Recruitment, Selection and Suitability of Staff Policy

At Muddy Puddles we are vigilant in our recruitment procedures aiming to ensure that all people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role. We are committed to ensuring that all staff, including students, volunteers and any agency or supply staff are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role in order to work with, or be in regular contact with, children.

We have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners and any other person who may have regular contact with children are suitable, as part of the recruitment process as well as monitoring continued suitability, as part of regular staff supervision.

Every time we recruit a new member of staff to join our team, we follow these procedures:

1. Legal requirements
   • We abide by all legal requirements relating to safer recruitment set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and accompanying regulations, including our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010
   • We also follow any requirements or guidance given by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in relation to carrying out checks. We abide by the employer's responsibilities by informing the DBS of any changes to the suitability of our staff, whether this member of staff has left the nursery or is still under investigation. Please refer to the Safeguarding children and child protection policy for further information.
2. Advertising
   • We use websites, job sites, and social media sites to advertise for any vacancies
   • We ensure that all recruitment literature includes details of our equal opportunities policy and our safer recruitment procedures, including an enhanced DBS check and at least two independent references for every new employee. We also include the requirement for an additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.
3. Interview stage
   • We shortlist all suitable candidates against pre-set specification and ensure all applicants receive correspondence regardless of whether they are successful in reaching the interview stage or not
   • All shortlisted candidates receive a job description, a person specification, an equal opportunity monitoring form and a request for identification prior to the interview
   • The manager decides the most appropriate people for the interview panel. There will be at least two people involved in the overall decision making
   • At the start of each interview all candidates' identities are checked using, for example, their passport and/or photo card driving licence. All candidates are required to prove they are eligible to work in the UK. The interview will also cover any gaps in the candidate's employment history
   • All candidates reaching the interview stage are questioned using the same set criteria and questions. These cover specific areas of childcare, including safeguarding the children in their care, planning suitable activities to enhance the child's development and their understanding

of the legal frameworks applied to childcare and used in the nursery. The questions are value based and will ensure the candidate has the same values as the nursery with regards to the safety and welfare of the children in their care

• Candidates will be given a score for their answers including a score for their individual experience and qualifications

• Every shortlisted candidate will be asked to take part in a supervised practical exercise which will involve spending time in a particular age group in the nursery interacting with the children, staff and, where appropriate, parents

• In addition, the manager may choose to carry out an online search for every shortlisted candidate. This may help identify any incidents or issues publicly available online, which may be explored with the applicant at interview

• The manager and deputy will then select the most suitable person for this position based on these scores and their knowledge and understanding of the early years framework as well as the needs of the nursery

• Every candidate will receive communication from the nursery stating whether they have been successful or not. Unsuccessful candidates are offered feedback.

4. Starting work

• The successful candidate will be offered the position subject to at least two references from previous employment or, in the case of a newly qualified student, their tutor and a personal or professional reference. These references will be taken up BEFORE employment commences and will meet the requirements for references as set out in the EYFS under 'Suitable people'. This may be verbal initially and then followed up with a written reference which will form part of their personnel file.

• The successful candidate will be asked to provide proof of their qualifications, where applicable. All qualifications will be checked and copies taken for their personnel files where applicable

• Prior to employment but after the job has been offered, a health check questionnaire will be given to the employee and its results will be taken into account in making an overall decision about suitability. The nursery reserves the right to take any further advice necessary in relation to a person's physical and mental fitness to carry out their role. Please see the Absence management procedure for more details about how the nursery manages health problems including access to medical records

• All new starters, other than those who have registered for the continuous updating service (see below), will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This will be initiated before the member of staff commences work in the nursery and they will not have unsupervised access to any child or children's records before this check comes back clear. Further to this, without an up-to-date enhanced DBS check, the new starter will not be allowed to take photographs of any child, look at their learning and development log or change the nappy of any child (whether supervised or not)

• An additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) should also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad

• The nursery will record and retain details about individuals, including staff qualifications, identity checks carried out and the vetting process completed. This will include the DBS

reference number, the date the disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it. The nursery will not retain copies of the disclosure itself once the employment decision is taken

• There may be occasions when a DBS check is not clear, but the individual is still suitable to work with children. This will be treated on an individual case basis and at the discretion of the Director, taking the following into account:

o seriousness of the offence or other information
o accuracy of the person's self-disclosure on the application form
o nature of the appointment including levels of supervision
o age of the individual at the time of the offence or other information
o the length of time that has elapsed since the offence or other information
o relevance of the offence or information to working or being in regular contact with children.

