Little Cuckoos Pre-School

Recruitment and Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Policy Statement

Little Cuckoos Pre-School is a committee-run pre-school providing early education and care for children aged 2–5 years.

The registered provider, management committee and staff team are committed to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. We recognise that safe and effective recruitment is essential to ensuring that children receive high-quality care and education in a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment.

We will recruit suitable, caring and responsible individuals who understand the needs of young children and are committed to supporting their learning, development, independence and wellbeing.

All recruitment will be undertaken fairly, consistently and transparently, in accordance with current legislation, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, safeguarding guidance and safer recruitment practice.

The registered provider remains legally accountable for meeting the applicable EYFS requirements and for ensuring that the pre-school is suitable to operate. The management committee may delegate day-to-day tasks to the manager or another authorised person, but delegation does not remove the registered provider's legal accountability.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Registered provider

The registered provider is the person or legal entity registered with Ofsted to provide early education and childcare. For this pre-school, the registered provider is **Arran Bennett**

The registered provider is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the pre-school meets applicable EYFS, safeguarding, suitability, staffing, premises and welfare requirements.

The registered provider must ensure that:

- Suitable people are recruited and remain suitable to work with children.
- Preparing job descriptions and person specifications.
- Arranging advertising, applications, shortlisting and interviews.
- Ensuring that safer recruitment checks are completed and recorded
- Required checks, references, qualifications and suitability assessments are completed.
- Staffing arrangements meet current EYFS requirements.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and implemented.
- The manager and DSL have appropriate authority, support and training.
- Concerns and allegations are referred to the appropriate external agencies.
- There is a safe reporting route for concerns about the manager, DSL, committee members or registered provider.
- Records are accurate, secure and available for inspection where required.

The registered provider is the final internal decision-maker where a matter cannot be resolved by the manager or committee, or where the committee is conflicted.

2.2 Management committee

The management committee supports the registered provider and oversees the pre-school's governance, staffing and recruitment arrangements, subject to the pre-school's constitution and legal structure.

The committee will:

- Approve the staffing structure, recruitment arrangements and recruitment budget.
- Appoint or authorise the recruitment panel.
- Approve appointments or delegate appointment authority in writing.
- Monitor completion of recruitment and suitability checks.
- Support and hold the manager and DSL accountable.
- Ensure that conflicts of interest are declared and managed.
- Ensure that concerns about senior staff or committee members have a safe alternative reporting route.
- Review safeguarding, staffing and recruitment reports.
- Ensure that this policy is reviewed and updated.

The committee must not interfere with safeguarding investigations or attempt to replace the role of the DSL, LADO, children's services, Ofsted or the police.

2.3 Pre-School manager

The manager is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the pre-school within the authority delegated by the registered provider and management committee.

The manager is the decision-maker for routine administration and operational staffing matters, including:

- Identifying staffing needs and advising the committee.
- Supervising staff and monitoring ongoing suitability.
- Ensuring that staff receive induction, safeguarding information and training.
- Reporting safeguarding concerns through the routes in section 3.
- Informing the registered provider of safeguarding concerns and external referrals.
- Taking immediate protective action where necessary, within their authority.

The manager must not investigate or make a final decision about a concern involving themselves or any matter in which they have a conflict of interest.

2.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL leads the pre-school's safeguarding response and is the decision-maker for routine safeguarding concerns about children or adults, unless the DSL is conflicted or is the subject of the concern.

The DSL will:

- Receive, record and assess safeguarding concerns.
- Advise staff, the manager, committee and recruitment panel.
- Make or arrange referrals to children's services, the LADO, Ofsted or the police where required.
- Take or arrange immediate protective action.
- Ensure concerns about adults are not treated solely as employment matters.
- Maintain safeguarding records separately from general personnel records where appropriate.
- Inform the registered provider of significant safeguarding concerns and external referrals.

- Ensure that concerns about the manager, DSL, committee member or registered provider are transferred to the correct alternative decision-maker.

The DSL must not manage or investigate a concern about themselves or any matter where their impartiality may reasonably be questioned.

2.5 Recruitment panel

The recruitment panel is appointed or authorised by the management committee. It makes a recommendation unless written authority has been delegated to it to make the appointment decision.

The panel will:

- Declare conflicts of interest before accessing applications.
- Use the approved job description, person specification and interview questions.
- Assess applicants fairly and consistently.
- Explore safeguarding knowledge and suitability to work with children aged 2–5 years.
- Record interview evidence and the reasons for its recommendation or decision.
- Report any concern to the manager, unless the manager is conflicted, in which case it must report to the Committee Chair.
- Maintain confidentiality.

