



08 Staff, assistants, volunteers and students policy

Alongside associated procedures in 08.1-08.5 Staff, volunteers and students, this policy was adopted by *Acorns Community Preschool* on 2025.

Aim

Staff are deployed to meet the care and learning needs of children and ensure their safety and well-being. There are effective systems in place to ensure that adults looking after children are suitable to do so.

Objectives

- Recruitment checks meet the requirements of the EYFS as stipulated in procedure 8.1
- All staff and volunteers who work more than occasionally with the children have enhanced DBS disclosure checks.
- All staff and volunteers working with children have appropriate training, skills, and knowledge.
- All staff, students and volunteers are deployed in accordance with the procedures.
- There is a complaints procedure and staff, and volunteers know how to complain and who they complain to.
- Ofsted are notified of staff changes or changes to the setting's name or address.
- Parents are involved with their children's learning and their views are considered.

Legal references

Protection of Children Act 1999

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Childcare Act 2006

Further guidance

Recruiting Early Years Staff (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2016)

People Management in the Early Years (Pre-school Learning Alliance

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
14 Jan 25	Minor alteration to title	LG/JB
26/1/2026	No changes	lg

Acorns Community Pre-School
Hanover Hall
Jennings Road
Totton



08 Staff, volunteers, assistants and students' policy

8.01 Recruitment Checks

Obtaining references

As part of our commitment to safer recruitment we 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, including those applying for a childminder assistant role, 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.

Further information and guidance

A120 New Employee Handbook (Alliance Publication)

A128 Recruiting Early Years Staff (Alliance Publication)

A129 People Management in the Early Years (Alliance Publication)

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
14/1/24	New policy Adopted	LG/JB
26/1/2026	Minor change	LG

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08 Staff, volunteers and students procedures

08.2 Staff deployment

Members of staff, including assistants, bank staff and students (where eligible to be counted in ratios) are deployed to meet the care and learning needs of children and to always ensure their safety and well-being.

- Two members of staff are on the premises before children are admitted in the morning and at the end of the day; one of which should be the manager or deputy.
- Only those staff aged 17 or over are included in ratios. Staff working as apprentices (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios if the setting manager is satisfied that they are competent and responsible. Except in the cases of apprentices, only those aged 17 and over may be included in the ratios and only if the setting manager is satisfied they are suitable, (staff under 17 should be supervised at all times).
- At least one Paediatric First Aider must always be on site when children are present, and at least one Paediatric First Aider must be present and within sight and sound of children at mealtimes. Consideration will be given around staff breaks, lunchtimes and absences from the setting so that [name of setting] is compliant with paediatric first aid requirements.
- The setting manager deploys staff to give adequate supervision of indoor and outdoor areas, ensuring that children are always within sight or hearing of staff. Whilst eating, children must be within sight and hearing of a member of staff and where possible the staff member will be sat facing children when eating.
- All staff are deployed according to the needs of the setting and the children attending.
- In open plan provision, staff are positioned in areas of the room and outdoors to supervise children and to support their learning.
- Staff are responsible for ensuring that equipment in their area is used appropriately and that the area is tidy at the end of the session.
- Staff plan their focus on activities.
- Staff inform colleagues if they must leave the room for any reason.
- There are two members of staff outside in the garden when it is being used, one of whom supervises climbing equipment that has been put out.

- The setting manager may direct other members of staff to join those outside, if the numbers of children warrant additional staff.
- Staff always focus their attention on the children whilst having a wider awareness of what is happening around them.
- Staff do not spend working time in social conversation with colleagues.
- Staff allow time for colleagues to engage in 'sustained shared interaction' with children and do not interrupt activities led by colleagues.
- Sufficient staff are available at story times to engage children.
- Key persons spend time with key groups daily; these times are not for focussed activities but for promoting shared times and friendship.

