

Twyford Playgroup – EY 484175

Safer Recruitment Policy

Signed by Manager – Rachel Knott
Signed by Chair of Committee – Melissa Simpson
Ratified – February 2025
Review Date – February 2026

Introduction

Twyford playgroup is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and requires all staff and volunteers to share and demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work. We are committed to using disciplinary procedures that deal effectively with adults who fail to comply with the playgroups safeguarding and child protection procedures and practices, including referring any allegation of abuse against an adult working with children to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day of an allegation being made.

A referral will be made if an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she will pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children. The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:
 - Attract the best possible applicants to vacancies.
 - Deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people.
 - Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people.

Single Equality Scheme.

We will ensure that people are treated solely based on their abilities and potential, in line with our single equalities scheme. We will comply with the requirements of the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Committee of the playgroup will:

- Ensure the federation has effective policies and procedures in place for the safe and fair recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers in accordance with the Department for Education guidance and legal requirements.
- Monitor the federation's compliance with policies, procedures and guidance.
- Ensure that appropriate staff and committee members/trustees have completed safer recruitment training.

The chair of committee and the manager will:

- Ensure that Twyford playgroup are safe and fair recruitment and selection procedures which are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensure that all appropriate checks have been carried out on staff and Volunteers.
- Monitor any contractors' compliance with this document.
- Promote the safety and well-being of children and young people at every stage of this process.

Delegation of Appointments and Constitution of the Selection Panel

The chair of Committee delegates the power to offer employment for all posts to the Manager. The Manager may not delegate the power to offer employment to any other senior staff member or committee member.

The Manager will involve at least one committee member in the appointment of all qualified practitioners.

The chair of committee will always be involved in the appointment of senior staff. Selection panels will comprise a minimum of two people. In accordance with the statutory requirement, every selection panel will have at least one member who has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

Advertising

All vacant posts will be advertised to ensure equality of opportunity and encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. This will normally mean placing an advert externally. However, where there is reasonable expectation that there are sufficient suitably qualified internal candidates, or staff at risk of redundancy, vacancies may be advertised internally before an external advertisement is placed. Any internal recruitment process will

follow the procedures set out in this policy. All advertisements for posts, paid or unpaid, will include the following statements:

“Twyford playgroup is committed to safeguarding. We follow Safer Recruitment procedure. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, enhanced DBS clearance and there is an ongoing culture of vigilance within our federation.”

All applicants will be provided with:

- A job description, outlining the duties of the post and a Person Specification.
- An Application Form (CVs will not be accepted);
- A description of the playgroup, relevant to the vacant post.
- Reference to the Child Protection Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, DBS and other pre-employment requirements.
- An outline of terms of employment including salary.

Prospective applicants must complete, in full, and return a signed application form. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed forms has not passed. Candidates submitting an application form completed online will be asked to sign the form if invited for an interview.

Short Listing and Reference Requests

The selection panel will shortlist applicants against the Job Description and Person Specification for all posts. The criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants. The selection panel will agree the applicants to be invited to interview.

Two references, one of which must be from the candidate's current/most recent employer, will be taken up before the selection stage so that any discrepancies may be probed during this stage of the selection process. References will be sought directly from the referee, and where necessary, they will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges. Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted to clarify any such anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges. If a candidate for a post working with children is not currently employed in a post working with children, a reference will be sought from the most recent employment in which the candidate has worked with children to confirm details of the candidate's employment and their reason for leaving.

Reference requests will ask the referee to confirm in writing:

- The referee's relationship with the candidate.
- Details of the candidate's current post and salary.
- The candidate's sickness record.
- The candidate's attendance record.
- The candidate's performance history and conduct.
- Any disciplinary action involving the safety and welfare of children, including any in which sanction has expired.
- Details of any substantiated allegations or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children.
- Whether the referee has any reservations as to the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people (if so, Twyford playgroup will ask for specific details of the concerns and reasons why the referee believes the candidate may be unsuitable to work with children).
- The candidate's suitability for the post. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, vetting procedures and DBS clearance. References are the “property” of the selection panel and strict confidentiality will be observed. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied. The selection panel will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend of the candidate, for any post. References will be verified, and any discrepancies or areas of potential concern will be discussed with the candidate at interview. If the field of the applicants is felt to be weak the post may be re-advertised.

