

Little Acorns Montessori

Ascot | Bracknell | Crowthorne

Staffing & Employment Policy

Document Control	
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1. Policy Statement

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in our care across our settings in Ascot, Bracknell, and Crowthorne. We recognise that a safe, skilled, and well-supported workforce is the foundation of high-quality early years provision.

This policy sets out our commitment to:

- recruiting, selecting, and retaining staff, volunteers, and students who are suitable, qualified, and safe to work with young children;
- maintaining staffing ratios, qualifications, and supervision standards that meet or exceed statutory requirements;
- ensuring that all pre-employment checks are completed rigorously and recorded accurately;
- supporting staff health, wellbeing, and professional development;
- managing staff absences in a manner that preserves the safety of children at all times; and
- maintaining a culture of openness, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- ensuring that this policy, read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, contains the procedures we follow to check the suitability of all individuals recruited to work or volunteer at the setting, in compliance with EYFS 2025.

This policy is mandatory. All staff, volunteers, and students must read and comply with it. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

2. Statutory and Regulatory Framework

This policy fulfils the requirements of the following primary legislation and statutory guidance:

Primary Legislation

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (and Exceptions Order 1975, as amended)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996

Statutory Guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, DfE 2025 (effective 1 September 2025) — Section 3 (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements)
- Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards (effective 1 January 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (HM Government)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025 — for context and best practice
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (DfE statutory guidance)
- Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB) procedures and guidance

Statutory reference: EYFS 2025 Section 3, paragraphs 3.3, 3.7, 3.10–3.28, 3.29–3.34, 3.35–3.56; Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards (Jan 2026).

3. Scope

This policy applies across all Little Acorns Montessori settings and to all individuals working or volunteering at the setting, including:

- Permanent and temporary paid staff
- Agency and supply workers
- Regular and long-term volunteers
- Students and trainees on placement
- Apprentices
- Contractors who have regular, unsupervised contact with children

One-off volunteers (for example, parents accompanying a trip) who will not be left unsupervised with children are not required to undergo the full vetting process; however, they must be supervised at all times by a fully vetted member of staff.

4. Staffing Ratios

We comply with the statutory staff-to-child ratios set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework (paragraphs 3.35 onwards). The minimum ratios are:

Age of Children	Minimum Staff:Child Ratio
3 months to 23 months	1:3
2 years	1:5
3 to 7 years	1:8

A minimum of two members of staff must be on duty at all times, regardless of the number of children present.

Where higher qualification-linked ratios apply (Level 2, Level 3, Level 6), we ensure compliance with the Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards (effective January 2026).

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.35–3.50; Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards (Jan 2026).

5. Paediatric First Aid (PFA)

We comply with the EYFS 2025 requirement that at least one person holding a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate is present on the premises and available at all times when children are present. A PFA-qualified member of staff must also accompany children on all outings.

- PFA certificates must be for a full course consistent with the criteria in Annex A of the EYFS Statutory Framework and must be renewed every three years.
- All staff who obtained a Level 2 or Level 3 qualification on or after 30 June 2016 must hold a current PFA or Emergency PFA (EPFA) certificate to be counted within the required staff-to-child ratios.
- From 1 September 2025, students on long-term placements, long-term volunteers, and apprentices must also hold a current PFA qualification in order to be counted in staffing ratios.
- A PFA-trained member of staff must be present in the room whenever children are eating snacks or meals.
- PFA certificates (or a list of staff holding current certificates) are made available to parents and carers on request.
- The manager ensures the number of children, staff, and layout of premises are taken into account so that a paediatric first aider can respond to emergencies promptly.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.29–3.32 and Annex A.

6. Staff Qualifications

All staff hold qualifications appropriate to their role and position within the staffing ratios. We refer to the DfE Early Years Qualifications List and the Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards to determine the level at which each member of staff may be counted in ratios.

