

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement:

Suitable People - Providers must ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.

Organisation - Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Documentation - Providers must maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the settings and to meet the needs of the children

12. EMPLOYMENT and STAFFING

Policy Statement

We provide a staffing ratio in line with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that children have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality.

We provide an induction for all staff, volunteers, regular outside groups who visit and all committee members, in order to fully brief them about the setting, the families we serve, our policies and procedures, curriculum and daily practice. Our staff are appropriately qualified and we carry out enhanced checks before an applicant can start their employment. These checks being the return of 2 satisfactory references, and a completed Enhanced DBS. We follow safer recruitment practice as outlined in the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board guidelines including obtaining references and EY2 checks for committee members.

Procedures

Staff are aware that:

- Appropriate footwear with solid bases should be worn;
- Clothes should cover personal areas of the body, and any tattoos or body piercings or similar that could cause offence to others should be covered;
- Mobile devices should only be used in the kitchen area, during breaks or with permission in emergencies, otherwise they should be kept in the provided storage. All staff phones are kept in the kitchen in a drawer; they can be accessed at staff members lunchtime while in the kitchen only. Smart watches are permitted to be used by staff if they are unable to take photos in isolation as a watch. The tablets we use for Tapestry are password protected and are only have the Tapestry App on them which is used to make observations for the learning journals. Tapestry is also password protected.;
- Adults should not work when under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substance abuse;
- Adults should not smoke in or around the pre-school;
- Adults should not swear or use offensive language;
- Hot drinks are only consumed in the kitchen area when pre-school is in session
- Hair should be tied back when cooking or handling food.
- Expectations of them if absent from work.

Ratios

- At each session there will be at least 1 qualified childcare worker with enough staff to adhere to the correct adult : child ratio. The ratio we use is:
 - children aged two years of age: 1 adult : 4 children; and
 - children aged three to five years of age: 1 adult : 8 children.
- A minimum of two staff/adults are on duty at any one time.
- We use a key person approach to ensure that each child has a named member of staff with whom to form a relationship and who plans with parents/carers for the child's well-being and development in the setting. The key person is available to meet with the family for discussion and consultation on their child's progress.
- We hold regular staff meetings to undertake curriculum planning and to discuss children's progress, their achievements and any difficulties that may arise from time to time.

Vetting and staff selection

- We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- All vacancies to be advertised at our setting and web page, locally using notice boards etc. local social media groups, and Norfolk County Councils Recruitment Tools. All posts should have an up-to-date job description and person specification.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. All applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by our imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.
- Short listing and interviews will be carried out by the manager and 1 or 2 other suitable people (this could include Deputies, committee members and/or the chairman) in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Selected candidates will be asked to bring with them proof of identity that bears a photograph i.e., new style driving license or passport. Adults or students (whether paid or voluntary) will be advised that positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- We may use the exemption clauses in relevant legislation to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community and will advertise positions and employ staff in line with our Safeguarding Policy.
- All appointments are subject to references, the disclosure and Barring Service and DBS and a trial period (usually 3 months). This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for the vetting and barring scheme.
- New staff / volunteers will not be able to start in their position until we have received the enhanced criminal record and barred list check (DBS).
- New staff will not be put into sensitive/vulnerable positions e.g., intimate care, toilets etc.
- All staff will be given an induction as to their responsibilities for duty of care.
- All applicants must be made aware and understand that anything they do whether at Playgroup or outside of work may reflect on how Playgroup is viewed and therefore should not partake in anything that may be seen as bringing Playgroup into disrepute.
- All staff have job descriptions which set out their staff roles and responsibilities.
- We keep all records relating to employment of staff and volunteers, in particular those proving that checks have been done, including the date and number of the enhanced DBS check.
- We will inform Ofsted of any changes to our team, and when necessary, the person responsible for our setting.

Obtaining references

As part of our commitment to safer recruitment Feltwell Playgroup will always obtain references from applicants for roles in our setting. Robust recruitment checks are essential to ensuring that unsuitable persons cannot have contact with children through employment with us.

Obtaining references is an essential element of our recruitment process. We will always obtain a reference prior to employment commencing in line with the requirements of the EYFS as follows:

- Our application process requires candidates, to supply us with the contact details of a suitable referee from:
 - Their current employer, training provider or early years education and care setting
 - A senior person within the organisation who is authorised to provide a reference.
- If the applicant is not currently employed, or is not currently working with children we will:
 - Obtain verification of the applicants most recent relevant employment if they are not currently employed
 - Obtain a reference from the applicants most recent relevant employer from the last time they worked with children
- If the applicant has never worked with children we will obtain a reference from their current employer, training provider or education setting.
- We do not accept references from the following:
 - Family members
 - A generic reference i.e. 'to whom it may concern'.

Once a reference is received

- A reference received electronically will be checked to ensure that it originates from a legitimate source.

- We will compare the information on the original application form against relevant information given in the reference, for example, checking that dates align, and roles and responsibilities listed are consistent. Where this is not the case, we will take up any discrepancies with the applicant.
- If information is incomplete or we feel it is insufficient for us to make an informed decision about the applicant's suitability, we will contact the referee for clarification.
- Before an offer of employment is made, we will ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily.
- In line with best practice, we will seek to gain explanations for any gaps in employment.

Induction

- The induction period lasts two weeks. The manager and if needed chairman induct new staff and volunteers. The chairperson and deputies induct new managers and with the help of the manager and committee new chairpersons.
- During the induction period new staff and volunteers will be:
 - Introduced to other staff, volunteers, parents/carers and children and when available committee members
 - Familiarised with the building, health and safety and fire procedures.
 - Shown our policies and procedures and asked to read them and sign to say they understand them;
 - Familiarised with confidential information where applicable in relation to any key children;
 - Reminded of the details of the tasks and daily routines which were on their job description.
- 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.
- The probationary period is usually 3 months, however can be changed/extended at the employer's discretion if further assessment or support is required.
- If a member of staff is absent for more than 3 months, upon their return the manager will carry out an induction process to ensure the staff member is fully updated and ready to return to work.

