

Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy



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NON-NEGOTIABLE FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2026

No employee, student or relevant volunteer may begin working or volunteering at a Dottie Tots setting until the required enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information has been received, checked and judged satisfactory. The limited exception for genuinely occasional supervised volunteers is set out in the linked DBS procedure.

1. Policy statement

Safeguarding is central to every recruitment decision at Dottie Tots Nursery School. We recruit people who are suitable, competent, appropriately qualified and able to uphold our values. Recruitment is conducted fairly and consistently while keeping children's welfare paramount.

This policy covers employees, agency workers considered for direct appointment, volunteers, students, apprentices and work-experience placements. It applies from the first contact with an applicant through appointment, induction, probation and continuing employment or placement.

2. Legal and guidance framework

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026 - particularly paragraphs 3.13 to 3.21.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended, including the removal of the supervision exemption for frequent unpaid regulated activity from 1 September 2026.
- Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) and Early Years Provision (Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and exceptions legislation, including rules on protected convictions and cautions.
- Equality Act 2010, UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, right-to-work legislation and relevant DBS and Ofsted guidance.

3. Responsibilities

Leadership and Management Team

- Approve recruitment arrangements and ensure sufficient trained managers are available.
- Maintain this policy and the linked checking procedure, forms and central recruitment record.
- Make or authorise final suitability decisions and ensure statutory referrals and notifications are made where required.

Recruiting manager

- Plans and documents each recruitment exercise; applies the same published criteria to candidates.
- Ensures checks are complete, discrepancies are resolved and no prohibited start is permitted.
- Keeps recruitment information confidential and escalates safeguarding or suitability concerns immediately.

Applicant or placement candidate

- Provides complete, accurate information and original evidence when required.
- Explains gaps, discrepancies and relevant matters openly.
- Discloses information that may affect suitability in accordance with the Staff Suitability and Continuing Disclosure Policy.

4. Recruitment principles

- At least two people should normally shortlist; at least one interviewer must have completed safer-recruitment training.
- Decisions are based on the role description, person specification, evidence and recorded safeguarding considerations.
- Reasonable adjustments are offered and applicants are treated fairly under the Equality Act 2010.
- CVs may provide supporting information but do not replace Dottie Tots' application form and full employment-history declaration.
- Recruitment information is only accessed by people who need it for the process.

5. Advertising and application

- Every advertisement states Dottie Tots' commitment to safeguarding and that the role is subject to appropriate suitability checks.
- The job description identifies responsibility for safeguarding children and the level of contact involved.
- The application form requires full employment and education history, explanations for gaps, relevant qualifications, referees and a suitability declaration.
- Applications are checked for unexplained gaps, inconsistencies, frequent changes, incomplete answers and conflicts with other information. These matters are explored and recorded, not automatically treated as evidence of unsuitability.

6. Shortlisting and online information

Shortlisting is completed against agreed criteria before interview. Any online search must have a clear safeguarding purpose, use publicly available information only, be applied consistently to shortlisted candidates, be documented and allow the candidate to respond to relevant concerns. Protected characteristics and irrelevant personal information must not influence decisions.

7. Interview and assessment

- Identity is checked against the person attending. Original qualification evidence is examined where relevant.
- Questions test safeguarding understanding, professional boundaries, attitudes to children, response to concerns and willingness to follow Dottie Tots procedures.
- Employment gaps, reasons for leaving, discrepancies, previous work with children and any declared suitability information are explored sensitively.
- Interviewers record evidence and reasons for their decision. A concern is escalated rather than informally disregarded.

8. References

DOTTIE TOTS STANDARD

The EYFS requires at least one written reference for staff, students and volunteers before recruitment. Dottie Tots requires two satisfactory references for employees and at least one for students and volunteers, unless the Leadership and Management Team records a justified decision to seek more.

