



## Staff Ratios and Attendance

### Introduction

Houghton and Wyton Pre-school is committed to ensuring children's safety, well-being, and development through consistent staffing that meets statutory requirements. This policy outlines the procedures followed when staffing levels fall below the required staff-to-child ratios due to absence, illness, or other unforeseen circumstances.

### Aim

To outline the steps taken to maintain statutory staff-to-child ratios in the event of short-term staff absence or staffing shortfalls, while continuing to deliver safe and effective care.

### Objectives

We will:

- Maintain statutory staff-to-child ratios at all times
- Ensure appropriate cover for staff absence
- Prioritise continuity of care for children and families
- Minimise disruption through early planning and communication

### Statutory Staff-to-Child Ratios

- Children under 2 years: **1:3**
- Children aged 2 years: **1:5**
- Children aged 3 and over: **1:8**

These ratios are in line with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2023)

### Reporting Staff Absence

- Staff must inform the Manager as early as possible (preferably the night before or by 7:30am at the latest)
- Ongoing absences must be regularly updated and reviewed

### Contingency Planning for Staffing Shortfalls

If planned or unplanned absences place us below the statutory ratios:

#### 1. Internal Cover

- The Manager will contact bank staff or non-working staff to check availability for extra shifts
- Staff hours may be adjusted where possible to maintain ratio coverage

#### 2. Parent Flexibility

- The Manager may review the daily attendance list and contact families who have previously indicated flexibility in childcare needs
- Parents may be asked to keep their child at home for the day to maintain safe ratios

Priority for Attendance (if reduced spaces):

1. Children of critical workers where all parents are working
2. Vulnerable children or those with an EHCP/SENIF plan
3. Children where all parents are working outside the home
4. Children where parents are working from home



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5. Children where one or both parents are not working on that day

### **3. Use of Agency or Volunteer Support**

- As a last resort, the Manager may contact known DBS-checked volunteers or supply agencies:
  - Randstad Education Cambridge – 01223 368836
  - Teaching Personnel Cambridge – 01223 393597
- Agency staff are used only when absolutely necessary due to cost and disruption risk

### **4. Temporary Closure**

If all reasonable alternatives have been exhausted:

- The pre-school may close temporarily for some or all children
- Families are informed via Family with as much notice as possible
- The pre-school works with the Local Authority to:
  - Explore staff sharing or emergency cover pools
  - Help families find temporary childcare elsewhere if needed

### **Risk Management**

- All staffing adjustments are risk assessed by the Manager
- Every effort is made to minimise disruption and protect continuity for children

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees, or sooner if operational pressures, staffing structures, or guidance changes.

### **Legislation and Guidance**

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2023)
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

### **Acknowledgment**

All staff, trustees, and families must confirm they have read and understood this policy. By doing so, they support the setting's commitment to maintaining safe and legal staffing arrangements at all times. environment for all children.