3. Escalation Routes and External Notifications

3.1 General rule

A concern must be reported to the named decision-maker who is not the subject of the concern. That decision-maker is responsible for recording the concern, taking immediate protective action and making any required external notification or referral.

No person must report a concern to the person who is the subject of it.

If the named decision-maker is unavailable or conflicted, the matter must be transferred immediately to the alternative decision-maker identified below. If no safe internal decision-maker is available, the concern must be reported directly to the relevant external agency.

A person raising a concern may contact an external agency directly where there is an immediate risk of harm, suspected criminal conduct, a concern about the handling of the matter, or no safe internal reporting route.

3.2 Concern about an applicant, volunteer, student or agency worker

Decision-maker: DSL

The concern must be reported to the DSL, who will:

- Record and assess the concern.
- Decide whether the person must be excluded from duties or prevented from starting work.
- Inform the manager and registered provider where appropriate.
- Seek advice from children's services, the LADO or Ofsted where required.
- Contact the police where a crime may have been committed or there is an immediate risk of harm.
- Record the decision, action taken and reasons.

If the concern is about the DSL, the matter must be reported to the Committee Chair under section 3.4.

If the concern is about the manager, the matter must be reported to the Committee Chair under section 3.3.

3.3 Concern about the manager

Decision-maker: Committee Chair

A concern about the manager must not be reported to or investigated by the manager.

The Committee Chair will:

- Record the concern.
- Take immediate protective action where necessary.
- Inform the registered provider.
- Appoint a suitable person to manage any safeguarding response.
- Contact the LADO where the concern may meet the threshold for an allegation against an adult working with children.
- Notify Ofsted where required by the applicable reporting requirements.
- Contact children's services where a child may be at risk of harm or requires safeguarding support.
- Contact the police immediately where there is an emergency, immediate risk of harm or suspected criminal conduct.
- Ensure that the manager does not investigate or make decisions about the concern.

If the Committee Chair is unavailable or conflicted, the decision-maker is the nominated non-conflicted committee member (Treasurer-Barley Moss)

3.4 Concern about the DSL

Decision-maker: Committee Chair

A concern about the DSL must not be reported to or investigated by the DSL.

The Committee Chair will:

- Record the concern.
- Inform the registered provider.
- Appoint a suitable non-conflicted person to manage the safeguarding response.
- Contact the LADO where the concern may meet the threshold for an allegation against an adult working with children.
- Notify Ofsted where required.
- Contact children's services where a child may be at risk of harm or requires safeguarding support.
- Contact the police immediately where there is an emergency, immediate risk of harm or suspected criminal conduct.

If the Committee Chair is unavailable or conflicted, the decision-maker is the nominated non-conflicted committee member.

3.5 Concern about the Committee Chair, registered provider or committee member

Decision-maker: Nominated non-conflicted committee member

A concern about the Committee Chair, registered provider or another committee member must not be reported to or investigated by that person.

The nominated non-conflicted committee member will:

- Record the concern.
- Take immediate protective action where necessary.

- Inform any other non-conflicted committee members.
- Contact the LADO where the concern relates to the safety or suitability of an adult working with children.
- Contact children's services where a child may be at risk of harm or requires safeguarding support.
- Notify Ofsted where the concern may affect the registered provider's compliance or where notification is required.
- Contact the police immediately where there is an emergency, immediate risk of harm or suspected criminal conduct.
- Inform the registered provider only where the registered provider is not the subject of the concern.

If no non-conflicted committee member is available, the person raising the concern must contact the LADO, children's services, Ofsted or the police directly, depending on the nature and urgency of the concern.

3.6 Concern about a recruitment panel member

Decision-maker: Manager

A concern about a recruitment panel member must be reported to the manager, who will:

- Record the concern.
- Remove the panel member from the recruitment process where appropriate.
- Inform the Committee Chair.
- Arrange an alternative panel member if required.
- Refer the matter to the DSL, LADO, children's services, Ofsted or the police where the concern involves safeguarding, suitability, criminal conduct or an allegation about an adult working with children.

If the concern is about the manager, the decision-maker is the Committee Chair.

If the concern is about the Committee Chair, the decision-maker is the nominated non-conflicted committee member.

