

LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI

EMPLOYMENT

SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

It is LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI'S policy to recruit the most suitable person for each vacancy, regardless of sex, colour, race, nationality, national or ethnic origins, religion or beliefs, age or perceived age, sexual orientation or disability. Wherever possible, existing employees will be invited to apply for promotion opportunities when a suitable vacancy arises.

SUITABILITY OF STAFF

Disqualification

Little Sponges Montessori follows its strict Safer Recruitment guidelines and will not employ anyone to work at the Nursery, with children or staff, if they are "disqualified". The grounds for disqualification are not only that a person is barred from working with children (included on the children's barred list) but also if:

- They have been cautioned for, convicted of or charged with certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults, at home or abroad;
- Other orders have been made against them relating to their care of children;
- They have had their registration cancelled in relation to childcare or children's homes or have been disqualified from private fostering; Staff is required to sign a disclaimer, prior to appointment, to this effect.

At Little Sponges Montessori we are vigilant in our recruitment procedures aiming to ensure all people working with children are suitable to do so. We follow this procedure when we recruit a new member to join our team.

Legal requirements

- We abide by all legal requirements relating to safe recruitment set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and accompanying regulations
- We also follow any requirements or guidance given by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in relation to carrying out checks; and abide by the employer's responsibilities relating to informing the DBS of any changes to the suitability of their staff, whether this member of staff has left the Nursery or is still under investigation. Please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information.

Advertising

- We use reputable websites to advertise for any vacancies
- We ensure that all recruitment literature includes details of our Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Diversity policy and our safer recruitment procedures; including the requirement of 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.

Interview stage

- We shortlist all suitable candidates against a 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 will receive a job description, a person specification, an Equal Opportunities monitoring form and a request for identification prior to the interview
- The Manager will decide the most appropriate people for the interview panel. There will be at least two people involved and both are involved in the overall decision-making
- At the start of each interview all candidates' identities will be checked using, for example, their passport and/or photocard driving licence. All candidates will be 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 will be 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
- Every short-listed candidate will be asked to take part in a supervised practical exercise (if interviews are conducted during term-time) which will involve spending time in the Nursery interacting with the children, staff and, where appropriate, parents
- 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.

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. 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. 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.
- 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 their records before this check comes back clear. Further to this, 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 without an up-to-date enhanced DBS check (whether supervised or not)
- An additional criminals 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 the individual including staff qualifications, identity checks carried out and the vetting process completed. This will include the Disclosure and Barring Service 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 manager's/owner's discretion taking into account the following:
 - seriousness of the offence or other information
 - accuracy of the person's self-disclosure on the application form
 - nature of the appointment including levels of supervision
 - age of the individual at the time of the offence or other information
 - the length of time that has elapsed since the offence or other information
 - 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 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' (usually the Head) 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/Child Protection policy and procedure, emergency evacuation procedures, Equality Opportunities, Inclusion and Diversity Policy and health and safety issues
- The new member of staff will have regular meetings with the manager and their mentor during their induction period to discuss their progress.

Ongoing support and checks

- All staff are responsible for notifying the manager in person if any there are any changes to their circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children (staff suitability status will also be checked through an annual 'staff suitability questionnaire'). This includes any incidents occurring outside the Nursery. Staff will face disciplinary action should they fail to notify the manager immediately
- All members of staff will update a Health questionnaire on an annual basis to ensure management have a good knowledge of any 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/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 policy
- The Nursery manager/owner 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.

- Every member of staff will have termly Supervision meetings with the Manager. This will provide an opportunity for the Manager and member of staff to discuss training needs as well as evaluate and discuss their performance. 1:1 meetings provide opportunities, in addition to the “Open-door policy” to monitor staff wellbeing, including discussions about workload and how staff are coping with their role and any matters relating to key children and families.
- There will be an annual Appraisal meeting to evaluate and discuss staff performance during the year.
- The Manager and deputy 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
- 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.

STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS AND ROTAS

Staff Deployment / Policy Statement

Here at LITTLE SPONGES MONTESSORI, we use the Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare Requirements. However, we pride ourselves on high adult/child ratios at all times (four children to one adult). This enables us to provide a safer and richer learning environment for the children. It means we are better placed to support the individual needs of the children. Due to the nature of the specialist Montessori materials, the children are taught on a one-to-one basis and in small groups.

Procedure

When we take the children on outings we always ensure that there is a higher level of staffing to support the children and their safety. Where volunteers are used to support outings we will take appropriate safeguarding procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children at all times.