



Student and Volunteer Placements Policy

Statement of Intent

Toddington Childcare and Forest School recognises that qualifications, training and practical experience make an important contribution to the quality of care, education and learning provided to children.

As part of our commitment to developing the early years workforce, we welcome suitable students and volunteers where their placement can provide valuable experience and can be accommodated without compromising the care, education, safety or wellbeing of the children.

The needs of the children will always remain our priority.

Aims

We aim to:

- provide students and volunteers with positive experiences of high-quality early years practice;
- support students to contribute towards the successful completion of their studies or training;
- provide opportunities to observe and develop good practice in early years care and education;
- work cooperatively with schools, colleges, universities and training providers; and
- ensure that students and volunteers are suitable, appropriately supervised and aware of their responsibilities towards children.

Methods

- All student and volunteer placements must be agreed by the Setting Manager before the placement begins.
- We will consider the age, experience, training, proposed role, length of placement and suitability of each student or volunteer, together with the needs of the children and the impact on the setting.
- We will obtain appropriate references for students and volunteers before they begin their placement, in accordance with the EYFS requirements. References will normally be obtained from an appropriate school, college, university, training provider or previous employer.
- We will undertake the appropriate DBS and suitability checks required for the individual's role.
 - From 1 September 2026, the removal of the supervision exemption means that some volunteers who regularly work directly with children will be undertaking regulated activity and will therefore require an enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information. We will determine the appropriate level of check according to the individual's role and current DBS guidance.
- Our detailed approach to criminal records and the recruitment of people with convictions is set out in our Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.
- Students and volunteers will receive an appropriate induction before working with children. This will include safeguarding and child protection, confidentiality, health and safety, professional conduct, emergency procedures and relevant setting policies.
- Students and volunteers will be appropriately supervised according to their age, experience, competence, role and the needs of the children.
- Students and volunteers will not be given responsibilities beyond their level of competence or training and will not be used as a substitute for appropriately qualified staff.
- Students and volunteers will not automatically be included in our staffing ratios. Where permitted by the EYFS, a suitable student on a long-term placement or a volunteer aged 17 or over may be counted within the ratios where we are satisfied that they are competent and responsible and all relevant EYFS requirements are met.
 - Short-term students and work-experience placements will normally be additional to our required staffing levels.
 - We will ensure that appropriate paediatric first-aid arrangements are maintained at all times and will only count an individual within ratios where the relevant EYFS requirements are met.

- Students and volunteers must follow our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and immediately report any concerns about a child or an adult working with children.
- Students and volunteers must maintain confidentiality and comply with our Confidentiality Policy and Data Protection and Privacy Policy. They must not share information about children, families or staff or take photographs or recordings of children using personal devices.
- We will work with tutors, placement supervisors and training providers, where appropriate, to support students in meeting the requirements of their course.
- We will provide constructive feedback about a student's placement where appropriate and will raise any concerns about conduct, attendance, safeguarding or suitability with the relevant placement provider.
- We will maintain appropriate insurance arrangements for approved students and volunteers.
- We will not accept students or volunteers in numbers that hinder the essential work of the setting or adversely affect the quality of care and education provided to children.
- We reserve the right to end a placement where there are concerns about safeguarding, suitability, conduct, competence or the individual's ability to comply with the requirements of the setting.

Legislative framework

This policy is based on the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, applicable from September 2026, together with relevant safeguarding, DBS, data protection, equality and health and safety legislation and guidance.

We will review this policy whenever there is a significant change to relevant legislation, statutory guidance or EYFS requirements.

Policy Review Date: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027

Signed on behalf of Toddington Childcare and Forest School;

Name: Sarah Malcolm

Position: Chair of the Board of Trustees