Staff children

- Where members of staff have their own children with them at the setting, the age of the child must fall within the stipulated ages of the setting's Ofsted registration.
- Where members of staff are likely to be working directly with their own children, this is subject to discussion before commencement with the setting manager.
- Where it is agreed that a member of staff's child attends the setting, it is subject to the following:
 - the child is treated by the parent and all staff as any other child would be
 - the child will not be in the parent/carers key group of children
 - the key person and parent will work towards helping the child to make a comfortable separation from the parent to allow the parent to fully undertake their role as a staff member of the setting
 - the key person will take responsibility for the child's needs throughout the day, unless the child is sick or severely distressed
 - time and space are made for the parent to breastfeed during the day, if that is their chosen method of feeding
 - the situation is reviewed as required, to ensure that the needs of the child are being met, and that the parent/carer can fulfil their role as a member of staff

If it is the setting manager's child, then their line manager ensures the criteria above is met.

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
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14/1/24	Changes to ratio and when children are eating	LG/JB
26/1/2026	Minor changes	LG

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08 Staff, volunteers and students procedures

08.03 Deployment of volunteers and parent/carer helpers

Volunteers and parent helpers are always under the supervision of a permanent member of staff. They are not included in staff ratios, or as the two members of staff needed on the premises before children are admitted in the morning or at the end of the day. This can be overridden as Acorns is a sessional pre-school, in certain circumstances we may need to operate with 2 or 3 members of staff, the volunteer helper will enable the session to run, while the supervisor in charge finds cover staff.

- The setting manager ensures that volunteers and parent helpers are deployed to assist permanent staff.
- Volunteers and parent helpers assist staff in ensuring that the equipment in their designated area is used appropriately and that it is left tidy at the end of the session.
- Volunteers and parent helpers give additional support for busy areas or to track or observe children.
- Volunteers and parent helpers inform colleagues where they are going if they leave the room at any time.
- Volunteers and parent helpers do not have unsupervised access to children; they do not take them into a separate room for an activity or toileting and do not take them off premises.
- Volunteers and parent helpers are deployed in addition to two members of staff in the garden/outdoor area when in use.
- The setting manager can direct volunteers and parent helpers to join those outside if the numbers of children warrant additional numbers of staff available.
- Volunteers and parent helpers focus their attention to children at all times.

- Volunteers and parent helpers do not spend time in social conversation with colleagues while they are with children.
- Volunteers and parent helpers allow time for colleagues to engage in ‘sustained shared interaction’ with children and do not interrupt activities led by colleagues.
- Sufficient volunteers and parent helpers are available to support staff at story times and other circle times.

.Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
14/1/2025	Minor alteration re circle time	LG/JB
26/1/2026	No changes	LG

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08 Staff, volunteers and students procedures

08.04 Student placement

Qualifications and training make an important contribution to the quality of care and education. As part of our commitment, we may offer placements to students undertaking relevant qualifications/training. We aim to provide students experiences that will contribute to the successful completion of their studies and provide examples of quality practice in early years care and education.

- The setting manager ensures that students meet the ‘suitable person’ requirements.
- The setting manager discusses the aim of the placement with the student’s tutor prior to the placement commencing. The expectations of both parties are agreed at this point.
- The good character of students under 17 years old is vouched for by the establishment that places them, the setting manager must be satisfied that all relevant checks have been made.
- Students do not have unsupervised access to children.
- Suitable students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios

at the level below their level of study, if the provider is satisfied that they are competent and responsible and if they hold a valid and current PFA qualification

- Public liability and employer’s liability insurance is in place that covers students and voluntary helpers.
- Students are aware of confidentiality.
- Student induction includes how the setting and sessions are managed, and policies and procedures, in particular safeguarding, confidentiality and health and safety.
- Appropriate members of staff co-operate with students’ tutors to assist them in fulfilling the requirements of their course of study.
- The setting communicates a positive message to students about the value of qualifications and training.
- The needs of the children and their families remain paramount at all times and students are only admitted in numbers that do not hinder the work of the setting.
- The setting manager ensures that students and trainees on placement are engaged in bona fide early years training, which provides the necessary background understanding of children’s development and activities.