3.7 Concern that recruitment procedures are being bypassed

Decision-maker: Committee Chair

A person who is pressured to ignore, falsify or bypass safer recruitment checks must report the concern to the Committee Chair.

The Committee Chair will:

- Record the concern.
- Inform the registered provider.
- Stop or suspend the relevant recruitment or appointment process where necessary.
- Ensure that no person undertakes duties for which required checks have not been completed, unless a lawful arrangement applies and all safeguards are in place.
- Refer the matter to the DSL if it raises a safeguarding concern.
- Notify Ofsted where the matter may affect compliance or where notification is required.
- Contact the LADO where the concern relates to the suitability or conduct of an adult working with children.
- Contact children's services where a child may be at risk of harm.
- Contact the police where there is suspected fraud, criminal conduct or an immediate risk of harm.

If the concern is about the Committee Chair or registered provider, the decision-maker is the nominated non-conflicted committee member.

3.8 External notification responsibilities

The person who receives and manages the concern is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate external agency is contacted. The registered provider must be informed of significant concerns and external referrals unless the registered provider is the subject of the concern.

The following routes apply:

- **LADO:** Contact where an allegation or concern may meet the threshold for consideration under procedures for allegations against adults working with children.
- **Children's services:** Contact where a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm, or where safeguarding advice or assessment is required.
- **Ofsted:** Notify where required by the EYFS, Ofsted requirements or other applicable regulations, including relevant serious incidents, allegations, suitability concerns or changes affecting the provider's compliance.
- **Police:** Contact 999 where there is an emergency or immediate risk of harm. Contact 101 for non-emergency suspected criminal conduct or safeguarding concerns requiring police advice.

The person managing the concern must record the date, time, agency contacted, advice received, action taken and any required follow-up.

3.9 External escalation and whistleblowing

If internal reporting is unsafe, inappropriate, delayed or ineffective, the person raising the concern may contact the relevant external authority directly.

Wiltshire safeguarding contact:

- **Name/service:** Integrated Front Door
- **Telephone:** 0300 456 0108 / 0300 456 0100 (Out of Hours)
- **Email:** Integratedfrontdoor@wiltshire.gov.uk
- **Website:** www.wiltshiresvpp.org.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer:

- **Telephone:** 0300 456 0108 (option 6)
- **Email:** LADO@wiltshire.gov.uk

Ofsted:

- **Telephone:** 0300 123 4666
- **Online reporting route:** enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Police:

- **Emergency:** 999
- **Non-emergency:** 101

The setting will not require a person to complete an internal reporting process before contacting an external agency where there is an immediate safeguarding concern or where internal reporting would be unsafe.

4. Conflicts of Interest

Anyone involved in recruitment, safeguarding decision-making or the management of a concern must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest as soon as it arises.

Examples include:

- A family, personal or close professional relationship with an applicant or person involved in the concern.
- A financial interest in an appointment or outcome.
- A previous dispute, grievance or disciplinary matter involving the person.
- Any circumstance that could reasonably call the person's impartiality into question.

The conflicted person must:

- Declare the conflict to the relevant decision-maker.
- Stop participating in the relevant shortlisting, interview, investigation or decision-making process.
- Not access confidential information unless required for a formal investigation or safeguarding purpose.
- Not attempt to influence the outcome.
- Ensure that the conflict and action taken are recorded.

The alternative decision-maker is:

- **Manager conflicted:** Committee Chair.
- **DSL conflicted:** Committee Chair.
- **Committee Chair conflicted:** Nominated non-conflicted committee member.
- **Nominated non-conflicted committee member conflicted:** Another non-conflicted committee member appointed by the registered provider.
- **Whole committee or sufficient committee members conflicted:** Registered provider, who must appoint an independent decision-maker or seek appropriate external advice.

Where the registered provider is also conflicted, the matter must be referred directly to the LADO, children's services, Ofsted or the police, as appropriate. The person raising the concern must not wait for an internal decision-maker where doing so could place a child or another person at risk.

5. Recruitment Procedure

When a vacancy arises, the manager will discuss the staffing need with the committee Chair & Treasurer

The committee will agree the role, hours, qualifications, responsibilities and budget before advertising.

The setting will prepare a job description and person specification identifying the duties, essential qualifications, experience, safeguarding responsibilities and personal qualities required.

Applicants will normally complete an application form and provide:

- Personal and contact details.
- Complete employment and education history.
- Explanations for significant gaps.
- Relevant qualifications and experience.
- Details of referees.
- Other information reasonably required to assess suitability.

