**Policy**

Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery has a duty under the Children’s Act 2004 and statutory guidance documents, to ensure that all staff are suitable for their job role. To ensure safer recruitment approaches are implemented when employing staff or volunteers, the following policy will be implemented to ensure a robust and consistent approach.

The named recruitment leads within a nursery are the franchisee and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL - Manager) who have overall responsibility for the recruitment of qualified and suitable staff. Interviewers will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

**Monkey Puzzle Day Nurseries Ltd Head Office Staff:** The recruitment ofall Monkey Puzzle Day Nurseries Ltd Head Office staff, where required, (employed and volunteers) will follow Safer Recruitment procedures

Head Office staff are visitors on nursery premises and should not be left alone with children or included in ratios.

**Procedure**

**Safer Recruitment procedure:**

Please see Annex 1 for an overview of the Safer Recruitment process.

**Job description / Person specification:**

There will be a job description and person specification for every position. The person specification will provide a detailed summary of the expectation of a candidate’s suitability for the role.  The job description and person specification will include a statement on the responsibility of the member of staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

**Criteria for selection**:

Prior to the recruitment process commencing, interviewers will agree the shortlisting criteria, using the person specification. Secondly, pre-agree the interview questions based on the post to be used to conduct the interview and the template to be used for responses.

**Advertising:**

The posts will be advertised, and job adverts will clearly state the position, required skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, expected qualifications and experience.  Adverts will also include the hours and salary for the position.  Job adverts will inform candidates that an enhanced DBS check (at the appropriate level) and self-disclosure if shortlisted, will be required for the post and will signpost candidates to the relevant policies and procedures to read prior to application.

**Applications:**

The candidates will be asked to complete a Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery application form, providing an explanation for any gaps in their employment history. Applications must be completed in full, including full education, employment and voluntary work history including dates and the reason for leaving their most recent post.

All candidates will be invited to review the status of any prior cautions, convictions or reprimands, and informed should they be successfully shortlisted – they will be required to self-disclose at interview.  Further information can be found: <http://hub.unlock.org.uk/contact/>

When using recruitment agencies settings must ensure that they are using Monkey Puzzle Application form and recruitment documents to ensure that the requirements of the Safer recruitment policy is adhered to. A preferred supplier list of recruitment agencies is available on Sharepoint.

**Shortlisting:**

Candidates will be shortlisted according to the criteria set out in the person specification on review of the application form.

**Pre-interview**:

Candidates who are successfully shortlisted will be informed of the documents they will need to provide as evidence at interview.  Additionally, they will be sent a ‘self-declaration’ form. This form will enable candidates to share any information regarding un-spent criminal convictions, reprimands, warnings or cautions at the point of interview. Candidates will be asked to bring the self-disclosure to interview and will provide it to the interviewer. Where necessary we are able to conduct media searches on candidates to explore any criminal activity within the public domain.

**Interviews:**

* Interviews will be undertaken by at least two people, both of whom must have completed Safer Recruitment training. The interviewers will check the candidate’s suitability by ensuring they:
* Have seen the original qualification certificates and verified the copy.
* Have verified the qualification is valid and relevant to the role by referencing the DfE approved qualifications list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eyfs-staffchild-ratios-dfe-approved-qualifications>  (Do not download this document as it is regularly updated).
* All staff qualified at level 3, holding an Early Years Educator qualification also have achieved a suitable level 2 qualification in English and maths as defined by the Department for Education.
* Have checked right to work, copied and validated identity documents including birth certificate and any change of name documents such as marriage certificate and Deed poll letters.
* Have seen the original DBS certificate and recorded the relevant details from the certificate.
* Have confirmed if the candidate is on the update service.
* Have probed candidate’s values and attitudes to working with children.
* Checked any gaps / inconsistences / clarifications highlighted on the application form.
* Have ensured the self-declaration form has been provided and fully completed.

**Decision to appoint:**

Successful candidates will be sent an employment offer letter clearly stating that the position is subject to all pre-appointment checks being completed, including DBS check and satisfactory references.

**References:**

Candidates must provide their two most recent education / employment references. Where possible the references should cover a five year period, and further references may be sought to cover this time period.