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
14/1/2025	No changes	LG/JB
26/1/2026	No changes	LG

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08 Staff, volunteers and students procedures

08.05 Employment (Including suitability, contingency plans, training, supervision and development)

We meet the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring that

our staff are appropriately qualified, and we carry out checks for criminal and other records through the

Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**) in accordance with statutory requirements.

Procedures - Vetting and staff selection

- We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- All our staff have job descriptions, which set out their roles and responsibilities.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex, age, marriage or civil partnership. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us.
- We follow the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Ofsted guidance on checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children. This includes obtaining references and ensuring they have a satisfactory enhanced criminal records check with barred list(s) check through the DBS. This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) and the Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) for the vetting and barring scheme.
- Where an individual is subscribed to the DBS Update Service we carry out a status check of their DBS certificate, after checking their identity and viewing their original enhanced DBS certificate to ensure that it does not reveal any information that would affect their suitability for the post.
- We keep all records relating to the employment of our staff and volunteers; in particular those demonstrating that suitability checks have been done, including the date of issue, name, type of DBS check and unique reference number from the DBS certificate, along with details of our suitability decision.
- We require that all our staff and volunteers keep their DBS check up-to-date by subscribing to the DBS Update Service throughout the duration of their employment with us.
- Our staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children – whether received before, or at any time during, their employment with us.
- We obtain consent from [our/my] staff and volunteers to carry out on-going status checks of the Update Service to establish that their DBS certificate is up-to-date for the duration of their employment with us.
- Where we become aware of any relevant information which may lead to the disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children. In the event of disqualification, that person's employment with us will be terminated.

Notifying Ofsted of changes

- We inform Ofsted of any changes to our Registered Person, director(s) of our provision and/or our management team.

Staff supervision, training and staff development

- Our supervisors and Deputy hold NVQ 3 in Early Years Care and Education or an equivalent qualification and a minimum of half of our staff hold the NVQ 2 in Early Years Care and Education 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.
- Training that staff participate in which is beneficial to the pre-school will be reimbursed at the discretion of the committee.
- Our pre-school budget allocates resources to training.
- We provide staff induction training in the first week of employment. This induction includes our Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy. Other policies and procedures will be introduced within an induction plan.
- 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.
- Full details about staff supervision, training, staff development and Code of Conduct can be found in the Staff Handbook.

Staff taking medication/other substances

- If a member of staff is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, we ensure that they seek further medical advice. Staff will only work directly with the children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.
- Staff medication on the premises will be stored securely and kept out of reach of the children at all times.
- If we have reason to believe that a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for children, they will not be allowed to work directly with the children and further action will be taken, as outlined in the Staff Handbook.

Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

- As we are a term time only pre-school, our staff takes their holiday breaks when the pre-school is closed. Where staff may need to take time off for any reason other than sick leave or training, this is agreed with the supervisors 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.
- Sick leave is monitored and action is taken where necessary in accordance with the contract of employment.
- We have contingency plans to cover staff absences, as follows:
 - a) At Acorns, there are two joint Supervisors and a Deputy whom Ofsted have approved.
 - b) In the event of staff shortage through staff sickness etc, usual standby staff to be called upon.
 - c) In the event of one Supervisor off for any reason, the other Supervisor leads the session and takes responsibility for the group.
 - d) In the event of both supervisors being unavailable, the Deputy, leads the group and takes responsibility for the group.

- e) If for any reason the Supervisors and the Deputy are person not available, the session has to be cancelled. If session has already begun, parents/carers need to be contacted to collect their child. Staff in the group are to remain with the children until they are picked up. Contact telephone numbers, passwords etc are listed at the front of the registration book.
- f) In all cases appropriate ratios of staff should be maintained, 1 to 6, three years and above; 1 to 4, two to three years old.
- g) In the event of no other members of staff being available, the setting manager or one of other Directors can be approached .

Date	Policy History - Alterations	Initials
31/01/2025	Policy created by Acorns from research documents. Continuing to be used.	LG
26/1/26	No changes	LG