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed. Questions will assess experience of working with children aged 2–5 years, safeguarding knowledge, child development, safe and inclusive care, professional judgement and commitment to children's welfare.

The selection decision and reasons will be recorded. Any unexplained gaps, discrepancies or concerns will be investigated before appointment.

Any offer will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the required checks unless a lawful arrangement permits the person to start subject to specified safeguards.

6. Safer Recruitment Checks

Before an appointment is confirmed, the Chair will ensure that the checks required for the role have been completed and recorded, including:

- Identity verification.
- Right-to-work checks.
- References obtained directly and verified.
- Relevant qualification checks.
- Appropriate DBS checks.
- Children's barred-list check where the role is legally eligible.
- Employment history and explanations for gaps.
- Applicable childcare disqualification and suitability checks.
- Any other checks required by current legislation or the EYFS.

The pre-school will not knowingly appoint anyone barred from regulated activity with children or otherwise legally prohibited from the role.

No person may start where a check identifies that they are barred, disqualified or otherwise legally prohibited from the role.

8. Volunteers, Students, Agency Staff and Committee Members

Volunteers, students and agency staff will receive checks, references, induction and supervision appropriate to their roles.

They will not be counted in staffing ratios unless permitted by the current EYFS requirements and will not replace suitably qualified staff.

Committee members who have regular contact with children or undertake duties within the setting will receive the checks required for their actual duties. Committee membership alone does not determine the level of DBS check required.

9. Induction and Ongoing Suitability

All new staff will receive induction covering:

- Safeguarding and child protection.
- The role of the DSL.
- Reporting concerns about children and adults.
- Allegations and whistleblowing.
- Professional boundaries and staff conduct.
- Health and safety.
- First aid and accident procedures.
- Confidentiality and data protection.
- Positive behaviour support.

- Equality and inclusion.
- The EYFS and the setting's approach to learning, development and care.

Staff must report any change in circumstances that may affect their suitability.

The manager will supervise staff and monitor conduct. The DSL will manage routine safeguarding concerns. The relevant alternative decision-maker identified in section 3 will manage concerns involving the manager, DSL, Committee Chair, registered provider or committee members. The registered provider will oversee significant concerns and ensure that required external notifications are made.

10. Confidentiality and Records

Recruitment information will be stored securely in accordance with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and the pre-school's data protection procedures.

The Chair will maintain recruitment records and provide the committee with confirmation of completed checks without unnecessary disclosure of sensitive information.

Records may include:

- Applications and employment history.
- Interview and selection records.
- References.
- Identity and right-to-work checks.
- DBS details and suitability decisions.
- Qualification and training evidence.
- Disqualification or suitability records.
- Induction and supervision records.
- Outstanding checks and safeguards.
- Conflicts of interest.
- Safeguarding concerns and escalation records.
- External referrals and notifications.

Access will be limited to authorised people who need the information for their duties.

11. Equality and Inclusion

The pre-school is committed to equal opportunities and will not unlawfully discriminate against applicants or employees.

Recruitment decisions will be based on the requirements of the role, suitability and the safeguarding and operational needs of the children.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled applicants.

Criminal record information will be considered fairly and proportionately where the law permits the applicant to be considered.

12. Review and Approval

The management committee will review this policy at least annually and whenever legislation, EYFS requirements, DBS arrangements, right-to-work requirements, disqualification requirements or safeguarding guidance changes.

13. Related Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers Procedure.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Equality and Inclusion Policy.
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.
- Induction and Staff Training Procedure.
- Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.
- Safer Recruitment Checklist.
- Staff suitability and staff-check record.
- Committee constitution and scheme of delegation.
- Current Wiltshire safeguarding and LADO procedures.
- Current Ofsted notification and reporting guidance.

Key Contacts & Sign-Off

Role / Contact	Details
Registered Management Committee Chair	Arran Bennett
Policy responsibility	Management & Committee Chair
Day-to-day implementation	Pre-School Manager
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Hayley McMahon - Manager
Deputy DSL	Vicky Smith - Deputy Manager
Nominated alternative	Barley Moss - Treasurer
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	LADOservice@wiltshire.gov.uk
Wiltshire safeguarding contact	0300 456 0108 / 0300 456 0100 (Out of Hours)
Ofsted contact	0300 123 4666
Police emergency contact	999

Police non-emergency contact	101

Approved by the Management Committee Chair: Arran Bennett

Date: 28/10/2026

Next review date: 28/10/2027