

Innsworth Preschool Policy for Staffing

Last Updated: June 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Overview: This policy sets out how Innsworth Preschool ensures appropriate staffing, qualifications, deployment, and conduct.

1.2 Commitment: We are committed to maintaining a highly skilled, safe, and legally compliant team to support all children's learning, safety, and development.

2. Statutory Framework

2.1 Compliance: This policy ensures compliance with the following legislation:

- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): Specifically the requirements on staff qualifications, training, support, and skills.
- The Children Act 2004: Duty to safeguard and promote child welfare.
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- The Equality Act 2010: Ensuring equal opportunity in recruitment and workplace conduct.
- The Childcare Act 2006: Regulations regarding disqualification.

2.2 Guidance: We also use safer recruitment best practice, including relevant principles from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE).

3. Staff-to-Child Ratios

3.1 Standards: We strictly follow the minimum statutory ratios as set out in the EYFS. Where practicable, we aim to exceed these ratios to ensure high-quality care.

- **Risk Assessment:** We may deploy additional staff based on risk assessment (e.g. for new starters, outings, complex needs, or outdoor, gardening, growing and practical learning activities).

3.2 Emergency Staffing, Staff Welfare and Closure Authority: Safety, safeguarding and lawful ratios take precedence over normal operation.

- **Manager's Authority:** If unexpected absence, staff illness, extreme heat, premises conditions or another emergency means statutory ratios, safe supervision or staff welfare cannot be maintained and safe cover or deployment is unavailable, the Manager may combine groups where safe, restrict activities or attendance, reduce hours, close a room, close in advance or close the setting during the day.
- **Notification and Charges:** Parents will be notified as soon as reasonably possible and must arrange prompt collection if requested. Fees, booked services and funded sessions will be managed under the Fees, Funding and Charges Policy and current local authority funding requirements.
- **Safety Override:** We will never operate below statutory ratios. If we cannot staff the setting safely, we will not open.
- **Staff Welfare Review:** Management will dynamically review whether staff can supervise safely in the conditions. Pregnancy and other vulnerable-worker risk assessments will be reviewed where heat, fatigue, illness or environmental conditions create additional risk, and reasonable adjustments or redeployment will be considered before closure where safe and practicable.

4. Staff Qualifications and Roles

4.1 Management: The Preschool Manager will hold a full and relevant Level 3 qualification (or above) and demonstrate suitable experience and competence to manage the setting.

4.2 Team Qualifications: We aim for over 50% of our team to hold a full and relevant Level 3 qualification. All staff qualifications are validated against the Department for Education's (DfE) Early Years Qualifications List.

4.3 SENCO: A named SENCO with appropriate training and experience is in post to support children with additional needs.

4.4 Specialist Competency (Farm Experience): Farm Experience means farming-themed, nature-based and practical learning such as planting, growing, gardening, flowers, food preparation, cooking, seasonal produce and outdoor learning. It is not animal care unless a separate risk assessment and written parent information confirm otherwise. Staff deployed to lead relevant activities receive specific internal induction and risk-assessment training.

- **Tool Safety:** Tools are used only under direct supervision, in defined zones, with a specific risk assessment and ratios appropriate to the activity.
- **Authorisation:** Staff who are not competent or authorised must not lead these activities.

5. Paediatric First Aid (PFA)

5.1 Commitment: We aim for **all practitioners** employed by Innsworth Preschool to hold a full and valid Level 3 Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification.

- **New Staff:** New staff who do not hold this must be scheduled to complete the training as soon as practicable (and within their probationary period). In the meantime, they are deployed so that statutory PFA cover is maintained.
- **Coverage:** At least one person with a current PFA certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and accompanies children on outings.