- To count in ratios at Level 3, staff holding an Early Years Educator (EYE) qualification must also hold a suitable Level 2 qualification in English.
- Level 3 staff are no longer required to hold a Level 2 Maths qualification solely to count in ratios; however, the manager is responsible for ensuring all staff have sufficient mathematics knowledge to deliver the EYFS curriculum effectively.
- Students and apprentices may be counted in ratios at the level below their current level of study, provided the manager is satisfied they are competent and responsible, and they hold a current PFA qualification.
- From September 2025, staff who have attained Experience-Based Route (EBR) status, received provider approval, and hold a current PFA qualification may be included in ratios in place of a Level 3-qualified staff member. The EBR is not a full qualification and is not automatically transferable to a new employer.
- All staff are required to maintain the right skills and knowledge for their role. Competence is evidenced through induction, probation, supervision, peer observation, and appraisal records.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.37–3.50; Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards (Jan 2026).

7. Manager and Deputy Manager

- The setting manager holds an appropriate early years qualification and has a minimum of two years' experience of working in an early years setting (or equivalent suitable experience).
- Managers appointed on or after 1 January 2024 must hold a Level 2 qualification in Maths, or must achieve one within two years of their appointment date.
- A named deputy manager is designated who, in the manager's judgement, is capable and qualified to take charge of the setting in the manager's absence. The name of the deputy is recorded in setting records and communicated to all staff.
- We notify Ofsted of any change to our Registered Person, trustees, manager, or provision in accordance with our legal obligations.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.51–3.53.

8. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

In accordance with EYFS 2025 requirements, we designate a named member of staff as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the setting.

- The DSL's name and role are clearly communicated to all staff, volunteers, and parents and carers.
- The DSL undertakes appropriate safeguarding training meeting the criteria set out in the EYFS 2025 framework. This training must be renewed every two years.
- In the absence of the DSL, a named deputy DSL assumes lead safeguarding responsibility.
- Full safeguarding responsibilities of the DSL are set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.4–3.6; Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

9. Safer Recruitment and Pre-Employment Checks

We are committed to safer recruitment in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, and Ofsted requirements.

Refer to Safer Recruitment Policy for information on Safer Recruitment and Pre-Employment Checks.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.10–3.22; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

10. Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006

The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 place a legal duty on Little Acorns Montessori to ensure that no member of staff, volunteer, or apprentice who is disqualified under those Regulations is employed in connection with our early years or later years provision.

10.1 Who is in Scope

The disqualification check applies to all staff who:

- Provide early years childcare — that is, any care or education for children from birth up to and including reception age, during and outside school hours; and/or
- Are directly concerned in the management of such provision.

10.2 Grounds for Disqualification

A person is disqualified under the Regulations if any of the following apply:

- They have been cautioned for, or convicted of, certain specified violent or sexual criminal offences against adults or children.
- They are subject to a court order, direction, or similar relating to childcare — including orders made in respect of their own children.
- They have had an Ofsted registration refused or cancelled in relation to childcare provision.
- They are included on the DBS Children's Barred List.
- They have been prohibited from private fostering.

10.3 Disqualification by Association

Disqualification by association (i.e., disqualification arising because an individual lives with a disqualified person) does not apply to non-domestic settings such as Little Acorns Montessori. It applies only to domestic childcare providers such as childminders. Staff at our settings are therefore not required to disclose information about household members for this purpose.

Reference: Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018; DfE statutory guidance 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006'; KCSIE September 2025.

10.4 Self-Declaration

- As part of the pre-employment process, all relevant staff must complete a self-declaration form confirming they are not disqualified under the Regulations.

- Self-declaration forms are held securely on the individual's personnel file.
- Staff are required annually to confirm whether their circumstances have changed. This is incorporated into the appraisal cycle and/or academic year welcome information. Any change that may give rise to disqualification must be reported to the manager immediately.
- Providing false information on a self-declaration form is an offence. The manager must not employ a person who is disqualified, except where the manager can demonstrate they did not know and had no reasonable grounds for believing the person was disqualified.

10.5 Waivers

- A disqualified person may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification.
- Ofsted cannot grant a waiver to a person who is on the Children's Barred List.
- Little Acorns Montessori must not employ a disqualified person in a relevant role unless and until a waiver has been granted by Ofsted in writing.

