

**Safer Recruitment
Policy**

**Safer Recruitment
Policy
(2025–2026)**

Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Paradise Early Years Nursery we are committed to ensuring that all recruitment, selection and ongoing suitability procedures are conducted in a way that **safeguards and promotes the welfare of children**. This commitment includes preventing unsuitable people from working with children, and ensuring that everyone who works in or on behalf of the nursery is properly vetted, trained and supported.

This policy is underpinned by and compliant with:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- All other relevant legislation, including equality, data protection, immigration, education and childcare regulations

We will ensure that our processes reflect up-to-date safeguarding practice, including recognition of emerging risks (such as online harms, disinformation, AI-enabled risks, children missing education, exploitation) as flagged in KCSIE 2025.

2. Aims

The aims of this Recruitment & Suitability Policy are to:

- Recruit and select individuals who are **suitable to work with children** and whose values align with our safeguarding and welfare commitment.
- Implement robust and transparent recruitment and selection procedures that actively deter, identify and exclude unsuitable individuals.
- Ensure compliance with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements relating to recruitment, selection, induction, ongoing suitability, record-keeping and safer working practices.
- Foster and maintain a culture of continuous vigilance and safeguarding awareness within the nursery, so that the welfare of children remains central at all times.

Safer Recruitment Policy

3. Pre-Recruitment Procedures

Job Descriptions & Person Specifications

- All job descriptions will include a clear statement about the role's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare, and that the successful candidate will undergo safer recruitment checks.
- Person specifications will identify the essential and desirable criteria relating to skills, experience, attitudes (especially safeguarding attitudes), and qualifications.

Advertising & Application

- The advertisement for each role will state our commitment to safeguarding children and that we follow safer recruitment procedures.
- Applicants must complete a full application form which includes: full personal details, employment history (with no unexplained gaps), qualifications, a statement of suitability to work with children, and a declaration of any criminal convictions (subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended).
- The application form will clearly state that omissions or misleading information may lead to withdrawal of an offer or dismissal.
- At application stage, candidates will self-declare any criminal convictions, cautions, or relevant safeguarding incidents.

Shortlisting

- Shortlisting will be carried out by at least two people and will match candidate applications against the person specification (including safeguarding suitability).
- Short-list documentation will record reasons for inclusion/exclusion, to ensure transparency and to deter unsuitable candidates.

4. Selection Process

- The interview panel will include at least one person who has received accredited "Safer Recruitment" training. (KCSIE 2025 emphasises the importance of trained staff in safer recruitment).
- Interviews will be structured, covering both role-specific and safeguarding questions (for example: children's welfare responsibilities, managing boundaries, online safety awareness, recognising signs of abuse/exploitation).

Safer Recruitment Policy

- We may include practical tasks or scenario discussions relevant to the early years setting and safeguarding responsibilities.
- At interview, any gaps in employment will be challenged and verified; the candidate will be asked to explain any safeguarding-related matters.
- Following selection, a **conditional offer** will be made subject to satisfactory completion of all pre-employment checks (see Section 5).

5. Pre-Employment Checks

No candidate will be permitted to commence unsupervised work with children until all relevant checks and verifications are completed satisfactorily. These include:

- An **Enhanced DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check** including **children's barred list** check (for those in regulated activity).
- Verification of **identity**, including photographic ID and proof of address.
- Verification of **right to work in the UK** (in line with immigration legislation).
- Verification of **qualifications** (where relevant for the role) and professional registration as required.
- At least two **professional references**, including the most recent employer, that comment on suitability to work with children, disciplinary history (where relevant) and confirm employment dates/role.
- **Online/social media check**: We will consider any publicly available online information about shortlisted candidates which may raise concerns about suitability (in line with KCSIE 2025 guidance on "other checks that may be necessary").
- If a candidate has lived or worked overseas, we will obtain **overseas criminal records checks or equivalent**, and verify employment history/employer references from those jurisdictions (where applicable).
- Ensure that the candidate is **not subject to any prohibition, direction, sanction or restriction** issued by a regulatory or legal body (for example, teacher prohibition orders).
- Record all checks, verifications and decisions in personnel records, including dates and who carried out the check.
- If for any reason an individual begins employment before all checks are completed, a **risk assessment** will be undertaken, they will work under supervision and access to children will be restricted until all checks are cleared.

