



Safer Recruitment Policy

Statement of Intent

At Bardfield Montessori Day Nursery, we are committed to prioritising the needs, safety, and well-being of our children and supporting the growth and well-being of our staff. We recognise that high-quality care and education are only possible when staff are valued, safeguarded, and empowered.

Our approach is rooted in the Montessori philosophy: we believe that children flourish when guided by calm, consistent, and respectful adults who nurture independence, curiosity, and self-discipline. Staffing and recruitment at Bardfield Montessori Day Nursery therefore focus not only on compliance with statutory requirements but also on selecting and developing staff who embody Montessori values of respect, observation, guidance, and prepared environments.

Safer Recruitment Practice (Appendix 1)

Our safer recruitment practices are guided by our commitment to placing children first, ensuring their safety, dignity, and Montessori-inspired learning. We follow robust recruitment procedures, including enhanced DBS checks, verified references, and thorough safeguarding vetting. All new staff complete a six-month induction, supported by a mentor and reflective supervision, to embed safe practice and Montessori values. We strictly adhere to EYFS 2025 staff ratios to maintain a safe and consistent environment. As part of safer recruitment, we also prioritise the well-being of our staff, recognising that children thrive when cared for by happy, supported adults. Finally, we are committed to ongoing professional learning, ensuring our team remains up to date with safeguarding, Montessori practice, and EYFS requirements.

Recruitment & Application

- Job descriptions highlight safeguarding responsibilities and Montessori values.
- Applications must be fully completed; CVs alone are not accepted.
- Gaps in employment history are explored at interview.

References (EYFS 2025 Requirement)

- Two written references must be received before employment begins, including for students, volunteers, and apprentices.

Updated: Sep 22, Jan 23, Sept 24, August 25

- At least one reference must be from the most recent employer or training provider.
- References must be verified for authenticity and checked for safeguarding concerns.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Checks

- All staff, volunteers, and apprentices must complete an Enhanced DBS Check with Children's Barred List.
- Overseas candidates must also provide a police check from their country of residence.
- DBS certificates are checked upon receipt and details recorded on the Central Record.
- Ongoing Suitability:
 - Staff are required to sign an annual declaration of continued suitability.
 - The nursery encourages enrolment in the **DBS Update Service** for regular status checks.
- No staff member may be left unsupervised with children until all suitability checks are complete.

Interviews & Values-Based Questions

- Interviews test knowledge of safeguarding, EYFS, Montessori practice, and personal values.
- Hypothetical safeguarding scenarios are used to assess judgment and child-centred thinking.

Record-Keeping

- A Central Record is maintained of all recruitment checks, DBS information, references, and training.
- We are fully supported by a professional HR company.

Induction & Mentoring of New Staff (Appendix 2)

We see induction and mentoring as an essential part of the safer recruitment process, in line with the EYFS guidance. A structured induction ensures that new staff quickly understand safeguarding responsibilities, safer recruitment standards, and the nursery's policies and procedures. By providing a dedicated mentor for the first six months, we create a safe space for learning, reflection, and professional growth. This support not only strengthens staff confidence and consistency in practice but also reduces the risk of safeguarding errors, helping to build a stable, skilled, and well-supported team.

- All new staff complete a six-month induction programme, covering:
 - Safeguarding and child protection policies
 - Montessori philosophy and practice
 - Health and safety procedures

- EYFS framework and statutory duties
 - First Aid in practice
 - Care practices with children
 - Supporting children's health and nutrition
- Each new staff member is assigned a **mentor** for their first six months. The mentor provides:
 - Regular check-ins and support
 - Guidance on embedding Montessori principles into daily practice
 - A safe space for questions and reflective learning
 - At the end of the induction, staff undergo a review meeting to confirm suitability and continued development goals.

Staffing Deployment & Ratios (EYFS 2025)

Staffing, deployment, and ratios are key to both safer recruitment and staff retention. Maintaining correct EYFS ratios ensures children are safe, supervised, and receiving quality individual attention, while effective staff deployment prevents stress and overwork among team members. When staff feel supported by fair workloads and reliable cover, they are more confident in their roles and less likely to experience burnout. This not only protects children's welfare but also fosters a positive, stable working environment where staff feel valued and are more likely to remain with the nursery long term.

Westwood Montessori Nursery meets and exceeds the statutory staff-to-child ratios:

- Under 2 years: 1 adult: 2 children
- 2-year-olds: 1 adult: 3 children
- 3 years+ (with qualified staff): 1 adult: 5 children

Additional commitments:

- Ratios are never compromised, including during staff breaks or sickness cover.
- A qualified Paediatric First Aider is always present on site.
- Staff are deployed to ensure children are always within sight and hearing.
- Montessori practice is supported by maintaining calm and consistent adult presence, giving children freedom within safe limits.

Staff Training & Development

We recognise that **staff training is central to safer recruitment and staff retention**. Ongoing training ensures that all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities, follow safer recruitment standards, and confidently apply policies in practice. It also supports professional

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growth, builds confidence in applying Montessori principles, and creates a culture of continuous improvement. By investing in training, we not only protect children's safety and well-being but also demonstrate our commitment to valuing and supporting our team, which helps retain skilled, motivated, and dedicated staff.

Staff Well-Being as Part of Safer Recruitment

At Bardfield Montessori Day Nursery, we believe that safer recruitment includes safeguarding staff well-being, as the welfare of children is directly linked to the welfare of the adults who care for them.

Staff are supported through:

- Clear induction and mentoring
- Access to supervision and mental health support
- A culture where concerns can be raised safely (Whistleblowing Policy)
- Protecting staff from burnout, stress, and unsafe workloads ensures that:
- Children are consistently cared for by happy, stable, and attentive adults
- Montessori principles of calm, respectful, and consistent guidance are upheld
- The nursery maintains a safe, nurturing learning environment for

Whistleblowing & Safeguarding Culture

We recognise that safeguarding children and safe recruitment and staffing also means ensuring that all staff, students, and volunteers feel confident to raise concerns about any unsafe, inappropriate, or unprofessional practice they may witness. Everyone in our setting is actively encouraged to speak up, and we are committed to protecting individuals from discrimination, victimisation, or negative consequences when they raise concerns in good faith.

Concerns can be raised through a range of **whistleblowing routes**. These include reporting directly to the Nursery Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead, escalating to the Board of Directors if needed, or contacting external agencies such as LADO. Staff may raise concerns directly with **Ofsted**, who regulate and inspect early years provision, which offers confidential advice and support. By embedding a clear and transparent whistleblowing process, we ensure that safeguarding concerns are dealt with swiftly, appropriately, and without fear, creating a culture of safety and accountability across the nursery.

Monitoring Attendance & Emergency Contacts

We recognise that regular staff absence can impact staff well-being, children's continuity of care and team well-being. As part of our safer recruitment and staff retention commitment, we adopt a **proactive and supportive approach** when staff experience frequent absence. This

includes open discussions, access to well-being support, and structured return-to-work programmes. Where appropriate, staff are offered **role modelling, mentoring, and gradual reintegration** to help them feel confident, valued, and able to resume their role positively.

- Two emergency contacts are held for every member of staff.
- Absences are followed up promptly to ensure staff welfare.
- Unexplained or prolonged absence are supported by our well-being team and staff are supported in gaining access from the relevant medical, therapeutic or outside agency.

Other Relevant Policies

Child Protection

Staff Code of Conduct

Behaviour Management

E-Safety

GDPR

Whistleblowing