

Staff Ratios and Attendance Policy

December 2022

Policy for Maintaining Staff: Children Ratios in Case of Staff Illness or Isolation

Since making several redundancies in the Pre School academic year (2019/20), we unfortunately no longer have the staffing levels to run as comfortably as we have done previously. In the current climate we have started to discuss what our plan would be as a Pre School if a member of the team was off for a period of time or had to isolate due to Covid-19 symptoms or other illnesses. We believe that with the staffing levels we have we can cope with short term illnesses within the team and cover each other, however if 1 or more team members are off for more than 2-3 days then it could mean that we are below the recommended ratio of staff: children. It is important that we outline our plan on how to deal with this especially in the winter months when illnesses are more likely.

The advice for staff ratios in a pre-school setting from the Department for Education is

Age	1	2	3+
Staff : Children	1:3	1:4	1:8

In line with our sickness policy if a member of staff is ill or unable to work, they must inform their line manager ASAP, by telephone on the morning (or prior) to the day they are unable to work. We then ask that regular updates are provided about subsequent days.

In an instance where our planned staffing levels for the day do not meet the above highlighted ratios, we will follow the following points.

1. Pre School-Manager or Deputy Manager to call other members of Pre-School staff to see if anyone can work additional hours to ensure ratios are met.
2. If this is unsuccessful then the Manager or Deputy Manager would need to look at the list of children due into Pre School and contact the parents who have previously informed the Pre School that there may be flexibility in the requirements they have for childcare, for example where a parent is not working or able to work from home we would contact them and ask if they can keep their child at home for that day or a period of time to allow us to still meet the required ratios.

Priority will be given in the following order;

- Children where all caregivers/Parents are working and are deemed as critical Workers
- Vulnerable children and children with an EHC/SENIF plan in place
- Children where all caregivers/Parents are working
- Children where all caregivers/parents are working from home
- Children where caregivers/parents are not all working that specific day

Separate conversations will need to take place with parents ASAP to determine where there may be some flexibility. It is always our priority to keep Pre School open, and therefore where we can remain open for families who require the childcare due to work then we will try to do this.

3. We do not usually use agencies at Houghton Pre School to cover staffing but in a last chance situation we could approach volunteers, or agencies that are known and DBS cleared to see if they can work.

Two Agencies that we could call:

- Randstad Education Cambridge: 01223 368836
- Teaching Personnel Cambridge: 01223 393597

It is worth noting that agency use will come at a considerable cost to the Pre-School both Financially and in increasing the risk of who is brought into the pre-school 'Bubble'; therefore, the Manager or Deputy Manager will be left to weigh up the risks on the day of whether this is an option we consider.

4. Temporary Pre-School Closure. We will work with our local authority to identify how appropriate provision can be put in place while keeping staffing arrangements as consistent as possible. They will advise us on looking at staffing pools that might be available for us to use.
5. Where all other options are exhausted, we will have to inform parents (via Family) that we have to temporarily close the Pre-School. We will keep you as updated as we can and aim to let you know how long we think the Pre-School will need to close. Again, we will work with our local authority to support families in finding alternative childcare settings if families require childcare support, during the closed period.

*This policy was adopted at a meeting of **HOUGHTON & WYTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP***

To be reviewed as required.

Signed on behalf of the Parent Management Committee:



*Name of Signatory: **CLAIRE ANDERSON***

*Role of Signatory: **CHAIRPERSON***