



9. Staff, assistants, volunteers and students policy

Aim

Staff members at Ducklings pre-school 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 the Recruitment checks procedure.
- All staff members and volunteers who work more than occasionally with the children have enhanced DBS disclosure checks.
- All staff members and volunteers working with children have appropriate training, skills, and knowledge.
- All staff members, 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.
- There is a whistleblowing procedure for all staff members, students and volunteers to raise any concerns they may have.
- Ofsted are notified if the supervisor changes or any changes to the pre-school's name or address.
- Parents/carers 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

This staff, assistants, volunteers and students policy was adopted by	NGCA Ducklings pre-school
On	29 th September 2025
Signed on behalf of the management committee	
Name of signatory	Ken Yap
Role of signatory	Chairperson



9.a. Staff code of conduct

Aim

This policy describes the standards of conduct and behaviour expected from our staff, students, volunteers and visitors who undertake work and spend time in Ducklings pre-school.

It is intended to help you by describing the standards expected of all persons caring for educating and safeguarding all children that attend Ducklings pre-school.

Please take your time and read this policy and ensure your conduct meets these requirements. If you are at all uncertain about what is expected, please seek further clarification from your supervisor or the chairperson on the parents committee so that you do not unwittingly contravene this code or otherwise act against Ducklings pre-school's policies.

Contravening or failing to act within the spirit of the code or behaving in a manner which could bring the good name of Ducklings pre-school into disrepute, whether or not within the workplace or working time, might be seen as a breach of discipline and could lead to action being taken against you under the appropriate procedure.

While workers who are not employees of the pre-school are expected to comply with the spirit of the code, any action that may be taken in response to a breach will depend on the precise nature of their working relationship with the provision.

This code relates to all staff, employees, committee members and volunteers working for or at Ducklings pre-school and therefore must be aware of and adhere to this policy.

Objectives

- As a pre-school employee, you should put the well-being, development and progress of children first. You should recognise that you are in a position to influence children through your slightest actions, comments or behaviour. As a pre-school employee, you are a person of trust and have a duty of care, feelings, nurture, support, education and safeguarding of every child within the setting.
- To the public you are a representative of the pre-school. You are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional competence, knowledge, integrity, confidentiality, financial propriety and personal conduct. Contact with all members of the pre-school, the committee, including parents and outside visitors, should be courteous, professional, confidential, polite, efficient and impartial to all groups and individuals. You must also familiarise yourself with and adhere to any rules or code of contact or policies relating to the pre-school and role and you should comply with all reasonable requirements or instructions from the supervisor and/or the chairperson. Early years specific requirements are detailed below in the policy.

- It is not appropriate for you when working within your role as an employee to oppose the stated aims, objectives and policies of Ducklings pre-school or to undermine the performance of their duties and responsibilities. It is important for all employees to present a unified image to the public.
- You should ensure that your relationships with your fellow employees and children are always conducted in a professional and courteous manner; you should not censure other colleagues or criticise their work within the hearing of other colleagues or parents. It is not acceptable to use sarcasm or make jokes at the expense of staff and children or embarrass or humiliate others or discriminate against or favour children.

As an early years practitioner working with children, we would expect calm voices, eye level communications, children's level of engagement and a friendly and welcoming manner, leading children with care, demonstrating good role modelling of how we treat each other.

We would also expect effective and consistent strategies for children's expectations, boundaries and attention rather than adults raising unacceptable levels of tones and words.

- It is not acceptable for you to publicly criticise or blame Ducklings pre-school, colleagues or the committee through any medium including internet 'blogs', websites or social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter or Tik Tok and you must be aware that the laws governing defamation, breach of copyright, etc. apply equally to on-line as to other forms of communications. Offensive, defamatory, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate comments will not be tolerated and may constitute a disciplinary and/or criminal offence, as could the disclosure/publication of any confidential information about the pre-school, its staff, the children or other members of the pre-school community.
- It is incumbent on you to ensure that you are aware of and comply with any relevant rules and instructions which pertain to your particular job, including the *Early years foundation stage statutory framework (2024)*, *Keeping children safe in education (2024)*, *Working together to Safeguard Children (2023)*, *Promoting positive behaviour*, *Confidentiality, recording and sharing information*, *Whistleblowing*, *Inclusion*, etc. The code cannot cover every situation but will be subject to reasonable interpretation. Any disagreement involving the interpretation or application of the code as it applies to you should be discussed with your supervisor in the first instance. However, if you feel the code is being applied unreasonably you may be able to seek redress through the pre-school's grievance procedure.