Interviews

Before the interviews, the selection panel will agree on the interview format. Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed candidates.

Candidates invited to interview will receive:

- An email confirming the interview and any other selection techniques.
- Details of the interview day including time and length of interview
- Details of any tasks to be undertaken as part of the interview process.
- The opportunity to discuss the process prior to the interview.

The questions asked will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how each candidate meets the requirement of the Job Description and the Person Specification and each candidate will be assessed against all the criteria for the post.

The same areas of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no questions which would discriminate directly or indirectly on protected characteristics under the Equality Act will be asked.

The selection process for every post will include exploration of the candidate's understanding of child safeguarding issues.

Candidates will always be required:

- To explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment.
- To explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the selection panel.
- To declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure.
- To demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.
- The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions or pending prosecutions, other than those protected, that the candidate has declared and are relevant to the prospective employment.

The recruitment documentation will be retained for six months from the date of interview. Under the Data Protection act, applicants have the right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. After six months all information about unsuccessful candidates will be securely destroyed.

Pre-appointment checks

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will: Verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available; Obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the candidate will be engaging in regulated activity.

Obtain a separate barred list check if, after carrying out a risk assessment, an individual will be judged as suitable to start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available.

Check that a candidate to be employed as a practitioner is not subject to a Prohibition Order issued by the Secretary of State, using the Employer Access Online Service.

Use the Employer Access Online Service to check for any existing prohibitions and sanctions made by the GTCE before its abolition at the end of March 2012, and for information about any practitioner's qualifications held and whether induction has been passed.

Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities (a job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role).

Verify the candidate's right to work in the UK (if there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then we will follow advice on the GOV.UK website).

Make any further checks that we consider appropriate, if the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK.

Candidates to complete the self-disclosure form in line with the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations.

- Verify professional qualifications as appropriate.

All checks will be:

- Documented and retained on the personnel file.
- Recorded on the school's Single Central Record.
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received.

Offer of Employment by the Selection Panel

The offer of employment by the selection panel and acceptance by the candidate is binding on both parties, subject to satisfactory completion of the pre-employment checks and satisfactory references. The successful candidate will be informed, normally by offer letter, that the appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of these checks.

Personnel File and Single Central Record

Recruitment and selection information for the successful candidate will be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of his/her employment with the setting including:
Application Form- signed by applicant.

Interview notes-including explanation of any gaps in the employment history.

References – minimum of two.

Proof of Identity.

Proof of right to work in the UK.

Proof of relevant academic qualifications.

Evidence of medical clearance from the Occupational Health Service.

Evidence of DBS clearance, Barred List (where applicable) and Teacher prohibition checks.

Offer of employment letter and signed contract of employment.

Self-disclosure in line with 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations.

The school will maintain a Single Central Record of employment checks in accordance with Keeping Children safe in Education (2024).

Start of Employment and Induction

The pre-employment checks listed above must be completed before the employee starts work. Exceptions will never be made in the case of the Barred List and Practitioner Prohibition checks.

All new employees will be provided with an induction programme which will cover all relevant matters of playgroup policy including safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, child protection procedures, whistleblowing and guidance on safe working practices.

Bank Staff

We use staff employed by Twyford playgroup who ensure and confirm that necessary checks and DBS requirements have been satisfactorily completed for bank staff.

Volunteers

We carry out DBS and pre-start vetting checks appropriate to the post (as above) and require regular volunteers to provide details of two referees when they apply to volunteer. References are taken up as detailed in this policy. Volunteers who help on an occasional basis (e.g. trips) are supervised, in accordance with the legislation.

Students on Placement

When volunteers are working in playgroup as part of a recognised training course (such as PGCE, NVQ etc.) references and completion of an application form will not be required. However, we will require proof of DBS enhanced clearance with a barred list check and will carry out identity checks when the student arrives at the setting.

Students on Work Experience

Students on work experience will always be supervised.

Contractors

We ensure that contractors working at the playgroup have been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, if any such check is required.

Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken will not be allowed on the premises during session times. In the case of an emergency the contractors will be supervised if they are working in an area where children are present.

If a contractor working at the playgroup is self-employed and will be in regulated activity, we will consider obtaining the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account.

We will check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the setting.