**Employment - 4.1 Employment and Staffing**

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**Policy Statement**

Little Apples of Bramley is a responsible employer, recognising our responsibility and legal obligations to our staff as well as the children and families of Little Apples. As an organisation that employs people to work with children, we are required morally and by law to Safeguard children. By having robust safer recruitment policies and procedures in place, we minimise the risk of employing anyone who may pose a risk to children. Those responsible for recruitment need to demonstrate their understanding of safer recruitment practices and that these are followed when employing all staff not only early years’ practitioners. Those responsible for organising, deploying and supervising staff recognise that the effectiveness with which these roles are carried out directly impact the safety of children and the quality of their educational experience at Little Apples, as well as the well-being of our employees and volunteers.

**Ratios and staffing procedure**

Little Apples of Bramley provides a staffing ratio in accordance with the Welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. To meet this aim we use the following ratios of adult to children: children aged two years of age: 1 adult: 4 children; and children aged three to seven years of age: 1 adult: 8 children.

A minimum of two staff/adults must be present when children are on site. A minimum of three staff are deployed for each session to ensure this requirement can be met in an emergency, for example accompanying a child to hospital.

**Staff deployment**

The following issues are considered:

Number of children attending each session and their ages.

Additional requirements for children with additional needs.

A qualified first aider must be present at all times.

A manager or a deputy should be always present.

The DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or deputy must be contactable when the setting is open.

Staff length of service, qualifications and experience.

Staff take their breaks away from the children, usually in the staff kitchen or other non-child zone.

**Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies**

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. A self-certification form must be completed upon return to work.

Sick leave is monitored and action is taken where necessary in accordance with the contract of employment. In order to cover sick leave, staff understand that they may be asked to cover at short notice. The manager/senco and business manager may be considered in the ratios, where this is not already the case.

**Vetting and staff selection**

We promote equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection. Applicants will be considered based on their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by our imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable. There is a requirement that all staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care. In addition, they should be sufficiently literate to generate observations, keep adequate records and liaise with parents. This is assessed throughout the recruitment process and during probation. Where possible, and if sufficiency in English is questionable, staff will be asked to produce a GCSE or equivalent level certificate of achievement.

We use Ofsted guidance on obtaining references and enhanced criminal record checks through the Disclosure and barring service for staff and volunteers. This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for the vetting and barring scheme. DBS checks are renewed every five years, which exceeds our legal obligation. As DBS checks are obtained, staff are supplied with details of the update service. Where staff are enrolled on the Update service, the information on their certificate is checked every five years, using this service. This replaces the need to obtain a new DBS check.

Our recruitment process has been established to obtain a full history for candidates as follows:

1. Positions are advertised and this specifies the need for a clear DBS check and the necessary qualifications.
2. Applicants are provided with a full job description and must complete an application form. A CV alone is insufficient.
3. Public on-line searches. Where candidates are shortlisted for interview, an on-line search for any public records including public social media accounts is undertaken. Interview is not declined on the results of the search alone, but the search may give rise to important questions for interview. Safeguarding information found may need to be advised to LADO
4. Interview. Questions are prepared in advance and any gaps in employment history must be explained. Understanding of and attitude to Safeguarding must be established. Interview notes must be retained.
5. References. A minimum of 2 must be obtained, including from the last employer. This must specifically ask about suitability to work with children. The authenticity of these are confirmed by phone, using numbers confirmed from websites.
6. Second interview or trial session, if required.
7. Position is offered subject to clear DBS.
8. Commence probation period once clear DBS seen. Induction interview to be carried out immediately with the safeguarding policy discussed. Issue of staff handbook which contains important safeguarding information,
9. Supervision interviews, at least termly. We conclude the induction period after a minimum of 6 weeks. Safeguarding, first aid and other training booked as required.
10. Supervision interviews every term.

**Changes to staff**

We inform Ofsted of any changes in the person responsible for our setting. We update website, parents and documents such as the Prospectus in a timely fashion with all staff changes.