10.6 Action on Discovery of Disqualification

Where the manager becomes aware that a member of staff may be disqualified, the following steps must be taken immediately:

- The member of staff must be informed of the potential disqualification and its implications.
- The individual must not be left in a role to which the disqualification applies pending investigation.
- The manager must consult the DSL and seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB).
- If disqualification is confirmed, employment in the relevant role must be terminated unless Ofsted grants a waiver.
- A referral to the DBS must be made if the individual was dismissed or would have been dismissed because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

11. Volunteer Policy

Little Acorns Montessori welcomes volunteers who contribute positively to children's learning and experiences. All volunteers are subject to the following requirements to ensure the safety of children in our care.

11.1 Categories of Volunteer

- Long-term / regular volunteers — those who volunteer on a planned, recurring basis, including where they may be counted in ratios.
- One-off / occasional volunteers — those who assist on a single occasion (for example, accompanying a trip or contributing to a special event) and who will not be left unsupervised with children.

11.2 Pre-Placement Requirements for Long-Term Volunteers

Before commencing a long-term or regular voluntary placement, all volunteers must:

- Provide at least one satisfactory reference from a suitable person (for example, a teacher, employer, or community leader). References from relatives or friends are not acceptable.
- Undergo an Enhanced DBS check, including a Children's Barred List check where the role involves regulated activity. A volunteer must not be left unsupervised with children until the DBS result is received.
- Complete the setting's self-declaration of disqualification (see Section 10.4).
- Have their identity verified in person.

- Receive a volunteer induction covering safeguarding, the setting's Whistleblowing Policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, and expectations for behaviour with children.
- Hold a valid and current PFA qualification if they are to be counted in staffing ratios (EYFS 2025, paragraph 3.56).

11.3 Counting Volunteers in Ratios

Long-term volunteers aged 17 or over may be counted in staffing ratios at the level below their level of study, provided:

- The manager is satisfied they are competent and responsible;
- They hold a valid and current PFA qualification; and
- All required vetting checks have been satisfactorily completed.

11.4 One-Off Volunteers

- One-off volunteers are not required to undergo the full vetting process.
- One-off volunteers must be supervised at all times by a fully vetted member of staff and must not be left alone with children.
- The manager must ensure that adequate supervision arrangements are in place before any one-off volunteer is permitted on the premises.

11.5 Whistleblowing

All volunteers must be informed of the setting's Whistleblowing Policy. Volunteers may raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice without fear of detriment, in the same way as paid staff. Concerns should be raised with the DSL or, if the concern involves the DSL, directly with the manager.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.7, 3.20, 3.56; Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

12. Student Placement Policy

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to supporting the professional development of students and trainees undertaking early years placements. All placements are managed in a way that ensures children's safety and welfare is not compromised.

12.1 Pre-Placement Requirements

Before commencing a placement, all students must:

- Provide at least one satisfactory reference — from their training provider, educational institution, or, if they have worked previously, their most recent employer.
- Undergo an Enhanced DBS check, including a Children's Barred List check where the placement involves regulated activity. A student must not be left unsupervised with children until the DBS result is received.
- Complete the setting's self-declaration of disqualification (see Section 10.4).
- Have their identity verified in person.
- Attend an induction at the start of their placement covering safeguarding, the Whistleblowing Policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, and expectations for behaviour with children.

12.2 Counting Students in Ratios

Students on long-term placements aged 17 or over may be counted in staffing ratios at the level below their current level of study, provided:

- The manager is satisfied they are competent and responsible;
- They hold a valid and current PFA qualification; and
- All required vetting checks have been satisfactorily completed.

Students who are on short-term or observational placements are not counted in ratio and must be supervised at all times by a qualified member of staff.