- References are obtained directly by Dottie Tots; open references and references supplied by the applicant are not accepted as verification.
- At least one employee reference must normally be from the current or most recent employer. If the applicant is not currently working with children, a reference is sought from the last employer where they worked with children.
- If the applicant has never worked with children, a reference is obtained from their current employer, training provider or education setting.
- Referees must be senior people with appropriate authority and must not be family members. Electronic references must come from a legitimate, verified source.
- Vague or insufficient information is clarified directly with the referee. Application and reference information is compared and discrepancies are resolved before appointment.
- The reason for leaving the current or most recent post is established and any concern is resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

9. Conditional offer and pre-employment checks

Any offer is conditional. The linked DBS, Barred-List and Pre-employment Checks Procedure controls the checks required for the role, including identity, right to work, references, employment history, qualifications, DBS and barred-list information, overseas checks, health capability enquiries at the lawful stage and disqualification requirements where relevant.

A proposed start date must not override the checking requirements. A manager may not authorise a supervised start for an employee while awaiting DBS clearance.

10. Suitability decision

The recruiting manager considers the complete evidence, the nature of the role, any relevant information, the applicant's explanation and risks to children. A DBS entry or disclosed matter is assessed fairly and does not automatically determine the outcome unless the law prohibits the person from the work. A barred person must never be allowed to undertake regulated activity.

The decision, rationale, controls and authorisation are recorded. Complex cases are referred to the Leadership and Management Team and appropriate professional advice is obtained.

11. Appointment, induction and probation

- Only written confirmation from an authorised manager confirms that checks are complete and the person may start.
- Induction includes safeguarding and child protection, whistleblowing, conduct, professional boundaries, allegations, mobile devices, health and safety and role-specific procedures.
- Practice is observed during induction and probation. Concerns about conduct, competence or suitability are acted on promptly.
- Ongoing suitability is managed under the Staff Suitability and Continuing Disclosure Policy; recruitment checks are not treated as a one-off guarantee.

12. Providing references

- References are provided promptly by an authorised manager and contain accurate facts rather than personal opinion.
- They confirm whether Dottie Tots is satisfied with the individual's suitability to work with children.
- They include factual details of substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations that meet the harm threshold.

- They do not include concerns or allegations that were unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious.
- Information is shared in accordance with safeguarding, data-protection and employment duties.

13. Records, confidentiality and retention

Dottie Tots records the qualifications, identity checks, vetting processes and references completed, including the DBS certificate reference number, date obtained and checker. Copies are retained only where necessary and lawful. Recruitment files and the central recruitment and vetting record are stored securely with access restricted by role.

14. Concerns, referrals and notifications

False or withheld information is considered under recruitment or disciplinary procedures. Where the statutory conditions are met, Dottie Tots makes a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, including where a person is dismissed or would have been dismissed had they not left because they harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm. Ofsted, the LADO, police or children's social care are notified where their respective thresholds are met.

15. Related documents

- DBS, Barred-List and Pre-employment Checks Procedure - DT-PR-01.8A.
- Staff Suitability and Continuing Disclosure Policy and declaration form.
- Volunteers, Students, Apprentices and Work Experience Policy.
- Qualifications, Ratios and Staff Deployment Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Managing Allegations Procedure; Staff Code of Conduct; Whistleblowing Policy; Induction and Probation documents.

16. Monitoring and review

The Leadership and Management Team audits recruitment records and manager compliance. This policy is reviewed annually and sooner following changes to legislation or guidance, an incident, a safeguarding concern, an audit finding or evidence that controls are not working.

17. Sources

- EYFS statutory framework effective 1 September 2026:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>
- Working or volunteering in regulated activity with children:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-or-volunteering-in-regulated-activity-with-children>
- DBS checks for childcare providers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disclosure-and-barring-service-dbs-checks-for-childcare-providers-who-register-with-ofsted>

Appendix 1 - Staff acknowledgement

I confirm that I have read and understood this document, know how it applies to my role and will follow it. I understand that concerns or uncertainty must be raised immediately with my manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Name	Role	Signature	Date

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