Safer Recruitment Policy

6. Induction & Training

- All new staff, volunteers and agency/supply personnel will receive a robust **induction programme** covering: the nursery safeguarding policy and procedures, child protection, safe working practices, staff code of conduct, online safety, boundaries, whistle-blowing procedures, roles of DSL/DDSL, and other relevant nursery policies.
- The induction will specifically cover current safeguarding risks, including child sexual exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, online harms (including misinformation/disinformation, AI-based risks) — as flagged in KCSIE 2025.
- Ongoing training will be provided: all staff must receive refresher safeguarding training at least annually (or more frequently if new developments occur).
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies will receive specialist training in line with statutory guidance, and their knowledge and skills will be updated at least every two years (or more often as required).
- Records of induction, training attendance, updates and competencies will be maintained and reviewed.

7. Ongoing Staff Suitability

- All members of staff (including volunteers, supply staff) will be required to complete an **annual suitability declaration**, confirming that nothing has occurred in their personal or professional lives which might affect their suitability to work with children (for example: new convictions, disciplinary investigations, safeguarding concerns, changes in health affecting role, barring list inclusion).
- Staff must immediately inform management of any change in circumstances which could impact their suitability (for example being charged with a criminal offence, being subject to a safeguarding investigation, change in health or professional registration).
- The nursery will maintain continual oversight of staff conduct and suitability — through regular supervision, performance management, appraisals, safe-working observations, and adherence to the staff code of conduct.
- Where a staff member's role changes (for example working unsupervised with children for the first time), a suitability/risk assessment will be carried out.
- Records of suitability monitoring and concerns will be retained in personnel files.

Safer Recruitment Policy

8. Safer Recruitment for Volunteers, Agency, Supply and Contractors

- Any volunteer, supply, agency worker or contractor who has **unsupervised access** to children will undergo appropriate pre-employment checks equivalent to those for employed staff (including DBS, barred list, identity, reference).
- Where volunteers or contractors do **not** have unsupervised access (i.e., are always supervised by a vetted member of staff), a risk assessment will be undertaken and appropriate supervision arrangements put in place consistent with KCSIE 2025.
- The nursery will ensure any agency or contractor engaged provides written confirmation that they have carried out all required checks on their personnel, and will notify the nursery of any safeguarding concerns or changes in circumstances.
- The nursery maintains a register of all volunteers, agency and contractor personnel, including details of checks, dates and supervision arrangements.

9. Record-Keeping and Data Protection

- We will keep detailed and secure records of all recruitment and vetting activity for each member of staff, volunteer or agency worker, including application forms, interview records, references, identity/qualification verification, DBS/barred list results, training records, suitability declarations, and any investigations or disciplinary actions.
- We will maintain a **single central staff suitability record** or spreadsheet which shows for each person: name, role, checks completed, dates, renewal dates (where applicable). This helps demonstrate overall compliance with statutory requirements.
- We will ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR when handling personal and sensitive data.
- Records will be retained for the legally required minimum period (for example, six years after employment ends where applicable) and disposed of securely when no longer needed.

Safer Recruitment Policy

10. Safe Working Practice & Behaviour Expectations

- All staff, volunteers and contractors must act in a professional manner, modelling safe practice, and adhering to the nursery's **Staff Code of Conduct** (including boundaries with children, appropriate use of mobile devices and social media, online safety).
- The nursery will ensure that staff are aware of and obey the safe working practices set out in statutory and non-statutory guidance (including but not limited to: not being alone with children in a room unless it is visible to others, not sharing personal contact details with children, not communicating with children via personal social media accounts).
- Staff must remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, online harms and wider safeguarding issues. They must **immediately report** any safeguarding concern (including concerns about another staff member) to the DSL or deputy.
- The nursery will maintain a culture of transparency, challenge, reflection and continuous improvement in safeguarding practice.

11. Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed **annually**, and sooner if there are changes in legislation, statutory guidance (such as KCSIE 2025) or nursery circumstances (for example a safeguarding incident, inspection recommendation).
- All staff will be required to read, understand and acknowledge any updates to this policy. Records will be kept of their acknowledgement.
- The review will take into account: updates to statutory guidance, the outcome of safeguarding audits, inspection feedback, internal incident reviews, and emerging safeguarding trends (for example online safety, AI risks, disinformation).
- The version date and review date will be recorded at the start of the policy.