


Little Dukes: Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy adopted September 2025

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Little Dukes Nursery Schools, 58 Buckingham Gate London SW1E 6AJ



Little Dukes: Safer Recruitment Policy

Monitoring and review...

This policy will be continuously monitored, refined and audited by the Headteacher who will also review it annually to assess how efficiently duties have been carried out over the year. This review will take place no later than one year from the date shown below, or sooner if needed due to changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines.

Adopted September 2025

Reviewed by:

- Joanne Allen - Director of Education - Little Dukes
- Nazish Usman - Head of Safeguarding and Compliance - EYFS

Next review due: August 2026

Please note:

This policy applies to all nursery schools within Little Dukes, including:

- Hove Village Day Nurseries
- Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nurseries
- Miss Daisy's Nursery Schools
- Miss Daisy's Nursery School Hyde Park Ltd
- The Kindergartens Nursery Schools
- Reflections Nursery and Forest School
- Riverside Nursery Schools
- Bright Beginnings (Twickenham) Ltd
- Twickenham Park Day Nursery Ltd
- Broomfield House School Ltd
- Pippa Pop-ins Nursery Schools

Any reference to 'Little Dukes' applies to all the nurseries named above.

Little Dukes: Safer Recruitment Policy

This policy has been developed to embed safer recruitment practices and procedures throughout Little Dukes nurseries and to support the creation of a safer culture by reinforcing the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people in our care. It includes information about line manager responsibilities, the role of the HR, job descriptions and employee specifications, assessment criteria, interviews (both remote and on-site) and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Policy aims:

This policy complies with guidance outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024 and has been ratified by Little Dukes senior management including the Principal and nursery's safeguarding lead.

This policy has considered the procedures as used by our Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the nursery's Whistleblowing policy which all team members are expected to be familiar with.

All successful candidates for paid or voluntary employment are made aware of these documents. This policy is an essential element in creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all children, team members and others within the community and aims to ensure both safe and fair recruitment and selection of all team members and volunteers by:

- Attracting the best possible candidates/volunteers to vacancies based on their merits, abilities and suitability to the position and considering each one equitably and consistently.
- Deterring prospective candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable from applying for vacancies.
- Identifying and rejecting those candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable to work with children and young people.

Key points:

- Headteachers of each setting are responsible for recruitment decisions, working together with their Principals, central recruitment and HR teams.
- We always aim to recruit the person who is most suited to each particular job.
- Before initiating the recruitment process, the responsible line manager must ensure that there is an up-to-date job description for the role and a clear employee specification.
- It is our policy that all vacancies will be placed on the Dukes Hub and advertised internally alongside external advertising.
- Headteachers should encourage existing employees to apply for vacant posts if they have the appropriate qualifications, experience and skills.
- We are committed to applying our equality, diversity and inclusion policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. We always carry out shortlisting, interviewing and selection without regard to an applicant's sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, skin colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave or trade union membership.
- Headteachers conducting recruitment interviews will ensure that the questions that they ask job applicants are not in any way discriminatory or unnecessarily intrusive.
- We only recruit individuals with a clear DBS, proof of qualifications, ID checks and legal right to work in the UK.
- We will refer to the Department for Education ("DfE") document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024' and any amended version in carrying out the required DBS checks.
- We process all personal data collected during the recruitment process in accordance with our data protection policy/policy on processing special category personal data and criminal records data.
- All hiring managers will have completed safer recruitment training every two years.

Hiring manager responsibilities:

All vacancies will be recruited in line with agreed nursery budgets. Where recruitment exceeds budget allowance, the hiring manager will seek approval from the Principals/Operations Director and/or FD.

Hiring managers will recruit the person who is most suited to each role.

They will recruit solely based on the applicant's abilities, individual merit and safer recruitment criterion as measured against the predetermined criteria for the job.

Qualifications, experience and skills are assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

It is the hiring manager's responsibility to ensure that their Safer Recruitment training is up to date and that they are applying the principles at all points during the recruitment process.

It is the hiring managers responsibility to ensure that all required records and documentation have been checked as valid and have been correctly uploaded to the HR system (Hi Bob)

Inviting Applicants:

All positions advertised will carry the following statement: Our nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and we expect all team members to endorse this commitment.

All applicants will be able to access the following information:

- Job description and person specification.
- The Safeguarding Policy
- An application form
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Prospective applicants must complete an online application form and declare any information about convictions, past cautions or prosecutions pending in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Candidates unsuccessful at application stage will be notified by email.

Screening:

Candidates who meet the criteria following initial application will be screened by a member of the central recruitment team or if required the Hiring manager using the Little Dukes Screening form.

Candidates unsuccessful at the screening stage will be notified by email.

