

1st Step Pre-school Ltd: Safer Recruitment & Suitable People Policy

Our Commitment

1st Step Pre-school Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in our care. We are equally committed to recruiting, selecting, and retaining staff, volunteers, students, and agency workers who share this commitment.

This policy outlines the processes and checks in place to ensure that all people working or coming into contact with children are suitable to do so. It meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2025), Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Childcare Act 2006, and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.

This policy applies to:

- All staff with responsibility for caring for children, for any length of time.
- Volunteers, students, and agency staff.
- Individuals who regularly come into contact with children in a supporting capacity, at the discretion of the Directors.

Our Aims

- To deter, reject, or identify individuals unsuitable to work with children.
- To operate robust, transparent, and consistent recruitment procedures.
- To maintain a safe and secure environment for children through ongoing suitability checks and staff training.
- To ensure compliance with EYFS 2025 (3.13–3.26), safeguarding legislation, and guidance.

Recruitment Procedure

Identifying the Need

- The Managing Director/Area Manager analyses the requirements of the role, including hours, contract type, essential/desirable criteria, safeguarding responsibilities, and eligibility checks.
- Job descriptions and person specifications clearly outline duties, qualifications, and behavioural expectations.

Advertising

- Job adverts include organisation details, location, contract type, safeguarding requirements (DBS check), and equal opportunities statements.
- Vacancies may be posted on Indeed, Facebook, and other relevant channels.

Application

- Applicants must complete a full application form; CVs alone are not accepted.
- Applications include a declaration of criminal convictions or safeguarding concerns.
- All applications are scored against the person specification and job description.

Shortlisting

- The Managing Director/Area Manager reviews applications and shortlists candidates.
- An online search of shortlisted candidates may be carried out in line with statutory guidance.

Interview

- Interviews explore safeguarding knowledge, experience, values, and professional conduct.
- Candidates are asked to bring original documentation:
 - Proof of identity (passport, driving licence, birth certificate)
 - Proof of address (utility bill/bank statement dated within 3 months, council tax)
 - National Insurance number documentation
 - Qualifications
 - Evidence of right to work in the UK
 - Name change documentation if applicable
- Gaps in employment are discussed, and safeguarding-related questions are asked.

References

- A minimum of two written references are obtained before employment.
- One reference must be from the candidate's most recent employer or educational setting.
- References are verified and compared with application details; any discrepancies are addressed.

Pre-Employment Checks

- Enhanced DBS check with barred list check.
- Childcare Disqualification Declaration Form (annually).
- Health questionnaire.
- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK.
- Verification of qualifications and professional registration, if required.

Induction & Probation

- All new staff complete a structured induction programme, including:
 - Reading and signing policies and procedures.
 - Mandatory training (Safeguarding, Prevent, Health & Safety, Food Hygiene, Paediatric First Aid).
 - Mentoring and shadowing.
 - A probation period of 6 months applies.
- Staff are not allowed unsupervised access to children or intimate care tasks until:
 - DBS check is completed and clear.
 - Safeguarding training is completed.
 - Identity and references are verified.

Ongoing Suitability & Monitoring

- Staff must attend annual suitability interviews and performance reviews.
- Staff are required to immediately disclose:
 - Health issues affecting suitability.
 - Criminal proceedings, convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings, or court orders.
 - Changes in household members that may affect disqualification.
- Directors may conduct additional checks and address concerns under safeguarding or disciplinary procedures.

Enhanced DBS Checks

- All staff must have an enhanced DBS check with barred list check.
- Staff must register with the DBS Update Service (£16 annually, payable by staff) for ongoing monitoring.
- Initial DBS checks are funded by the pre-school; staff pay if they leave within 6 months.
- Disclosure certificates are not retained longer than 6 months, but certificate numbers and issue dates are recorded.

Childcare Disqualification Declaration

- Staff and directors complete an annual declaration confirming they are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.
- Disqualification may arise from convictions, orders, or association with disqualified individuals.
- Disqualified individuals must cease working immediately; a waiver may be sought from Ofsted.

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

- 1st Step Pre-school Ltd complies with the DBS Code of Practice.
- Applicants are assessed fairly, considering convictions in the context of the role.
- Failure to disclose relevant information may result in withdrawal of employment offer.

Record Keeping

- All recruitment, induction, and suitability documents are securely stored with restricted access.
- Staff files include:
 - Application forms and CVs
 - Interview notes
 - References
 - Identity checks
 - DBS certificate numbers
 - Training records
 - Suitability and disqualification declarations

Compliance with EYFS 2025 (3.13–3.26)

In line with EYFS 2025 reforms:

- Providers must ensure that all staff are suitable and competent to fulfil their roles.
- Systems must be in place to check and monitor staff suitability on an ongoing basis.
- Providers must record identity, qualifications, vetting processes, references, and DBS checks.
- Staff must understand their duty to disclose relevant information about convictions, cautions, or other suitability matters.
- Providers must act on information disclosed, including reporting concerns to Ofsted and DBS as required.

Equality and Diversity

- The pre-school promotes equality of opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or criminal background.
- Recruitment decisions are based on skills, experience, and suitability for the role.