* The first reference must be from the candidate’s current or most recent employer.
* The second reference must be from the next consecutive most recent employer.
* If both references are in relation to roles outside of childcare, the candidate’s employment history should be reviewed to undertake an appropriate childcare reference outside of this.
* It is not advised to accept references from a personal email, however if the only option is a reference in this way, then additional verification must be sought. References from family members must not be accepted.
* References must confirm the position held by the candidate and the dates within which they were employed. To be acceptable, references should also indicate whether the candidate was subject to any disciplinary action and whether there are any known reasons why the candidate should not work with children.
* You must make every endeavour to receive work references and cover any gaps in employment. for instance: If a place of work in the last 5 years has closed down, moved or no longer operating under the same name, the candidate can supply their HMRC statement. This will show the dates worked and salary earnt and can become proof of employment to cover a period of time. This does not cover the safeguarding element of a reference and this is why the DBS is so important.
* Candidates will be asked to provide evidence for any gaps in employment/education.
* Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided.
* **All** references **must** be received before commencement of employment.
* Suitable candidates must not commence employment until the hiring manger has deemed the suitability checks sufficient.

**Referencing examples**

**Candidate A –** Working as a nursery nurse at a day nursery for 8 years, before that they worked at Marks and Spencer`s.

Reference request needed from their current day nursery to and Marks and Spencer’s to cover their last 5 years work history as this is covered by the one employer.

**Candidate B** – Working as a carer for the last 6 months, worked in Tesco for 4 years previous to that, Nursery nurse at local day nursery for 3 years prior to that, attended college for 2 years before this.

Reference requests needed from the Care Home and the Day Nursery. This covers the last employer plus their childcare reference.

**Candidate C** – Worked as a nursery nurse for 7 years however this was 5 years ago as they have been caring for their 5-year-old child since then. The nursery was their first and last employment.

References needed – Day nursery from 5 years ago. You will also need to view their child’s birth certificate and ask for proof of the child benefit or a letter from HMRC as proof they have not worked in the 5 years. We can not keep their child’s birth certificate on file due to GDPR but you can sign to say that you have seen this with the child benefit letter or HMRC document.

**References MUST include:**

* All requests for references should enclose a copy of the job description and person
* specification.
* The referee’s opinion should be sought about how the person meets the requirements of the specification and his or her capacity to carry out the duties set out in the job description.
* Every request should also ask the referee to state whether they are aware of anything that might give rise for concern about the person’s suitability to work with children and, if so, to provide details.
* Whether the person has been the subject of any substantiated allegations about their behaviour towards children. If this is the case, there should be a request for a comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved and a note of the action taken and decisions reached.
* details of any disciplinary action the person may have been subject to in relation to behaviour involving children, including any in which any sanctions imposed are expired.
* Referees **should not** be asked about the candidate’s criminal record – this would be a breach of GDPR

References should be provided for previous employees upon request in a timely manner.

When asked to provide references, [providers/childminders] should ensure the information

confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant’s suitability to work with children and

provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations that

meet the harm threshold\*. They should not include information about concerns/allegations

which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.” (EYFS safeguarding reforms

HM gov October 2024)

**Scrutinising References**

It is very important to read references carefully and thoroughly to make sure that:

* The referee has answered all the questions.
* There are no vague or ambiguous statements.

It is also vital to compare the information about the applicant provided by the referee with

the information the applicant has given about him or herself and his or her experience and

background.

If the references reveal any discrepancies or inconsistencies, or any doubts or concerns

about the person’s suitability, the issues should be followed up and explored with the

referee. This is probably best done by telephone, but it is important to keep a written record

of the conversation and if the issues are significant, to confirm your understanding in writing

to the referee. This is particularly important if the information is such that you decide to

withdraw the offer of employment, or that you need to explore the issues with the applicant

further before making a decision.

**Overseas & DBS checks**

Candidates must have been provided with the link to apply for their DBS application if they are not on the update service. Employer must complete the candidate's verification on the DBS portal without delay to ensure the checks are completed in a timely manner.