Training and staff development

We are committed to raising the quality of our provision by encouraging and supporting the professional and personal development of our staff and we adhere to the requirements of the EYFS Code of Practice.

- At least 50% of staff hold the NVQ 3 in Early Years or equivalent.
- All staff undertake induction training which includes basic: health and safety, manual handling, safeguarding, behaviour management, evacuation procedure, observation and child development recording, food preparation, responsibilities of children's personal care, staffing structure, building layout, prevent training
- All staff attend training for child protection, safeguarding, first aid, prevent duty, food hygiene and behaviour management as soon as possible after employment with us and these are kept updated as required.
- We provide regular training opportunities to staff through the Pre-school Learning Alliance, Norfolk County Council and other agencies. We do not limit the amount of training that staff want to undertake but any courses that have a cost attached to them or that a staff member has to attend (i.e. not online courses) must first be agreed by the manager. Staff will be paid their hourly rate for the duration of any agreed course they attend from start time to finish time.
- We ensure that staff are confident and fully trained in first aid, administering relevant medicines and performing invasive care procedures when these are required.
- Staff have knowledge of fire prevention and regular fire drills are carried out and recorded.
- Staff are aware of their responsibilities, whilst in and out of the setting, including absences, and should an emergency occur.
- Staff attend weekly staff meetings.
- Staff are offered the opportunity to do specific training to meet the needs of individual children if necessary (i.e., communication or medical needs).
- We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings (half termly) and manager and staff appraisals (yearly). These help to identify any training or development needs of individual staff.
- The manager and chairperson are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.
- We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish;

- We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for promoting equality, valuing diversity and inclusion.
- A professional development record and copies of certificates are kept for each staff member.
- Following any training, the staff member that attended, shares relevant and useful information to the other staff during staff meetings. The training is evaluated to see if it would be worthwhile for other staff to attend. Certain training may also be evaluated to identify any impact it has on any individual, the setting, the children or the staff.
- Many of the staff have particular responsibilities i.e., Special Educational Needs, Behaviour Management, Equal Opportunities and attend training to support those roles.

Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

- Staff take their holiday breaks when the setting is closed in line with Norfolk County School term dates. Where staff may need to take time off for any reason other than sick leave or training, it must first be 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.
- We have contingency plans to cover staff absences, as follows:
 - Staff to contact the manager or if unavailable the deputies at the earliest convenience, no later than 8:00am if possible;
 - Manager or deputies to contact other staff members or relief staff to cover for sickness;
 - If no staff are available to cover, then contact the committee including the Chairperson to help with cover until alternative arrangements can be made.
- Sick leave is monitored and action is taken where necessary in accordance with staff contracts. Reason for being absent may be discussed and additional support offered if required, A member of staff's behaviour while absent may also be reviewed if seen to be not in line with expectations.
- Paid Staff may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), which is £116.75 a week (from April 2024) for up to 28 weeks, this will be in accordance with the latest Government advice (Current Government guidance link is below)

Curriculum planning meetings

- The aim of these are to plan experiences and activities for children;
- All staff will attend most planning meetings throughout the year;
- Staff planning meetings will generally be held on Mondays (term time only) from 3.30pm for approximately 1 - 1½ hours;
- Each member of staff is committed to providing evaluation and next step evidence to enable individual planning for children;
- Wherever possible, every key group will be represented at every planning meeting in some way;
- Planning will include linking evaluations/next steps to plans, preparing planning resources, linking areas of development from EYFS to plans and filling in necessary planning forms;
- Notes are to be put on the planning sheets at the meeting where possible and/or added to during staffs PPA time;
- Planning should be shared between all staff members who are responsible for key children.

Tax, National Insurance and Pension

It is the employer's duty to deal with the employee's PAYE income tax, pension and NI contributions (if payable). In our Playgroup the treasurer/admin is responsible for arranging this.

Employee obligations

To carry out the duties as outlined in their job description:

- To conform to all the policies and procedures of the Playgroup and ensure that they fully understand the implications if they do not adhere to them;
- To attend and complete training courses and to seek out training opportunities alongside the manager's and committee's recommendations to ensure they are up to date with current guidelines in all aspects of childcare;

- Notification of absence from work due to illness or any other cause should be made on the first day that the employee will be absent from work, to the Playgroup manager or chairperson. If an employee is absent for more than a working week, a doctor's certificate should be obtained;
- Employees are required to give 4 weeks' notice in writing if they decide to leave;
- Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, it is the duty of all employees to conform to policy and safety codes of practice. They have a responsibility to work safely and efficiently, to report incidents that could lead to injury or damage, to ensure that accidents are recorded in the Accident Book and to avoid interfering intentionally or recklessly with anything provided for health and safety.

Legal framework

The Employment protection act 1996 re: employee's rights.

Health and safety at work act 1974 and subsequent regulations.

Health and safety (first aid) regulations 1981.

SSP - <https://www.gov.uk/employers-sick-pay>

A120 New Employee Handbook (Alliance Publication)

A128 Recruiting Early Years Staff (Alliance Publication)

A129 People Management in the Early Years (Alliance Publication)

This policy was adopted by

Feltwell Playgroup

On

20.03.2026

Date to be reviewed

(on or before) 20.03.2027

Signed on behalf of the provider

J.I.

Name of signatory

Jonathan Irving

Role of signatory (e.g., chair, director or owner)

Committee Chairperson