gaps in knowledge and skills to support tailoring the induction process to the individual needs of the successful candidate
- 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 activity is observed using a pre-agreed set of prompts and criteria to assess the candidate's competence in a range of areas (e.g. Ekkan peer observation format)
- Staff and children working with the candidate will be asked for their feedback to help inform the panel's decision
- In addition, the manager may choose to carry out an online search for every shortlisted candidate. This may help identify any incidents or issues publicly available online, which may be explored with the applicant at interview
- The panel will then select the most suitable person for this position based on these scores and their knowledge and understanding of the early years framework as well as the needs of the nursery
- Every candidate will receive communication from the nursery stating whether they have been successful or not. Unsuccessful candidates are offered feedback.

#### **4. 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. No new staff will start their position prior to references being returned and checked
- Where candidates have only been in their previous post(s) for a short time, references may be sought to capture up to the last 5 years of work/voluntary experience/education
- References will not be accepted from friends or family members

- References from prior employment must be supplied by someone in a senior position in the company (e.g. manager, deputy)
- 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. The person undertaking the check will record the date and their initials, and print a copy of the qualifications checker which will also be dated to show that at the time of recruitment they could be counted in ratios if applicable
- Prior to employment but after the job has been offered, a health check questionnaire will be given to the employee, and its results will be taken into account in making an overall decision about suitability. The nursery reserves the right to take any further advice necessary in relation to a person's physical and mental fitness to carry out their role. Please see the staff Absence Management procedure for more details about how the nursery manages health problems including access to medical records
- 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 nursery and they will not have unsupervised access to any child or children's records before this check comes back clear. Further to this, without an up-to-date enhanced DBS check, the new starter will not be allowed to take photographs of any child, look at their Tapestry account/IEP or change the nappy of any child (whether supervised or not). As far as possible the new starter will undertake induction tasks/courses during the wait for the DBS, and if they are in contact with children will never be left on their own with them
- 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 nursery will record and retain details about individuals, including staff qualifications, identity checks carried out and the vetting process completed. This will include the DBS reference number, the date the disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it. The nursery will not retain copies of the disclosure itself once the employment decision is taken
- All reference checks will be logged, including the person who undertook the check, what was checked and who was spoken to, the information shared and any decisions taken based on the information gained
- There may be occasions when a DBS check is not clear, but the individual is still suitable to work with children (see Recruitment of Ex-Offenders section below). This will be treated on an individual case basis and at the

director's discretion, in conjunction with advice obtained from Human Resources taking the following into account:

- 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
- Staff who choose not to register with the update system will be required to have a new DBS every 3 years, and sign a suitability declaration annually, to ensure continued suitability
- All DBS expenses are at the expense of the staff member. If the nursery pays the expense initially, this will be recouped in the next payroll
- New starters are required to sign a suitability declaration to state that they have no criminal convictions, court orders or any other reasons that disqualify them from working with children or identify that they are unsuitable to do so
- All new members of staff will undergo an intensive induction period during which time they will read and discuss the nursery policies and procedures and be assigned a mentor who will introduce them to the way in which the nursery operates and complete a range of occupational competencies in order to ensure that they can complete the requirements of the job description
- During their induction period all new staff will receive training on how to safeguard children in their care and follow the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy, Inclusion and Equality policy and Health and Safety policy.
- 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 and will put this in writing to the staff member by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> month if this is the case
- The new member of staff will have regular meetings with the manager and/or their mentor during their induction period to discuss their progress, support required and/or further training and professional

development opportunities (at end of weeks one, six and 12 and 24 at a minimum)

## 5. **Delayed DBS checks**

- Where possible, staff will have the checks completed prior to starting employment. As long as the DBS check has been applied for, if there are delays in the results coming through, staff may work in the nursery before these checks are completed as a last resort, but they must be supervised at all times by staff who already hold an enhanced check, and will be primarily undertaking induction activities/training. All nursery 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
  - 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 Tapestry log, but can contribute to it via another staff member
  - 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 nursery day.

## 6. **Ongoing support and checks**

- All staff are responsible for notifying the manager in person if 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 declaration and within supervision and appraisal meetings). This includes any incidents occurring outside the nursery. Staff will face disciplinary action should they fail to notify the manager **immediately**
- We act on any information that comes to our attention that suggests someone may no longer be suitable for their role
- All members of staff will update a health questionnaire on a regular 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 supervision meetings. Management may require this more regularly where health circumstances change and/or when reasonable adjustments are being made for staff and may request a new health questionnaire is completed early. There are more details about how the nursery deals with any health problems in the Absence Management procedure

- The nursery manager 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 procedure for further details
- Every member of staff will have two meetings a year with a manager/senior staff member: an annual appraisal and midyear appraisal review. 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, assistant manager and room leaders will be responsible for any support the staff team may have between these reviews. This includes mentor support, supervisions, one-to-one training sessions, ongoing supervision, work-based observations and constructive feedback
- We will ensure staff receive continuous support, training and supervision from management in order to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment for all children in the nursery
- See Staff Development Policy for further information.