Following a successful screening call, candidates will be introduced to the hiring manager by email and invited to a formal interview.

Interviews:

Hiring managers conducting recruitment interviews will ensure that the questions they ask job applicants are not in any way discriminatory or unnecessarily intrusive. They will use Little Dukes approved interview forms for this purpose.

The interview will focus on the role and the skills needed to perform it effectively. To ensure fairness, the hiring manager should ensure that questions asked are consistent in all interviews for a particular job.

Hiring managers must make a record of every recruitment interview and retain this in line with our Data Retention policy.

Interviews should be in person; however online interviews may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances and may be carried out using Zoom/Google Meet/Microsoft Teams. Following a successful online interview, a follow-up interview in person should be arranged before any job offer is made.

At least two people should conduct an interview. If this is not possible for any reason, a second interview should take place as part of the hiring process.

Hiring managers should in advance provide the interviewee with details of when and how the interview will be conducted and should also give the interviewee the opportunity to provide details of any reasonable adjustments that should be made or technological difficulties they may have.

For some roles, a monitored stay and play session may be required to assess the candidate's ability to interact and engage with children and the team. If this is the case, all candidates applying for the same role must complete this part of the hiring process.

Online searches of publicly available information will be carried out on shortlisted candidates only and be recorded in writing such as social media platforms, news websites or other online platforms visited and any issues arisen. This will then be discussed with the candidate at interview.

After the interview, the Hiring manager will note their intended decision to hire or not on the interview form and will give specific reasons for the decision

Candidate responsibilities:

At interview selection candidates must:

- Explain any gaps in employment.
- Disclose any period of time over three months spent living outside of the UK in the last 5 years so we can perform an overseas check.
- Explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel.
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on the DBS disclosure.
- Demonstrate their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.
- Demonstrate their ability to perform the role advertised.

- Disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the nursery).

On no account should any job offer be made during or at the end of an interview.

Selection and References:

Following a successful interview where the candidate has met all relevant criteria, the hiring manager will contact the applicant and make an offer pending successful receipt of the following:

- DBS Checks
- 2 x satisfactory references
- Positive completion of pre-employment checks

Unsuccessful candidates will be contacted by email explaining the reasons for rejection. Any information regarding these candidates will be retained in line with our Data Protection policy.

Disclosure Barring Service checks and vetting:


All nursery-based jobs are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as the work brings employees into contact with children who are regarded by the Act as a vulnerable group, therefore all applicants must be in possession of a current and relevant enhanced DBS check.

Little Dukes will apply and pay for the new DBS in all cases where the new employee is not registered on the update service.

Following receipt of a clear DBS, the candidate must register for the update service themselves. If the candidate does not register within 15 days, they will have to pay for a new DBS certificate each time it is required.

If an applicant is on the update service and has a current certificate the nursery must:

- See the original DBS certificate
- Obtain consent from the applicant to do a check on the update service.
- Confirm the certificate matches the individual's identity.
- Examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, e.g., enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information, and the position applied for states 'child workforce'.



In rare cases, successful candidates may be able to start employment before receipt of a new DBS if there is a delay in receiving the DBS. In such cases, it will be the hiring manager's responsibility to make this decision, a risk assessment must be completed by the hiring manager and the candidate will not be left alone with children until the clear DBS is received. This risk assessment must be added to the candidate's DBS folder on the HR system (Hi Bob) and will be reviewed every two weeks and signed off to confirm no issues with supervision or employment with the new employee.

References:

For a candidate to be appointed, two references, one of which must be from the applicant's current/most recent employer, must be received. Students can have their tutors as referees.

References are sought directly from the referee and should be completed using our online form. Where necessary, referees will be contacted in person to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. We will keep detailed written records of such exchanges.

Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted to clarify any such anomalies or discrepancies.

Referees will be asked about:

- The candidate's suitability to work with children and young people
- Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, relating to the safeguarding of children and young people
- The candidate's suitability for the post.

Reference requests may also include request for the applicants:

- Current post and salary
- Sickness record
- Attendance record
- Disciplinary record.
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The hiring manager must review these references to check for suitability and if any questions arise should have a follow-up telephone call with the referee to review – notes should be kept of any of these follow-up calls and added to the candidate's folder.

Additional checks:

An offer of appointment is conditional upon satisfactory completion of the following additional checks:

Identity checks:

All applicants who are invited to an interview must bring evidence of their identity (preferably current photographic ID) and proof of address. In exceptional cases where none is available, three forms of ID will be required. Only original documents are accepted, and photocopies will be made. Copies of documents made for unsuccessful applicants will be securely destroyed at the closure of the recruitment process. Copies of documents made for successful applicants will be added to their personnel file.