**Induction**

We provide staff induction training in the first week of employment. This includes providing the staff handbook which features key safeguarding information.

Induction includes:

Introductions to all staff and volunteers, including management committee members.

Familiarising with the building, health and safety and fire procedures.

Ensuring our policies and procedures have been read and are carried out.

Introduction to parents, especially parents of allocated key children where appropriate.

Familiarising them with confidential information where applicable in relation to any key children.

Details of the tasks and daily routines to be completed.

The induction period lasts two weeks. The manager inducts new staff and volunteers. The chairperson or senior manager inducts new managers.

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.

**Supervision Policy**

The Early Years’ Foundation Stage (September 2012 and subsequent revisions) places an increased emphasis on welfare and safeguarding standards, stipulating that regular staff supervision is now a statutory requirement. As we strive to improve outcomes for all children and families, and narrow the gap in achievement of vulnerable children, safe systems and the effective management of staff performance and well-being are of prime importance. It is important to embrace the process of supervision as an effective tool for supporting staff members, developing personal and professional skills and creating a culture of mutual support and teamwork.

Supervision will provide the following:

A named supervisor for all members of staff. Supervisors are currently Joanne Whatley and Karen Totterdell.

Opportunities to raise any professional queries, to discuss career progression, to clarify roles, responsibilities and work tasks, to support performance management and to build their confidence in supporting children’s development.

Opportunities for practitioners to raise any concerns that they might have about children in their care, and to receive support to help them deal with difficult or challenging situations at work.

Procedure

Responsibilities of supervisor

Meetings to be arranged at least termly, with time and date provided in advance, where possible. The venue should be private and acceptable to the supervisee.

Cover the following topics as a minimum:

* Safeguarding
* Inclusion
* Personal development & training
* Developing learning and practice
* Staff wellbeing including issues of workload

Record the meeting and provide supervisee with copy.

Responsibilities of supervisee

Be ready to share their thoughts and ideas in the meeting.

Disclose any safeguarding concerns. Where employees feel they cannot share this with their supervisor, they understand their responsibility to share with the DSL, chair of committee, LADO or Child services.

Talk openly about what has gone well and what has been challenging.

Be prepared to plan and undertake training and other development activities as agreed with their supervisor.

Read and agree the notes from the meeting and carry out any required actions.

**Appraisals**

A performance appraisal should be carried out for all employees annually. This will usually be in combination with the Spring term Supervision interview.

The objectives of the appraisal process are to:

* Review and evaluate individual performance in relation to job roles and responsibilities.
* Identify strengths and accomplishments in the employee’s contribution to the Little Apples environment.
* Set and monitor professional development goals to enhance skills and knowledge.
* Provide constructive feedback to support ongoing professional growth.
* Ensure alignment with Little Apples ethos, values, and educational standards.

Appraisal process

* Self-Assessment: Employees will complete a self-assessment form reflecting on their achievements, challenges, and professional development needs.
* Appraisal: A formal meeting between the employee and the Manager/Business Manager to discuss the self-assessment, review performance, and provide feedback.
* Goal Setting: Based on the review, employees and the Manager/Business Manager will set clear, achievable goals for the next appraisal period.
* Mid-Year Review (optional): A mid-year informal check-in to discuss progress towards goals and provide support if needed.

Performance Criteria

Performance will be evaluated based on specific criteria, including but not limited to:

* Effectiveness in planning and delivering the curriculum
* Ability to create a nurturing and engaging learning environment
* Communication with children, parents and colleagues
* Professional behaviour and adherence to Little Apples policies and staff handbook
* Participation in professional development activities

Feedback and Support

Constructive feedback will be provided during appraisal meetings. Manager/Business Manager will support employees in achieving their goals by offering:

* Opportunities for training and professional development.
* Access to relevant resources and support materials

Documentation

All appraisal documents, including self-assessments, observation reports, performance review notes will be stored confidentially in each employee’s personnel file. These documents will be for reference in future appraisals and for tracking professional development.

