

Recruitment and Suitability Policy

Statement of Intent

We are committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure that every person working or learning within our nursery schools are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role and be in regular contact with children. We have an effective recruitment process as well as a commitment to regularly monitor everyone's continued suitability.

Aims

- ★ To recruit the highest-quality staff who share our safeguarding values.
- ★ To ensure fairness, transparency, and equality throughout recruitment.
- ★ To meet all legal requirements under the EYFS, DBS, and Equality Act 2010.

Methods

Recruitment procedures

We follow 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. Every time we recruit a new member of staff, including Apprentices, we follow these procedures:

Advertising and shortlisting

- ★ We advertise opportunities on Education Job Finder, Norfolk Early Years and Childcare Jobs (private Facebook Group created by Norfolk County Council), our own public Once upon a time Facebook page and our Careers page on Once upon a times website.
- ★ We ensure that all opportunities are accompanied by a Job Description and a Person Specification.
- ★ We clarify the requirement for an enhanced DBS check, at least three suitable references, that our positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and that we look for people who want to share our safeguarding responsibilities.
- ★ Applicants must inform us at application stage if they have any criminal convictions or cautions, spent or unspent, as set out in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and/or any police proceedings impending or outstanding.
- ★ Applications are shortlisted against job criteria, their qualifications, experience and the quality of supporting statements.
- ★ We frequently receive a high volume of applications for one position. In these cases, quality and full applications are prioritised to be contacted. This means, not all applications will result in contact from a manager.
- ★ We welcome applications from all communities and make decisions based on suitability only.
- ★ We do not discriminate based on age, gender, marital status, culture, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

Interview process

- ★ There will be at least two people involved in the interview process and overall decision making. Everyone part of the interviewing team has completed Safer Recruitment training.
- ★ 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 cover any gaps in the candidate's employment history shown on their application.
- ★ All candidates reaching interview stage are questioned using the same set criteria and questions, which have been tailored to the role they are applying for. These include safeguarding, planning suitable activities to enhance the child's development and their understanding of the legal frameworks. The questions are heavily 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, plus delve into their working style and experiences.
- ★ If the candidate has demonstrated sound knowledge, experience and communication skills during the question and answer interview, they will be asked to spend 30-45 minutes in the nursery, alongside staff, to assess their natural interaction and engagement with the children.

- ★ Following the first interview, candidates will be given a score for their answers based on their individual experience, qualifications and engagement.
- ★ After the first interview, shortlisted candidates will be asked to return to the nursery for a second interview. This is a practical interview, spending 2 – 3 hours within the nursery, interacting with the children and team.
- ★ In addition, a 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 two managers interviewing will select the most suitable person for this position based on their scores, their knowledge and values, their understanding of the early year's framework and their natural ability with children.
- ★ Every candidate interviewed will receive communication from the nursery stating whether they have been successful or not. Unsuccessful candidates are offered feedback.

Conditional job offers

All job offers are conditional. They are subject to:

- ★ Three references from previous employment or, in the case of a newly qualified student or Apprentice, a mixture of both professional and character references are acceptable. These references must be to an acceptable standard and meet the requirements for references as set out in the EYFS under 'Suitable people'. Any questionable feedback or past high absences found within a reference will be discussed and explored with the individual by a manager.
- ★ Enhanced DBS check (and overseas checks if applicable). If the individual has registered to the Update Service managers may use the update service with the candidate's permission instead of carrying out an enhanced DBS check.
- ★ Joining the Update Service and maintaining an annual membership.
- ★ There may be occasions when a DBS check is not clear, but the individual is still suitable to work with children. This will be treated on an individual case basis and at a director's discretion 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
- ★ An additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) should also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.
- ★ Proof of suitable qualifications.
- ★ 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.

Induction and probation

Please see the Staffing, Development and Training Policy which explains the welcoming and onboarding of all new staff. All new staff have a six-month probation period during which suitability for the position they have been appointed will be assessed. The nursery reserves the right to extend the probationary period if necessary.

Ongoing support and checks

- ★ Staff must maintain their membership with the Update Service. If this lapses, a new Enhanced DBS will be completed, so the staff member may re-join. Manager's check for any changes to staff's Update Service every six to eight weeks.
- ★ Every six to eight weeks staff are asked to sign a suitability declaration confirming if there have been any changes to their circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children, including any criminal convictions or disqualifications.
- ★ All staff are responsible for notifying their manager if this occurs between these declarations. This includes any incidents occurring outside the nursery. Staff will face disciplinary action should they fail to notify the manager **immediately**.

- ★ We act and investigate on any information that comes to our attention that suggests someone may no longer be suitable for their role. We have a separate Whistleblowing Policy for our staff to follow.
- ★ Every six – eight weeks staff are asked to sign a declaration in regard to any health changes that may require support or additional resources to aid them to carry out their day-to-day duties. Management may require this more regularly where health circumstances change.
- ★ A Director 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.

Students, Volunteers and Bank team

Throughout the year we sometimes support students studying towards an Early Years qualification. We occasionally offer placements for prospective Adoptive parents. All students and volunteers 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 and volunteers will be fully supervised to ensure they receive the appropriate support, training and information they may require.

We have a small team of Bank Early Years Practitioners, who we sometimes call on to support the three settings. Their recruitment process mirrors the process for permanent team members and Apprentices.

Every person working, learning or volunteering within the nursery must provide or complete enhanced DBS and suitability checks before starting. Students, volunteers or Bank team members are always supervised by experienced members of the team and never left alone with children.

This policy was adopted by Once upon a time nursery school

Date: 1 September 2025

Signed on behalf of the nursery

To be reviewed: Annually or sooner if any matters arise