Right to work in the UK:

All candidates need to show proof of their right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then prospective employers, or volunteer managers, should follow advice on the GOV.UK website ([Checking a job applicant's right to work - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/checking-a-job-applicant-s-right-to-work)).

If the candidate does not have a British/Irish passport, when taking copies of their passport document you must make sure you copy the relevant visa/endorsement page as well as the usual passport ID page.

Qualification checks:

If a candidate is applying for a role linked to a specific qualification, these must be checked by the hiring manager against this list issued by the DFE and verified to be full and relevant.

[Early Years Qualifications achieved in the United Kingdom 28 August 2024.xlsx \(live.com\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualifications-achieved-in-the-united-kingdom-28-august-2024)

Original certificates and qualifications must be seen, and copies made and filed on Hi Bob noting who verified the qualification and when.


Overseas Police checks:

All new appointments to our workforce who have lived or worked outside the UK for three months or more in the last ten years are subject to additional checks as appropriate. Further details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>.

Where an overseas check is required and has been applied for, the successful candidate may begin work at the nursery providing all other required checks and documents have been successfully completed.

If this is the case, the hiring manager must complete a risk assessment to this effect and add to the employee's online staff folder. If a police check is not forthcoming then a letter of professional standing can be asked for from someone who is in a professional role, not a relative who has known the candidate for the period in question being checked. Whether a delayed overseas police check or letter of professional standing the risk assessment must be reviewed every two weeks and



signed off to clearly evidence no issues with supervision of employment with the new employee.

Suitability Checks

All candidates will be asked to complete a self-disclosure check on their suitability to work with children (the Little Dukes termly suitability check) this will be reviewed by the hiring manager. This check will be completed termly following a successful hire.

Health checks:

As a responsible employer, we ensure that those we employ have the mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. Therefore, we request all prospective employees to complete a medical questionnaire once an offer of employment has been made. If necessary, we will seek further medical advice, with the written consent of the prospective employee. This also applies to those who seek to work for us either as supply staff or volunteers.

The hiring manager will review these health checks and where there are any medical issues that might affect an employee's suitability to work with children they will discuss with the employee and where necessary put a support plan in place. This should be reviewed at least on a termly basis and will be filed in the medical folder on Hi Bob.

Existing, agency and third-party team members and volunteers:

The Headteacher will obtain - from the organisation that they use for any agency and third-party team members including Peripatetic teachers and volunteers - written notification that the organisation has carried out the relevant safer recruitment checks on the individuals who will be working at the nursery.

The Headteacher will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Any information disclosed as part of the DBS check will be treated confidentially. This confirmation will be used as evidence on the Single Central Record if requested by Ofsted. If the nursery has concerns about an existing team member's suitability to work with children, all relevant checks will be carried out as if the person were a new team member.

The level of checks required on a volunteer is dependent on the type of duties they will be performing, for example a supervised volunteer is not considered to be undertaking a regulated activity, but the nursery may require an enhanced DBS check only. If they are unsupervised then they will be undertaking a regulated activity and therefore will require an enhanced DBS check with a barred list check.

It is not necessary to obtain a DBS Disclosure for secondary pupils undertaking voluntary work or work experience. However, as good practice we ensure they sign in and out and are not left unsupervised with children. A risk assessment will be completed for any such pupils.

Little Dukes nurseries requires that all necessary checks and DBS checks have been satisfactorily completed for peripatetic team members.

Inductions:

All team members and volunteers who are new to the nursery will receive information on the mandatory policies and a copy of the employee handbook. It is every team member's responsibility to read and understand the handbook.

All new team members undergo a period of monitoring (induction period) and must meet regularly with their hiring manager in line with the guidelines laid out in their employee handbook.

In cases where short term agency staff are required to cover sickness or unexpected vacancies, the DSL must complete the day one induction for Agency staff and hold this on record.

DSLs must assure themselves that the agency staff in question have the relevant understanding of policy and procedures to enable them to safely care for children.

Where agency staff have been employed on a longer-term basis they should be inducted and trained in the same ways as permanent staff.

All new team members must complete all mandatory online training and attend any additional training deemed appropriate by their line manager.

If at any point during this induction period or longer probation period there are any concerns about the employee's behaviour or suitability to work with children, these must be addressed immediately by the Headteacher in line with our safeguarding and disciplinary policies.

Ofsted and LADO must be informed immediately if any team member is, suspended, 'disqualified' or is dismissed (or would have been, had they not left the nursery first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, a referral will also be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Contact details for Ofsted:

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Telephone: 0300 123 4666

By post: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Legislative Framework:

Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2> (Updated 2024)

Safeguarding policy

Whistle blowing policy

Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> (Updated 2024)

GDPR/Confidentiality policy

Data protection Act 2006

[Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006)

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006