Staff and family relationships

- You are expected to treat all children and families with dignity and fairness, building relationships rooted in mutual respect and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a person in a position of trust. You should comply with safe working practices of the pre-school.
- You must not communicate personally with families via email, mobile phone or internet other than on pre-school related matters, using the pre-schools communication platforms.
- You must not discuss any pre-school matters outside of our set communications with families; this may result in breach of confidentiality and safeguarding procedures.

Personal interests

- The interests of Ducklings pre-school or the way you do your job must not be influenced by personal interests or those of relatives, friends or membership of external organisations or societies. There should be no grounds for suspicion that you are using your position with or knowledge of Ducklings pre-school for personal gain or that you could be influenced by improper motives. If you belong to outside organisations, including voluntary organisations, there must be no conflict with your job or Ducklings pre-school interests. You should advise your supervisor in writing about anything which could give this impression.

Private work

- Ducklings pre-school equipment, working time or other resources must not be used to undertake private work.
- Ducklings pre-school needs to be aware if its employees undertake private work or voluntary activities in their own time to ensure that there is no conflict of interests with the pre-school and to meet its obligations under Health and Safety legislation. Therefore, to protect yourself and Ducklings pre-school from potential criticism you should not put yourself in a position where there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest. You should be aware that outside work or activity, whether or not you receive payment, could reduce your ability to safely and effectively carry out your employment with Ducklings pre-school e.g. through tiredness, and that would be considered unacceptable.
- You must advise the chairperson of the parents committee before engaging in any other work especially if it could reasonably be seen to conflict with your employment with the pre-school or lead to misunderstanding or criticism. We ask our staff to be open and honest so we can support and protect both parties from any concerns that may affect your suitability to work.
- You must not undertake private work when on sick leave without the express knowledge and prior written approval of the chairperson of the parents committee and subject to appropriate medical advice.

Expressing concern about irregularities and tackling malpractice

- If you feel there is something seriously wrong at work, please tell the appropriate person as a 'voice of concern'. It might be, for example, the conduct of another employee, the way a contractor is behaving, a work practice, something that is endangering the safety of children or staff. You might be the first to notice it and your intervention could stop things getting worse. The staff are expected to adhere to the Whistleblowing procedures in any situation of concern.
- No matter how reticent you may feel, you should raise any serious concern, e.g. a suspicion of fraud or corruption or reasonable belief that a child or adult's health, safety or well-being are in danger with the supervisor so that potentially serious problems or malpractice can be addressed without undue delay. If this is not appropriate, then you should contact either the chairperson of the parents committee, If you do raise a genuine concern in good faith all reasonable steps will be taken to respect your confidence and protect you from possible reprisals.

- Ducklings pre-school take these issues very seriously and will investigate and address any problems genuinely raised. However, any frivolous, malicious or mischievous use of the Whistleblowing procedures will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Copyright

- You should be aware that 'intellectual property' such as software, ideas, documents, etc. created during your employment belong to Ducklings pre-school. All files, materials, the media upon which they are located and all software programmes or packages which are utilised or developed solely for or in connection with your job remains the property of the school.

Confidentiality

- Ducklings pre-school is committed to open government, and, in law, certain information must be made available to the staff, committee, service users and the public. However, you must make sure you know whether information is 'public' or confidential and treated it accordingly.
- You may sometimes acquire information at work which has not been made public or is confidential. Examples include information about a child or family, a colleague, information on tenders or costs, the proceedings of confidential meetings.
- You must ensure that sensitive and/or confidential information is properly secured and safeguarded at all times especially if being transported in paper or electronic formats. Particular care must be taken with information stored on portable electronic media such as laptops and memory devices, which are often targeted for theft due to their high intrinsic value.
- Confidential information which comes into your possession must not be used for personal benefit or divulged to other parties except in the proper course of duty, for example to other professionals working with the child. If you have any doubt whether or not disclosure is appropriate, you must check with the supervisor, designated safeguarding lead or chairperson of the parents committee before releasing confidential information.
- Some information can be extremely valuable in business and commerce and its publication loss or misuse could seriously disadvantage Ducklings pre-school and its employees. Therefore, it is important that you do not, deliberately or inadvertently, pass on information, including software, during or after your employment with the pre-school, to anyone who has no right to receive it. You must not discuss, disclose, publicise or use such information for your own or anyone else's personal interest or advantage.
- You must not criticise Ducklings pre-school, its policies or staff in open media such as internet @blogs', websites, social networking sites, etc. where it may be seen by parents, children, committee members or others in the community.

Contact with the media

- Unless you are properly authorised to speak with, write or give interviews to the media you should refer any enquires from the media on work related matters to the chairperson of the parents committee.