6. Safer Recruitment and Suitability

6.1 Process: Our recruitment process is robust and complies with the EYFS.

- **Training:** At least one member of any staff appointment panel will hold a valid Safer Recruitment training certificate.
- **Employment Gaps:** All application forms are scrutinised to identify and explore any gaps in employment history.
- **Online Searches:** We conduct online searches on shortlisted candidates to identify any publicly available information that may raise safeguarding concerns. Findings are handled confidentially, and candidates are given an opportunity to respond where appropriate.
- **References:** Professional references are requested, checked and assessed in line with the current EYFS safer recruitment and suitability requirements, including any current requirements relating to early years employment references. References are sought directly from referees and verified; the number and type required will follow the current statutory framework and safer recruitment assessment.

6.2 Pre-Appointment Checks: Any offer of appointment is strictly conditional upon:

- An Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including the Children's Barred List.
- Verification of identity, professional status, and right to work in the UK.
- An appropriate health declaration and/or occupational health process to confirm fitness to carry out the role with reasonable adjustments where required.

7. Ongoing Suitability & Declarations

7.1 Ongoing Duty: Safeguarding is an ongoing duty, not just a recruitment check.

7.2 Declarations:

- **Disqualification:** Staff must notify the Manager immediately if they become disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006.
- **Suitability:** Staff must declare any caution, charge, conviction, bail conditions, restraining orders, or other matter that may affect their suitability to work with children. We will assess relevance and proportionality.

7.3 Conduct Outside Work: We expect staff to maintain high standards of personal conduct to protect the reputation of the Preschool. Behaviour outside work that undermines trust and confidence (e.g. violence, drug use, online abuse) may lead to disciplinary action.

8. Induction, Supervision, and Conduct

8.1 Induction: New staff undergo a structured induction covering all key policies, including Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and Emergency Procedures.

8.2 Supervision: All staff receive regular, documented supervision and appraisals to support their professional development, monitor their practice, and check on their wellbeing.

9. Professional Conduct & Social Media

9.1 Code of Conduct: Staff are required to abide by our Staff Code of Conduct at all times.

9.2 Social Media Boundaries:

- **Friending Parents:** Staff are prohibited from "friending" or following current parents/carers on personal social media accounts, unless there is a pre-existing relationship (e.g. relative or long-term friend) declared to and approved by management.
- **Content:** No photographing or sharing of setting information on personal accounts.
- **Communication:** All communication with parents must occur via official preschool channels.

9.3 Mobile Phones: Personal mobile phones and smartwatches must be stored in the office or lockers. They are not used in child areas except for setting-owned devices used for approved purposes.

10. Staff Sickness and Fitness to Work

10.1 Fitness: Staff must not attend work if they are unfit to do so or if they pose an infection risk.

- **Exclusion:** Staff suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea must not attend work for **48 hours** after the last symptom.
- **Notification:** Staff must inform management as early as possible.
- **Manager's Discretion:** The Manager reserves the right to send a staff member home if they are deemed unfit to practice safely.

11. Use of Supply and Agency Staff

11.1 Checks: We obtain written confirmation from the agency of identity, DBS, barred list checks, and suitability, and we verify key details before deployment. Agency staff receive a safeguarding induction and are supervised in line with risk.

12. Students, Volunteers & Apprentices

12.1 Supervision: Students and volunteers are **never left alone** with children.

12.2 Competence: Apprentices and students count in ratios only where permitted by the EYFS and where assessed as competent; otherwise, they are supernumerary.

12.3 DBS Checks: DBS checks are obtained in line with EYFS requirements and role/supervision arrangements. Regular unsupervised contact requires the appropriate checks.

13. Whistleblowing

13.1 Culture: We foster a culture of safety where staff feel confident to raise concerns.

13.2 Duty to Report: All staff have a duty to report any concerns about a colleague's conduct or the practice within the setting to the Manager, DSL, or directly to the LADO or Ofsted. Staff may also contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.

- **Protection:** No staff member will face victimisation or retaliation for raising a genuine safeguarding concern.

14. Lone Working

14.1 Child Supervision: No staff member is ever permitted to be alone on site with a child.

14.2 Opening/Closing: Staff opening or closing the site alone must follow the specific Lone Working Risk Assessment.

14.3 Restrictions: No intimate care is carried out under lone-working conditions.

15. Monitoring and Review

15.1 Review: This policy is reviewed annually.