• If the individual has registered on the DBS system since 17 July 2013, managers may use the update service with the candidate's permission instead of carrying out an enhanced DBS check

• New starters are required to sign (either application form, contract or separate form) to state that they have no criminal convictions, court orders or any other reasons that disqualify them from working with children or identify that they are unsuitable to do so

• All new members of staff will undergo an intensive induction period during which time they will read and discuss the nursery policies and procedures and be assigned a mentor or buddy who will introduce them to the way in which the nursery operates

• During their induction period all new staff will receive training on how to safeguard children in their care and follow the Safeguarding children and child protection policy, Lock down policy, Inclusion and equality policy and health and safety issues

• New staff members will have a probationary period for the first 6 months of work during which suitability for the position to which they have been appointed will be assessed. The nursery reserves the right to extend the probationary period if necessary

• The new member of staff will have regular meetings with the manager and their mentor or buddy during their induction period to discuss their progress, support required and/or further training and professional development opportunities.

5. Delayed DBS checks

• Where possible, staff will have the checks completed prior to starting employment. As long as the DBS check has been applied for, if there are delays in the results coming through, staff may work in the nursery before these checks are completed as a last resort, but they must be supervised at all times by staff who already hold an enhanced check. All nursery staff will be informed of any staff awaiting enhanced DBS clearance.

• Staff awaiting these checks will never:

o Be left unsupervised whilst caring for children
o Take children for toilet visits unless supervised by staff holding an enhanced check
o Change nappies
o Be left alone in a room or outside with children
o Administer medication
o Administer first aid
o Take photographs of any children

o Be involved in looking at a child's learning and development log, but can contribute to it
o Have access to children's personal details and records.

• While adhering to the above list, we recognise that it is vital that the staff member awaiting an enhanced disclosure is made to feel part of the team and we support them in participating fully in every other aspect of the nursery day.

6. Ongoing support and checks

• All staff are responsible for notifying the manager in person if there are any changes to their circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children (staff suitability status will also be checked through termly staff suitability questions during staff supervisions). This includes any incidents occurring outside the nursery. Staff will face disciplinary action should they fail to notify the manager immediately

• We act on any information that comes to our attention that suggests someone may no longer be suitable for their role

• All members of staff will ensure management have a good knowledge of any health changes that may require support or additional resources to aid them to carry out their day-to-day duties. This will also be discussed at staff supervisions and review meetings. Management may require this more regularly where health circumstances change. There are more details about how the nursery deals with any health problems in the Absence management procedure

• The Director will review any significant changes to an individual's circumstances that may suggest they are no longer suitable to work with children and take appropriate action to ensure any unsuitable or potentially unsuitable employee does not have unsupervised contact with children until the matter is resolved. Please see the Disciplinary procedure for further details

• Every member of staff will have a meeting each term with the manager and Director. This will provide an opportunity for the manager and member of staff to discuss training needs for the following term as well as evaluate and discuss their performance in the previous term

• The manager, deputy and room leaders will be responsible for any support the staff team may have between these reviews. This includes mentor support, one-to-one training sessions, ongoing supervision, work-based observations and constructive feedback.

• We will ensure staff receive continuous support, training and supervision from management in order to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment for all children in the nursery

• The nursery will provide appropriate opportunities for all staff to undertake professional development and training to help improve the quality of experiences provided for children.

7. Students and agency/supply staff

• All students will receive an interview to ensure they are suitable for the nursery and an induction process to ensure they fully understand and are able to implement the nursery procedures, working practices and values

• All students will be fully supervised to ensure they receive the appropriate support, training and information they may require

• We request confirmation that all necessary checks have been completed by the agency before using any supply or agency staff. Once checks are obtained, we record the DBS check reference number, the date the check was obtained and details of who obtained it

• We have a short induction prior to agency staff working with the children. It is our policy that all agency and supply staff are fully supervised and not left alone with children.
• 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.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for Review
01/03/2026	Heather Black	01/03/2027