**DBS checks:**

All candidates are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check at the relevant level. In relation to the DBS process, the following will be implemented:

* Update service: If a candidate produces a DBS check on the update service, the previous role listed, and the level of check must be validated as appropriate for the role they are applying for. The details of the DBS check must be recorded from the original certificate, the update service checked, and the date of the check and outcome recorded in the staffs file
* All candidates who are not on the update service will complete an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.
* All new staff are advised to join and pay for the update service if they are not already subscribed. This is an approximate cost of £13 per year and is the responsibility of the employee. Applicants have 30 days from the certificate issue date to register for the update service. You can apply to register for the update service before a DBS check completes.

**Applicants from overseas**

All elements of the recruitment process and the pre-appointment checks should be applied

to applicants from overseas in the same way as to applicants resident in the UK, but extra

time will need to be allocated to obtaining references, checking applicants’ qualifications

and possible criminal records. In addition, as noted above, overseas applicants will need to

establish that they have the right to live and work in this country.

**Overseas DBS:**

* For applicants that have lived or worked outside of the UK, you must make any further checks appropriate to ensure any events occurred outside of the UK can be considered when checking someone’s suitability, including obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with barring list information (even if the person has never been to the UK before)
* Overseas checks must be sought if a candidate has lived outside of the UK for 3 months or more within 5-year period, or 6 months or more within 10-years.
* For further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/guidance-on-the-application-process-for-criminal-records-checks-overseas>

**Eligibility to work in the UK:**

* It is an offence to employ someone who is not eligible to

work in the UK so proof of eligibility must be checked before the offer of employment is confirmed. Gov.uk has set up an online tool [www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk](http://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk) to help you find out if a potential employee has the right to work in the UK and what documents you should check. They also have useful guidance to help you recognise fraudulent documentation at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-fraudulent-identity-documents](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-fraudulent-identity-documents)

* check the applicant’s right to work online, if they’ve given you their share code
* check the applicant’s original documents

British and Irish citizens cannot get an online share code to prove their right to work. You’ll need to check their original documents - for example, their passport or passport card - or use an identity service provider instead.

**Information declared on self-disclosure / DBS certificate:**

When the original certificate is seen and there is information disclosed within it, the following steps must be taken:

* Review the self-declaration form and compare the information shared by the candidate, and what is now on the DBS certificate.
* The Disclosure DBS Risk Assessment form must be completed to establish if the candidate is suitable.

**Checking the applicant’s original documents**

* Ask to see the applicant’s original documents. You can no longer accept biometric residence cards or permits. Ask the applicant for a share code instead.
* Check that the documents are valid with the applicant present.
* Make and keep copies of the documents and record the date you made the check.

**What to check**

* You need to check that:
* the documents are genuine, original and unchanged and belong to the person who has given them to you
* photos are the same across all documents and look like the applicant
* dates of birth are the same across all documents
* if 2 documents give different names, the applicant has supporting documents showing why they’re different, such as a marriage certificate or divorce decree

If the applicant is not a British or Irish citizen, you’ll also need to check that:

* the dates for the applicant’s right to work in the UK have not expired
* the applicant has permission to do the type of work you’re offering (including any limit on the number of hours they can work)
* for students you see evidence of their study and vacation times

**Commencement of employment**

Contracts shall be issued to the employee on the day of employment unless requested prior. This must be reviewed and signed by the employee and manager of the nursery.

Successful candidates will be required to undertake the Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery induction training, which guides them through the company’s policies and procedures.

All new staff will be subject to a 6-month probation period with regular reviews. Probation periods may be extended if necessary – this should also be stipulated in the offer letter.

**On-going culture of vigilance**

Staff files, the Single Central Staff Record and DBSs are kept up to date for all staff and volunteers:

* All staff will be expected to participate and complete the ongoing suitability checks provided
* It is the individual’s responsibility to inform Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery if there are any changes to their circumstances in between reviews
* All DBS checks are subject to a regular review (at least every 3 years) and are kept current. Staff who are subscribed to the DBS update service will be reviewed via the DBS updates website. The proof of ongoing suitability will be stored in the relevant staff file
* Right to work checks must be saved within each staff members file - If your
* employee’s right to work is time-limited, you’ll need to check their documents again
* when it’s due to expire.

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**Further guidance**

* [Keeping Children Safe in Education](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686b94eefe1a249e937cbd2d/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025.pdf)

**Linked Policies**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Code of Conduct

Managing allegations against staff Policy