## **7. Students and Agency/Supply Staff**

- 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 request confirmation that all necessary checks have been completed by the agency before using any supply or agency staff. Once checks are obtained, we record the DBS check reference number, the date the check was obtained and details of who obtained it
- We have a short induction prior to students/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 or undertake nappy changes until the



manager has given explicit consent for this having seen the quality of their interactions over time

- 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.

### **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders**

- As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), La Petite Academy complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly
- We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed
- We only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended) and only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
- We are committed to the fair treatment of our staff, potential staff or users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background
- We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records
- We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience in line with the requirements of the job description and person specification
- An application for a criminal record check is submitted to DBS after a conditional job offer is made for all positions due to the vulnerability of the children in the setting.
- We ensure that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences (e.g. via NSPCC safer recruitment training or in-house training)

- We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment
- We make every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of this code of practice and make a copy available on request
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- We will always discuss any concerns regarding the outcome of a DBS check with Human Resources to ensure that all legal requirements are followed.

### **Staff Code of Conduct**

We take the safety and welfare of our children and staff seriously and expect staff to behave in an appropriate manner to act as a role model for and protect all children in their care. We also ensure that any changes to staff behaviours or ways of working are closely monitored, discussed and supported to ensure all children are safeguarded throughout their time here.

### **Expected staff behaviour**

Within our nursery we expect our staff to:

- Put our children first. The safety, welfare and ongoing development of children is the most important part of their role
- Behave as a positive role model for the children in their care by remaining professional at all times and demonstrating caring attitudes to all
- Work as part of the wider team, cohesively and openly
- Be aware of their requirements under the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and the nursery policies and procedures designed to keep children safe from harm whilst teaching children and supporting their early development
- React appropriately to any safeguarding concerns quickly and concisely in accordance with relevant procedures and training received
- Not share any confidential information relating to the children, nursery or families using the nursery

- Maintain the public image of the nursery and do nothing that will put the setting into disrepute
- Ensure that parental relationships are professional and external social relationships are not forged. If a relationship exists prior to the child starting at the setting, discussions with management will be held to ensure the relationship remains professional
- Adhere to the Use of Technology and Internet policy
- Report to management immediately any changes in their personal life that may impact on the ability to continue the role. These may include (but are not limited to) changes in police record, medication or any social service involvement with their own children.

All staff are expected to follow our Behaviour Code, which is signed at induction, and outlines the conduct that La Petite Academy expects from all our staff and volunteers.

The Behaviour Code is in place to help us protect children and young people from abuse. It has been informed by the views of children and young people and has been adapted from the NSPCC example code.

### **Monitoring staff behaviour**

Within the nursery we:

- Conduct regular peer observations using all staff and management, during which we observe interactions between staff and children
- Have regular supervisions with all staff in which ongoing suitability is monitored and recorded
- Have a Whistleblowing policy that enables team members to discuss confidentially any concerns about their colleagues
- Operate staff suitability checks and have clauses in staff contracts to ensure any changes in their suitability to work with children are reported immediately to management
- Ensure all new staff members are deemed suitable with the appropriate checks as detailed above

Some behaviours that may cause concern and will be investigated further include:

- Change in moods
- Sudden change in religious beliefs and/or cultural beliefs (which may indicate radicalisation)

- Changes in the way they act towards the children or the other members of the team (becoming more friendly and close, isolation, avoidance, agitation etc.)
- Sudden outbursts
- Becoming withdrawn
- Secretive behaviours
- Missing shifts, calling in sick more often, coming in late
- Standards in work slipping
- Extreme changes in appearance.

If we have a concern about changes in staff behaviour within the nursery, or non-adherence to the Behaviour Code, an immediate meeting will be called with the individual and a member of management to ascertain how the person is feeling and the reasons for this. We will aim to support the staff wherever possible and will put support mechanisms in place where appropriate.

Ultimately, we wish to ensure all staff are able to continue to work with the children as long as they are suitable to do so, but if any behaviours cause concern regarding the safety or welfare of the children then the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy will be followed. In the case of allegations against a staff member, the Local Authority Designated officer (LADO) will be contacted.

All conversations, observations and notes on the staff member will be logged on a discussion log and kept confidentially in their personnel file.

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
09/05/25	<i>Seren Brown</i>	30/04/28