



## **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Staff:Child ratios**

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety

### **5.1 Staffing**

#### **Policy statement**

At **Impact Montessori Nursery**, we recognise that effective staffing is essential to children's safety, wellbeing, learning and development.

We ensure that staffing arrangements meet or exceed the requirements of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework** and that sufficient suitably qualified and experienced adults are available to meet the needs of the children attending.

Staff are deployed according to children's ages, individual needs, activities, the environment and any additional safeguarding or support requirements.

We maintain appropriate records of staff qualifications, training, suitability checks and ongoing professional development.

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#### **Staffing ratios.**

##### **Children aged two**

The minimum ratio is:

##### **1 adult to 5 children**

Where applicable:

- at least one member of staff holds a full and relevant Level 3 qualification or above; and
- at least half of the other staff hold a full and relevant Level 2 qualification or above.

##### **Children aged three and over**

The minimum ratio is:

##### **1 adult to 8 children**

Where applicable:

- at least one member of staff holds a full and relevant Level 3 qualification or above; and
- at least half of the other staff hold a full and relevant Level 2 qualification or above.

Where a suitably qualified teacher, Early Years Professional, Early Years Teacher or other appropriate Level 6 practitioner is working directly with children aged three and over, the nursery may operate the alternative staffing arrangements permitted by the current EYFS requirements.

Any such arrangements will only be used where the statutory conditions are met.

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## **Deployment of staff**

The manager is responsible for ensuring that staff are appropriately deployed throughout the nursery.

Staff deployment takes account of:

- the number and ages of children attending;
- children's individual needs;
- additional needs or disabilities;
- staff qualifications and experience;
- the layout of the nursery;
- indoor and outdoor activities;
- staff breaks and absences;
- safeguarding considerations;
- children requiring additional support; and
- the requirements of the EYFS.

Staff will be positioned so that children receive appropriate supervision and support.

Children will normally be within sight and/or hearing of staff in accordance with their age, needs and the activity taking place.

Staff will remain alert and attentive to children and will avoid unnecessary conversations or activities that distract them from their responsibilities.

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## **Key person system**

Every child is allocated a key person.

The key person:

- develops a secure and positive relationship with the child;
- works in partnership with parents and carers;
- supports the child's wellbeing, care and learning;
- contributes to observations and assessments;
- helps the child settle into nursery;
- supports transitions; and
- ensures relevant information about the child is shared with appropriate members of the team.

A suitable back-up person will be identified so that children continue to receive consistent care when their key person is absent.

Further information is provided in our **Role of the Key Person and Settling-In Policy**.

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## Qualifications and suitability

Impact Montessori Nursery ensures that staff working directly with children meet the relevant qualification and suitability requirements of the EYFS.

Before staff are permitted to work unsupervised with children, the nursery completes the required recruitment and suitability checks.

These include, as appropriate:

- identity checks;
- references;
- enhanced DBS checks and barred list checks;
- qualification checks;
- right-to-work checks;
- employment history checks;
- suitability declarations; and
- any other checks required by legislation or the EYFS.

Further information is provided in our **Safer Recruitment Policy**.

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## Students, apprentices and volunteers

Students, apprentices and volunteers are welcomed where their presence benefits the children and the nursery.

They:

- receive an appropriate induction;
- are made aware of nursery policies and procedures;
- are appropriately supervised;
- are not left with sole responsibility for children;
- are not counted in statutory ratios unless the relevant statutory requirements are met; and
- are deployed according to their competence, experience and the needs of the children.

Volunteers and students will never be used as a substitute for appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

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## Supervision of children

Staff have a responsibility to maintain effective supervision at all times.

Staff must:

- know which children they are responsible for;
- maintain appropriate sight and/or hearing of children;
- complete regular headcounts where appropriate;
- communicate with colleagues when moving between areas;
- inform colleagues when leaving an area;
- ensure that children are not left unsupervised;

- remain aware of potential hazards; and
- follow the nursery's safeguarding, health and safety and risk assessment procedures.

Particular care will be taken during:

- arrival and collection;
  - transitions between activities;
  - outdoor play;
  - toileting and personal care;
  - mealtimes;
  - sleep/rest periods;
  - outings; and
  - staff changes or breaks.
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### **Staff breaks and absence**

The manager will organise staff breaks to ensure that statutory ratios and appropriate supervision are maintained.

Where a member of staff is absent, the manager will arrange suitable cover.

Contingency arrangements may include:

- reallocating staff;
- using appropriately qualified bank or agency staff;
- adjusting activities or room arrangements;
- reducing the number of children attending where necessary; or
- temporarily closing a provision if safe staffing levels cannot be maintained.

The nursery will never knowingly operate below the statutory staffing requirements.

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### **Lone working and emergency arrangements**

The nursery will assess any situation in which staff may be working alone and will put appropriate safeguards in place.

Where emergency circumstances affect staffing levels, the manager will immediately assess the situation and take action to ensure children's safety.

This may include contacting additional staff, reducing activities, moving children to another supervised area or contacting parents/carers where necessary.

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### **Staff communication and meetings**

Regular staff meetings and supervision are used to:

- discuss children's wellbeing and development;
- review safeguarding concerns;

- plan learning and activities;
- review staffing arrangements;
- discuss training and professional development;
- identify emerging risks;
- review incidents and accidents; and
- ensure consistent approaches across the staff team.

Information about individual children will be shared appropriately and confidentially.

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### **Staff conduct and professional responsibilities**

All staff are expected to:

- prioritise children's safety and wellbeing;
- follow nursery policies and procedures;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- treat children with dignity and respect;
- promote positive behaviour;
- maintain confidentiality;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- remain attentive when supervising children; and
- raise concerns if staffing arrangements or deployment could compromise children's safety.

Staff must inform the manager if they believe that staffing levels, deployment or working conditions are creating a safeguarding or health and safety concern.

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### **Review of staffing arrangements**

Staffing arrangements will be reviewed regularly and whenever there is a significant change, including:

- changes in the number or ages of children attending;
- changes in children's individual needs;
- staff absence;
- changes to qualifications;
- changes to the nursery environment;
- significant incidents or safeguarding concerns; or
- changes to statutory requirements.

The manager will ensure that staffing remains appropriate to the needs of the children throughout each session.

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### **Legal and statutory framework**

This policy is informed by:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework;**
- relevant safeguarding and welfare requirements;
- **Equality Act 2010;**
- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;** and

- current Ofsted requirements and guidance.
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**This policy was adopted by:** Impact Montessori Nursery

**Date adopted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next review:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed on behalf of the provider:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of signatory:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Role:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_