Confidentiality

The appraisal process is confidential. Discussions and documentation will be handled with the utmost discretion, ensuring personal and performance information are only accessible to the relevant Managers.

Appeals

If an employee disagrees with their appraisal outcome, they may request a further meeting with the Manager/Business Manager to discuss their concerns.

**Supporting staff welfare**

We hold regular staff meetings to keep staff up to date with current information regarding Little Apples and the wider professional environment, undertake curriculum planning and to discuss children's progress, and any issues that may arise from time to time. Staff are encouraged to contribute information and suggestions.

Staff are supported by regular supervision meeting with a member of the management team, where wellbeing and workload pressures are specifically discussed. Staff can bring personal issues, for example mental health issues, drug or alcohol misuse or domestic difficulties including domestic abuse to the meeting with confidence that all discussions are entirely confidential. Managers will support including signposting to appropriate support. Depending on the circumstances of the individual case, this may lead to a performance assessment, at which time our employment policies and procedures will apply.

**Training and staff development**

Our setting managers and deputies hold a minimum of the CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Pre-school Practice or an equivalent qualification and a minimum of half of our staff hold the CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Pre-school Practice or an equivalent or higher qualification.

We provide regular in-service training to all staff - whether paid staff or volunteers - through the Pre-school Learning Alliance and external agencies.

Statutory training e.g. First Aid and Safeguarding will be paid for by Little Apples. Further curriculum training will be offered and paid for by Little Apples as CPD requires. Level 2 and 3 qualifications are normally expected to be self-funded, whether independently, by student loan, grant or bursary. Little Apples will consider applications to help fund studies of Level 4 and above on a case by case basis. This support may be part or all of the cost of the course and will be conditional on the candidate remaining employed by Little Apples for a minimum of 18 months after the qualification is achieved. Little Apples will only support one candidate at a time and the onus is on motivated staff to approach the committee / management team.

Our setting budget allocates resources to training.

We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings and appraisals.

We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.

**Student Placements**

This 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 for students on placement with us experiences that contribute to the successful completion of their studies and that provide examples of quality practice in early years care and education.

Procedures

Students must abide by our policies and procedures.

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

We require schools placing students with the setting to vouch for their good character.

We always supervise students and do not allow them to be unsupervised with the 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 may be included in the ratios if they are deemed competent.

We take out employers' liability insurance and public liability insurance, which covers both trainees and voluntary helpers.

We provide students, at the first session of their placement, with our induction programme on how our setting is managed, how our sessions are organised and our policies and procedures. This emphasises the importance of confidentiality and our Safeguarding 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 and students placed with us are engaged in bona fide early years training, which provides the necessary background understanding of children's development and activities.

We co-operate with students' tutors in order to help students to fulfil the requirements of their course of study.

**Providing Employment References**

**Policy Statement**

This policy outlines the procedure for providing reference requests for current and former employees of Little Apples of Bramley. It is designed to protect the pre-school from liability, safeguard employee privacy, and ensure consistent, factual responses.

**Procedure**

This policy applies to all reference requests received for current or former employees of Little Apples of Bramley, regardless of the request source (potential employers, agencies, etc.).

Little Apples will only verify employment dates and job titles for reference requests. No additional information, including job performance, reasons for leaving, or character assessments, will be provided.

**Receiving a Reference Request**

* All reference requests should be directed to the Business Manager.
* Employees or managers who receive reference inquiries should not respond directly but should forward the request to the Business Manager.

**Verification Process**

* The Business Manager will confirm the identity of the requesting party to ensure legitimacy.
* The requesting party will be informed that only dates of employment and job titles will be disclosed, as per policy.

**Providing Employment Information**

* Employment Dates: Only the start and end dates of employment will be provided.
* Job Title (s): Only the position(s) held by the employee during their tenure will be confirmed.
* No Additional Information: Information about job performance, attendance, or reasons for termination or resignation will not be disclosed.
* Exception: We have a duty to advise potential employers if we feel a candidate is unfit to work with children or may represent a risk to children.

