3. Staff:Child Ratios and Students

3.1 Staffing

Policy statement

St Mary's Nursery, Camberley provides a staffing ratio in line with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that children have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality. Our staff are appropriately qualified, and we carry out checks for enhanced criminal records and barred list checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service in accordance with statutory requirements. From 1 September 2026, we will also comply with the updated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and the Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards.

Procedures

The staff ratio requirements apply to the total number of staff available to work directly with children across the whole provision, and not separately to each room or area. The manager is responsible for ensuring that sufficient staff are available and appropriately deployed throughout the provision to meet the required ratios and to ensure that children are adequately supervised and their individual needs are met.

To meet this aim we use the following ratios of adult to children across the whole provision::

- Children aged two years: 1 adult : 5 children:
- at least one member of staff holds a DfE-approved level 3 qualification; and
- at least half of all other staff hold a DfE-approved level 2 qualification.
- Children aged three years and over: 1 adult : 8 children:
- at least one member of staff holds a DfE-approved level 3 qualification; and
- at least half of all other staff hold a DfE-approved level 2 qualification.
- We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements where **a** person holding Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Early Years Teacher Status

(EYTS) or Early Years Professional Status (EYPS**)** is working directly with children aged three and over between the hours of 8.45am and 3.45pm as follows:

- there is at least one member of staff for every 13 children; and
- at least one other member of staff holds a DfE-approved level 3 qualification.
- Where a person holding QTS, EYTS or EYPS is not working directly with children aged three and over, the ratio remains at 1 adult to 8 children, with the applicable Level 3 and Level 2 qualification requirements being met.
- The number of children for each key person takes into account the individual needs of the children and the capacity of the individual key person to manage their cohort.
- We only include those aged 17 years or older within our ratios. Apprentices aged 16 or over may be included in ratios where permitted by the EYFS. Students and long-term volunteers aged 17 or over may also be counted in ratios at the level below their level of study, but only where the setting is satisfied that they are suitable, competent and responsible and they hold a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification.
- No person under the age of 17 will be permitted to care for children unsupervised at any time.
- Students, long-term volunteers and apprentices who are being counted within the staff ratio must hold a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification, in accordance with the EYFS requirements.
- Where they are competent and responsible, we may include students on long-term placements and regular volunteers (aged 17 or over) and apprentices (aged 16 or over), where we deem them to be suitably qualified and experienced.
- A minimum of two staff/adults are on duty at any one time; one of whom is either our manager or deputy.
- Our manager deploys our staff, students and volunteers to give adequate supervision of indoor and outdoor areas, ensuring that children are always within sight and hearing of staff.
- Children must be adequately supervised at all times. Children must usually be within sight and hearing of staff and must always be within sight or hearing of staff. Particular

attention will be given to supervision during eating and other activities where there may be increased risks.

- All staff are deployed according to the needs of the setting and the children attending.
- Our staff, students and volunteers inform their colleagues if they have to leave their area and tell colleagues where they are going.
- Our staff, students and volunteers focus their attention on children at all times and do not spend time in social conversation with colleagues while they are working with children.
- We assign each child a key person to help the child become familiar with the setting from the outset and to ensure that each child has a named member of staff with whom to form a relationship. The key person plans with parents for the child's well-being and development in the setting. The key person meets regularly with the family for discussion and consultation on their child's progress and offers support in guiding their development at home.
- We hold regular staff meetings to discuss children's progress, their achievements and any difficulties that may arise from time to time.
- All qualifications used to determine whether a member of staff can be included within the required staff ratios must meet the Department for Education's current Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards and, where applicable, be listed on the Early Years Qualifications List.
- Where a Level 3 Educator is being counted within the required staff ratio, they must meet the applicable English qualification requirements set out in the current Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards.
- The setting will ensure that staff who are required to hold paediatric first aid qualifications to count within the required staff ratios have a valid and current qualification in accordance with the EYFS.
- The setting will review staff qualifications, paediatric first aid certificates and eligibility to count within staff ratios whenever staff join or change role and as part of the setting's regular safeguarding and staffing checks.
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This Policy was adopted by	St Mary's Nursery, Camberley,	*(name of provider)*
Last reviewed On	1st September 2026	*(date)*
Date to be reviewed	1st September 2027	*(date)*
Signed on behalf of the provider		
Name of signatory	Sue Dunn	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Acting Chairperson	