12.3 Supervision and Named Supervisor

- Each student is allocated a named supervisor who is a qualified member of staff.
- The named supervisor is responsible for guiding the student, monitoring their practice, and identifying any concerns about conduct or suitability.
- Any concerns about a student's conduct or suitability must be referred to the manager and DSL immediately, and — where appropriate — to the relevant training provider.

12.4 Liaison with Training Providers

- The manager liaises with the student's training provider or educational institution regarding placement objectives, assessment requirements, and any concerns.
- Where a concern arises about a student's suitability to work with children, the training provider must be notified without delay.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.20, 3.56; Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

13. Staff Taking Medication or Other Substances

Little Acorns Montessori has a duty to ensure that all staff who work directly with children are fit to do so at all times. The following requirements apply to all staff, volunteers, students, and contractors while on the setting's premises or engaged in their duties.

13.1 Prescribed Medication

- If a member of staff is taking prescription medication that may affect their ability to care for children, they must seek further medical advice and inform the manager.
- A member of staff will only work directly with children if written or verbal medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to care for children appropriately.
- All staff medication held on the premises must be stored securely and kept out of reach of children at all times.
- The manager must document any arrangement made in relation to a staff member's medication and the steps taken to ensure children's safety.

13.2 Alcohol and Prohibited Substances

- No member of staff may be under the influence of alcohol or any prohibited substance while working with, or in the presence of, children.
- If the manager has reasonable grounds to believe that a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance, that individual must be removed from direct work with children immediately.
- The manager must take further appropriate action, which may include referral to occupational health, disciplinary proceedings, or — where child protection concerns arise — referral to the DSL and LADO.

13.3 Smoking, E-Cigarettes, and Vaping Devices

This policy applies to cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and all vaping devices.

- Smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited in all areas of the nursery premises, including indoors, in the garden, and in any outdoor spaces used by children.
- Staff who choose to smoke or vape may only do so during their designated break times and must do so away from the nursery premises and out of sight of children and parents.
- After smoking or vaping, staff must wash their hands thoroughly and take all reasonable steps to minimise smoke or vapour odours (for example, by using a jacket or outer layer during breaks and removing it before returning to the children's environment) before returning to work with children.
- The use of e-cigarettes and vaping devices is subject to the same restrictions as smoking. The health risks of second-hand vapour to young children mean that the same precautions as for tobacco smoke must be observed.
- Staff must not smoke or vape in any vehicle used to transport children.

Breach of this requirement will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.3; Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; Health Act 2006 (smoke-free legislation).

14. Managing Staff Absences

Little Acorns Montessori takes all reasonable steps to ensure that statutory staffing ratios are maintained at all times, including during planned and unplanned absences. The safety of children must not be compromised at any time during periods of reduced staffing.

14.1 Reporting Absence

- All staff must report their absence directly to the manager (or deputy, in the manager's absence) by telephone before their shift commences, or as early as possible on the day of absence.
- Text messages or emails are not an acceptable substitute for a telephone call unless the manager has explicitly agreed to this in advance.
- Staff must provide an indication of the expected duration of their absence and must keep the manager updated on their likely return date.

14.2 Maintaining Ratios during Absence

The manager must ensure statutory ratios are maintained at all times. Contingency arrangements include:

- Maintaining a bank of suitable, DBS-checked supply or sessional staff familiar with the setting;
- Redeploying existing qualified staff from other rooms or activities whilst maintaining ratios throughout the setting;
- In term-time-only settings, staff take holiday breaks when the setting is closed. Any other time off must be agreed with the manager with sufficient notice; and
- The named deputy manager is available to assume management responsibility in the manager's absence.

The manager must not allow the setting to operate below statutory ratios. If it is not possible to maintain ratios safely, places must be reduced or the setting must not open until adequate staffing is in place.

14.3 Short-Term Absence

- Sick leave is monitored and managed in accordance with each employee's contract of employment.
- Fit notes (Statement of Fitness for Work, issued by a GP) are required for any absence of seven calendar days or more.
- For absences of fewer than seven calendar days, the manager may request a self-certification form.

- The manager must follow up on all absences in a timely manner. Where a pattern of absence gives rise to concern, this must be addressed through the setting's absence management procedure.