**Documentation**

* All reference requests and responses will be documented, including the name of the requesting party, date of request, and information provided.
* Documentation will be stored securely for the required retention period.

**Staff Resignation Process**

**Policy Statement**

At Little Apples of Bramley, we are committed to ensuring a fair, respectful, and inclusive process for employees who choose to resign from their position. This policy specifically applies to voluntary resignations and aims to support a smooth and professional transition for both the departing employee and the organisation, while recognising and valuing the contributions of every individual.

**Procedure**

**Notification**

When a staff member formally resigns from their position, an email will be sent by the manager to all team members to inform them of the resignation. This communication will be handled professionally and respectfully, providing the date of departure and expressing appreciation for the staff member’s contribution.

**Acknowledgement**

All departing staff will be recognised as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| **Length of Service** | **Reward** |
| Under 2 years | Thank You Card and Flowers |
| 2 – 5 years | Thank You Card, Flowers, and a Gift (up to £50 in value, non-cash) |
| 5 – 10 years | Personalised Gift (up to £100), Thank You Card, Flowers |
| 10 – 20 years | Personalised Gift (up to £150), Thank You Card, Flowers, and Team Lunch |
| 20+ years | Personalised Gift (up to £200), Thank You Card, Flowers and Team Lunch |

**Gifts and Collections**

No monetary collections or gift will be organised from staff members.

**Presentation**

Presentation to the departing staff member will be made by the children of the pre-school, under the supervision of staff. This reinforces the connection between staff and the children and allows the children to take part in a meaningful goodbye.

**Communication and Consistency**

All staff will be informed of this process upon induction and reminded of it when a colleague is due to leave.

This process will be applied consistently to all staff to ensure fairness, transparency, and the fostering of an inclusive workplace culture.

**Exit Interview**

**Policy Statement**

Little Apples of Bramley values the insights and feedback of departing employees. Exit interviews will be conducted to:

* Identify reasons for departure.
* Understand employee perspectives on work environment, management, and organisational culture.
* Gather constructive feedback to improve retention and engagement strategies.

**Responsibility:**

The Manager and Business Manager is responsible for conducting exit interviews, maintaining confidentiality, and analysing trends from the feedback provided.

**Notification of Exit Interview:**

* Employees will be informed that participation is voluntary but encouraged.
* A copy of the Exit Interview form will be sent to the employee 1 week prior to the exit interview, to allow the employee time to review and complete.

**Scheduling the Interview:**

* The exit interview will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time, preferably during the employee’s final week.

**Interview Format:**

The exit interview will follow a structured format to ensure consistency while allowing room for open-ended feedback.

Topics covered will include:

* + - Reasons for leaving.
    - Job satisfaction and challenges.
    - Relationship with management and colleagues.
    - Suggestions for organisational improvement.

**Confidentiality:**

* Feedback provided during the exit interview will be kept confidential and used for internal purposes only.
* Specific comments will not be attributed to the employee without their consent.

**Documentation and Analysis:**

* The Business Manager will document the feedback from each exit interview.
* The Business Manager and Manager will analyse trends and common themes, as required and share with the committee for action planning.

**Follow-Up:**

If issues requiring immediate attention are raised during the interview, The Manager and Business Manager will address them promptly and escalate as necessary.

**Guidance**

EYFS Statutory Framework <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/DRAFT-EYFS-Framework-for-comment-February-2021.pdf>

Employment Rights Act 1996 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/18/contents>

National Minimum Wage Act 1998 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/39/contents>

Employment Relations Act 1999 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/26/contents>

The Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3312/contents>

Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2000/1551/contents>

The Equality Act 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>

Ofsted – Inspecting safeguarding in the early years <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills>

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| **This policy was adopted by Little Apples of Bramley** |
| **On 6th September 2021** |
| **Date to be reviewed** |
| **Signed on behalf of the management committee *J V Whatley*** |
| **Name of signatory J V Whatley** |
| **Role of signatory Manager** |