Information technology, social media and data protection

- Everyone using computing equipment has a duty of care to use it according to prescribed arrangements, e.g. to avoid introducing computer viruses, to comply with the Data Protection Act, General Data Protection Regulations and to safeguard and ensure the security of information.
- You must familiarise yourself with Ducklings pre-school's E-safety (including all electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities) policy, including use of the internet. In particular, all use of the internet and email facilities must be authorised, legal. Appropriate and in accordance with the provisions of our policies. Personal use of any devices such as mobile phones, laptops or iPads is prohibited within working hours. The staff all have use or access to a pre-school laptop for business use.

Mobile devices must be kept locked, in your bags, in a locker. The staff can use them during their allocated breaks, away from the children.

Please refer to the Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy and E-safety (including all electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities) policy.

Ducklings pre-school has two work mobiles, one is used by the administrator and the second one is kept in the fire box, which is used for parent communications and external calls in an emergency. Ducklings also has six iPads for Tapestry use.

Failure to comply with the policies in force or any unauthorised use of such facilities will be dealt with in accordance with relevant disciplinary procedure.

- We discourage social media friendships with families still attending Ducklings pre-school. If you are a 'friend' of a parent of a child, you should be particularly careful not to share information about children, staff or working practices. You should ensure that full privacy settings are applied to your social media accounts. You must remain professional at all times and also ensure your activities/posts do not conflict the interest and trust of your position as a person of trust.

Use of pre-school resources and equipment

- Facilities, equipment, vehicles, materials and other resources provided by Ducklings pre-school for use in your work must not be used for any other purpose without permission, e.g. photocopying, private telephone calls. Mobile phones are provided exclusively for business use and must not be used to make private calls. In this context a call 'home' to advise that you have been unavoidably delayed because of work would not be considered a private call.

Equality

- All members of the community, including pupils, families and other staff have a right to be treated fairly and with dignity. You must make yourself aware of and comply with the pre-school's Promoting inclusion, equality and valuing diversity policy and procedures.

Political neutrality/extremism

- All staff have a responsibility to ensure that they act appropriately in terms of their behaviour, the views they express (in particular political views) and the use of pre-school resources at all times.
- You must follow the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory Framework and must not allow your own personal/political opinions to influence your work. In particular, you must not behave or act in any way that undermines fundamental British Values as defined within the Counter-Terrorism and Security act 2015 as democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect; tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- You must not express radical or extremist views; promote or permit the voicing of views or incitement of any action in support of extremism, terrorism, radicalisation or any prohibited organisations.

Standard of appearance

- Staff are expected to present a reasonable and professional appearance and to dress appropriately to the circumstances within the working environment, remembering that you are working with children. Logo polo tops, and hoodies will be allocated. We ask that staff wear comfortable trousers/leggings and comfortable safe shoes/trainers – no open toe sandals or flip flops.
Clothing should not be offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and should not display political or other any other slogans.
- Where uniform or protective clothing is issued it must be worn as required when at work or representing the pre-school, PPE should be worn when carrying out nappy changes, body fluid clean ups.
Handling of foods require effective hand washing procedures and the appropriate protection and equipment.
You must maintain appropriate standards of conduct whether or not on duty, e.g. when travelling to and from work.

Relatives and close personal relationships in the pre-school

- In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias you should endeavour to not be directly involved in the appointment, promotion, discipline or other employment decision relating to another employee to whom you are related or with whom you have a close personal relationship.
These decisions will be handed to the chairperson of the parents committee. Ducklings pre-school fully expect that standards delivered by all staff to a high level and managed accordingly whether colleagues have a close relationship/or relative.
- If you work in close proximity with other employees or children to whom you are related or have a close personal connection, you must maintain a strictly professional relationship at work. You should also be aware that if any relationship leads to disruption in the workplace, unacceptable conduct or performance or situations involving undue favouritism or detriment, action will be taken under the appropriate procedure which could lead to your contract being terminated.

Smoke free environment

- Ducklings pre-school and the Great Notley Community Centre are smoke free areas. Since July 2007, it has been against the law to smoke in workplaces; failure to comply is a criminal offence.

Drugs and alcohol

- Pre-school staff must not take drugs, alcohol or any other substance before work, during a break or at lunchtime that is capable of causing their behaviour, judgement or performance at work to be affected. This is particularly important for employees who have responsibility for children, and who come into contact with members of the public and/or visitors. Please note that it is equally inappropriate for those working in close proximity to children to have alcohol on their breath even though this may not amount to drunkenness.

Health and safety

- Unsafe working can endanger you, your colleagues, pupils and members of the public. You must familiarise yourself with the Health and Safety policy and procedures. Please speak to your supervisor for further information. You must follow the rules, codes and the safe practices they describe, including reporting any accidents, incidents or near misses you have at work.