14.4 Return-to-Work

- A return-to-work discussion must be held with the member of staff on their first day back following any period of sickness absence, however short.
- The purpose of the discussion is to welcome the staff member back, confirm they are fit to return, identify any ongoing support needs, and note any pattern of absence.
- A brief record of the return-to-work discussion must be kept on the staff member's personnel file.

14.5 Long-Term Absence

- Where a member of staff is absent for four weeks or more, the manager must consider whether a referral to occupational health is appropriate and whether a phased return to work may be beneficial.
- The manager must maintain regular, supportive contact with the absent staff member (for example, monthly telephone check-ins), subject to the individual's wishes.
- Where long-term absence affects the setting's ability to maintain ratios or programme continuity, the manager must make alternative staffing arrangements without delay.

14.6 Absence and Safeguarding

- Where a concern about a child arises in connection with a staff member's unexplained absence (for example, where the absence follows an allegation or concern), the manager must consult the DSL immediately.
- The DSL must consider whether a referral to the LADO or BFSB is required in accordance with the setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

For child absence and attendance, please refer to the Attendance Policy.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.35–3.50 (ratios); Employment Rights Act 1996; Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

15. Key Person System

We operate a key person system to ensure that each child and family has a named member of staff as their primary point of contact for discussion, communication, and consultation. Key person allocations are shared with parents and carers at the earliest opportunity and reviewed regularly to reflect any changes in staffing or children's needs.

16. Supervision, Appraisal, and Support

We support the professional effectiveness and wellbeing of all staff through regular, structured supervision and annual appraisal.

Supervision meetings provide the opportunity for staff to:

- discuss any issues — particularly concerns relating to children's development or wellbeing, including child protection matters;
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise;
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness and practice; and

- reflect on their own professional development needs.

Supervision records are maintained confidentially and reviewed as part of the appraisal process. Supervision forms a core part of the setting's safeguarding culture and supports the early identification of concerns about children or staff practice.

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.27–3.28.

17. Training, Induction, and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- All new staff, volunteers, and students complete the setting's induction programme within their first week.
- Induction covers, as a minimum: Health and Safety; Safeguarding and Child Protection; key person responsibilities; EYFS requirements; the Whistleblowing Policy; the Staff Code of Conduct; and the Disqualification under the Childcare Act self-declaration process.
- Safeguarding training must meet the criteria set out in the EYFS 2025 Statutory Framework and must be renewed every two years for all relevant staff.
- The DSL must complete Level 3 safeguarding training appropriate to their role, renewed every two years.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff, volunteers, and students through approved external training providers.
- CPD records are maintained for each member of staff and reviewed as part of their annual appraisal.
- Training records must be kept on each individual's personnel file and recorded in the Single Central Record (SCR).

For further information on Staff training, refer to the Staff Qualifications, Training & Support Policy

18. Recording, Record-Keeping, and the Single Central Record

18.1 Single Central Record (SCR)

The manager must maintain a written record — effectively a Single Central Record (SCR) — of all vetting checks for all staff, volunteers, students, and contractors. This record must be available for inspection by Ofsted at all times.

For each individual, the SCR must include:

- Full name and date of birth
- Date of identity verification and documents seen
- Qualification certificates verified (type and date)
- DBS check reference number, date obtained, and the name of the person who obtained it
- Whether a Children's Barred List check was carried out
- Date references received, the referee's name and employer, and any concerns noted
- Overseas criminal records check details (if applicable)
- Date of right-to-work verification
- Disqualification self-declaration date and outcome
- Date of induction completion
- Date of most recent safeguarding training

18.2 Secure Storage

- All recruitment, vetting, and personnel records must be stored securely in a locked cabinet or a password-protected digital system, in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Access is restricted to the manager and DSL.
- Records are retained for a minimum of six years after the individual leaves the setting, or as otherwise required by law.
- Copies of DBS certificates should not be retained beyond six months from the date of the appointment decision unless there is a clearly documented and justified reason to do so. After six months, the DBS reference number, date obtained, and the name of the person who obtained it are retained on the SCR as the permanent record, in line with DBS guidance.