3.2 Student Placements

Qualifications and training make an important contribution to the quality of care and education. As part of our commitment, we may offer placements to students undertaking relevant qualifications/training. We aim to provide students experiences that will contribute to the successful completion of their studies and provide examples of quality practice in early years care and education.

- The setting manager ensures that students and trainees are suitable to work with children and that the appropriate safer recruitment and safeguarding checks have been completed before they undertake regulated activity.
- The setting manager discusses the aim of the placement with the student's tutor prior to the placement commencing. The expectations of both parties are agreed at this point.
- The good character of students under 17 years old is vouched for by the establishment that places them, where appropriate, and the setting manager must be satisfied that all relevant suitability, safeguarding and recruitment checks have been completed.
- Students under the age of 17 must not care for children unsupervised at any time
- Students do not have unsupervised access to children. Where a student is aged 17 or over, the setting will ensure that any access to children is appropriate to their role, level of training, suitability and competence.
- Students aged 17 or over and apprentices aged 16 or over may be included in staff:child ratios at the level below their level of study, but only where the setting is satisfied that they are suitable, competent and responsible and they hold a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification.
- Students and apprentices who are counted in the staff:child ratio must meet all applicable requirements relating to suitability and qualifications. The setting will not count a student or apprentice in ratios simply because they are undertaking a relevant course.

- Employed trainee staff over the age of 17 may be included in staffing ratios if deemed competent and if they meet the relevant EYFS qualification, suitability and paediatric first aid requirements for the ratio in which they are being counted.
- Staff working as apprentices (aged 16 or over) may be included in staffing ratios if deemed competent and responsible, suitable and appropriately qualified/trained for the level at which they are being counted, including holding a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification where required.
- The setting will assess whether a student, apprentice or trainee is eligible for the appropriate level of DBS check. From 1 September 2026, the removal of the supervision exemption means that people undertaking regulated activity with children frequently (more than 3 days in a 30-day period) or overnight may be in regulated activity even when supervised. Where regulated activity applies, the appropriate Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information will be obtained.
- The setting will not rely solely on supervision as a reason for not obtaining the appropriate DBS check where the individual meets the definition of regulated activity.
- Public liability and employer's liability insurance is in place that covers students and voluntary helpers.
- Students are aware of confidentiality.
- Student induction includes how the setting and sessions are managed, and policies and procedures, in particular safeguarding, confidentiality and health and safety. Induction will also cover the student's responsibilities regarding safeguarding, whistleblowing, professional conduct, mobile phones and electronic devices, confidentiality and reporting concerns.
- Appropriate members of staff co-operate with students' tutors to assist them in fulfilling the requirements of their course of study.
- The setting communicates a positive message to students about the value of qualifications and training.
- The needs of the children and their families remain paramount at all times and students are only admitted in numbers that do not hinder the work of the setting.
- The setting manager ensures that students and trainees on placement are engaged in bona fide early years training, which provides the necessary background understanding of children's development and activities.

- Students, apprentices and trainees are made aware that they must immediately report any safeguarding concern, allegation or incident involving a child to the designated safeguarding lead or appropriate member of staff, in accordance with the setting's safeguarding procedures.
- The setting manager will ensure that students and volunteers are included within the setting's whistleblowing arrangements and understand how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice.
- Where a student or apprentice is to be included in the staff:child ratio, the setting manager will verify that they hold a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification and that all other relevant requirements for inclusion in the ratio have been met.
- The setting will review the student's role if their placement pattern changes, particularly if they begin attending frequently enough to meet the definition of regulated activity with children.

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