Essential training

- Pre-school staff are expected to make every effort to comply with reasonable requests to attend training which is a statutory requirement or essential for your job role, as well as attending staff meetings. Employees will be required to undertake mandatory training as requested to be able to safely work in ratio; safeguarding, prevent, first aid and allergy awareness training. You will be required to take additional training to continue your professional development. Staff members are also responsible to ensure they upskill themselves and request help and support as and when they need it.

Criminal charges, cautions and convictions

- You must advise the supervisor immediately if you are charged with or cautioned or convicted of any criminal offence whilst you are an employee of Ducklings pre-school. While such proceedings will not necessarily affect your employment, the pre-school needs to be sure there are no implications for the provision, its reputation, the safety of children or in relation to the role you undertake.



9.b. Recruitment Checks

Obtaining references

As part of our commitment to safer recruitment Ducklings pre-school will always obtain references from applicants for roles in our pre-school. 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, 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.



9.c. Staff deployment

Members of staff, including assistants, bank staff and students (where eligible to be counted in ratio) at Ducklings pre-school are deployed to meet the care and learning needs of children and to ensure their safety and well-being at all times.

- Four members of staff are on the premises before children are admitted in the morning and the end of the day; one of which would be the supervisor or deputy supervisor.
- 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 supervisor 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 supervisor is satisfied, they are suitable (staff under 17 should be supervised at all times).
- At least one Paediatric First Aider must be on site at all times 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 Ducklings pre-school is compliant with paediatric first aid requirements.
- The supervisor deploys staff to give adequate supervision of indoor and outdoor areas, ensuring that children are always within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight *or* hearing of staff at all times. 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 members are deployed according to the needs of the pre-school and the children attending.
- In our open plan provision, the staff are positioned in areas of the room and garden to supervise children and to support their learning.
- Staff members 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 members plan their focus on activities
- Staff members inform colleagues if they have to leave the room for any reason.
- There are two members of staff outside in the garden when it is being used.
- The supervisor may direct other members of staff to join those in the garden, if the numbers of children warrant additional staff.

- Staff members focus their attention on the children at all times whilst having a wider awareness of what is happening around them.
- Staff members do not spend working time in social conversation with colleagues.
- Staff members allow time for colleagues to engage in 'sustained shared interaction' with children and do not interrupt activities led by colleagues.
- Sufficient members of staff are available at story times to engage children.
- Keypersons spend time with their key children weekly; these times are not for focussed activities but for promoting shared times and friendship.

Staff children/grandchildren

- Where members of staff have their own children/grandchildren with them at the pre-school, the age of the child must fall within the stipulated ages of the pre-school's Ofsted registration.
- Where members of staff are likely to be working directly with their own children/grandchildren, this is subject to discussion before commencement with the supervisor/chairperson.
- Where it is agreed that a member of staff's child/grandchild attends the pre-school, it is subject to the following:
 - the child/grandchild is treated by the parent and all staff members as any other child would be.
 - the child/grandchild will not be in the parent's/grandparent's key group of children.
 - the keyperson and parent/grandparent will work towards helping the child to make a comfortable separation from the parent/grandparent to allow the parent/grandparent to fully undertake their role as a staff member of the pre-school.
 - the keyperson will take responsibility for the child's needs throughout the day, unless the child is sick or severely distressed and
 - the situation is reviewed as required, to ensure that the needs of the child are being met, and that the parent/grandparent is able to fulfil his/her role as a member of staff

If it is the supervisor's child/grandchild, then the chairperson ensures the criteria above is met.



9.d. Deployment of volunteers and parent/carer helpers

Volunteers and parent helpers are always under the supervision of a permanent member of staff at Ducklings preschool. They are not included in staff ratios, or as the four members of staff needed on the premises before children are admitted in the morning or at the end of the day.

- The supervisor 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 staff members 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 when in use.
- The supervisor 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 staff members 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 members at story times and other circle times.



9.e. Student placement

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

- The supervisor ensures that students meet the 'suitable person' requirements.
- If possible, the supervisor 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 supervisor must be satisfied that all relevant checks have been made.
- Students do not have unsupervised access to children.
- Suitable students on a long term placement and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and staff working as apprentices at Ducklings pre-school (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios at the level below their level of study, if the Supervisor is satisfied that they are competent and responsible and if they hold a valid and current PFA qualification.
- Students and apprentices who are undertaking Level 3 or above may be counted in ratios if the supervisor is convinced that they are suitably experienced.
- Employed trainee staff over the age of 17 may be included in staffing ratios if deemed competent.
- Staff members working as apprentices (aged 16 or over) may be included in staffing ratios if deemed competent.
- Public liability and employer's liability insurance is in place that covers students and voluntary helpers.
- Students are made aware of confidentiality.
- Student induction includes how the pre-school 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 pre-school 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 pre-school.
- The supervisor 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.