19. Managing DBS Disclosure Outcomes and Ongoing Suitability

19.1 Disclosed Information

Receiving a disclosed criminal record does not automatically bar a candidate from appointment. Each disclosure will be considered on its merits, taking into account:

- The nature of the offence and its relevance to the role;
- The length of time since the offence;
- Whether the offence was a one-off or part of a pattern; and
- The individual's circumstances at the time.

The manager will consult the DSL and, if necessary, seek advice from the BFSB before making a decision.

19.2 Ongoing Disclosure

- All staff and volunteers must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands, or warnings received before or at any time during their employment that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- Staff must also disclose any police investigations, social care inquiries, or investigations by any regulatory authority that relate to them.
- Any change in circumstances that may give rise to disqualification (see Section 10) must be reported to the manager immediately.

19.3 Mandatory Referral to the DBS

Little Acorns Montessori has a legal duty to refer to the DBS any member of staff who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child or vulnerable adult, and who has been dismissed or would have been dismissed had they not resigned.

19.4 Referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Where a concern arises about the conduct of a member of staff towards a child, the manager must contact the LADO without delay. In the Bracknell Forest area, the LADO can be contacted via Bracknell Forest Children's Services. The DSL must be informed immediately.

20. Whistleblowing

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to a culture of openness and transparency. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures are in place for all staff, students, and volunteers in accordance with EYFS 2025 (paragraph 3.7).

- Any member of staff, volunteer, or student who has concerns about the conduct or suitability of a colleague, or about poor or unsafe practice, is encouraged and supported to raise those concerns without fear of detriment.
- Concerns must be raised with the DSL or, if the concern involves the DSL, directly with the manager.

- Where the concern involves the manager or owner, staff should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy for guidance on escalation, including reporting to Ofsted or the BFSB.
- All concerns will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately, and the person raising the concern will be supported throughout.
- Little Acorns Montessori will not tolerate victimisation of any individual who raises a genuine concern in good faith.

For further information, refer to the Whistleblowing Policy

Statutory reference: EYFS Statutory Framework (Sept 2025) 3.7. External contacts include: NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285; Ofsted; GOV.UK whistleblowing guidance for employees.

21. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
Manager / Owner	Overall responsibility for implementing this policy consistently across all settings. Ensures all recruitment, vetting, disqualification, and absence procedures are followed. Maintains the SCR. Makes DBS and LADO referrals as required. Ensures all staff have read and understood this policy.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Provides advice and guidance on all safer recruitment and disqualification matters. Consults with the LADO, BFSB, and Ofsted as required. Keeps up to date with changes in legislation and statutory guidance. Supports the manager in all safeguarding-related decisions.
Deputy Manager	Assumes management responsibility, including oversight of ratios and absences, in the manager's absence. Named deputy DSL assumes safeguarding lead responsibility when the DSL is absent.
All Staff	Read, understand, and comply with this policy. Report concerns about a colleague's suitability to the DSL or manager immediately. Disclose any change in personal circumstances that may affect their suitability, including arrests, cautions, convictions, or disqualification.
Volunteers and Students	Comply with all relevant sections of this policy. Attend induction. Raise concerns via the Whistleblowing Policy. Disclose any changes in circumstances that may affect their suitability.

22. Equal Opportunities

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to genuine equality of opportunity. Our recruitment and selection processes are applied fairly and consistently to all applicants, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, in full compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

A criminal record does not automatically disqualify a candidate from appointment. Each case is considered individually on its merits (see Section 19.1).

23. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by a change in legislation, statutory guidance, Ofsted requirements, or local safeguarding arrangements. The manager is responsible for ensuring the policy remains current and is communicated to all staff, volunteers, and students.

The current version reflects:

- EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (effective September 2025)
- Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards (effective January 2026)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025

24. Sign-Off

Policy Author	Jonathan Duffy
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Date	June 2026
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