

Working Experience Policy

Kingfisher Kindergarten Ltd is committed to providing meaningful, safe and positive work experience opportunities for students who are considering a career in early years education and childcare. We recognise that work experience can provide valuable opportunities for young people and adult learners to develop their knowledge, skills, confidence and understanding of the early years sector. It can also help students make informed decisions about future education, training and employment.

The safety, wellbeing and safeguarding of the children attending Kingfisher Kindergarten remain our highest priority. We will therefore ensure that all work experience placements are carefully planned, appropriately risk assessed, adequately supervised and managed in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, safeguarding requirements and relevant employment, health and safety and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) legislation.

We work in partnership with schools, colleges, universities, training providers, parents and carers, where appropriate, to ensure that placements are suitable for both the student and the setting.

The aims of this policy are to:

- provide students with a safe, supportive and meaningful experience of working in an early years setting
- support students to develop an understanding of children's learning, development, care and wellbeing
- provide opportunities for students to observe and, where appropriate, participate in suitable early years activities
- ensure that children's safeguarding and welfare remain the priority throughout every placement
- ensure that work experience students are appropriately assessed for suitability and DBS eligibility before commencing their placement
- ensure that students understand their responsibilities while working at the setting
- provide appropriate supervision, guidance and mentoring
- ensure that students are not placed in situations that exceed their knowledge, skills, experience or level of responsibility
- comply with current EYFS requirements relating to suitable people, safeguarding, supervision and staff-to-child ratios
- work collaboratively with the student's school, college or training provider
- make reasonable adjustments where a student has a disability or additional need
- evaluate each placement to identify learning and improve future work experience opportunities

Who Can Undertake Work Experience?

Kingfisher Kindergarten may accept work experience students from:

- secondary schools
- sixth-form colleges
- further education colleges
- universities
- apprenticeship or training providers
- recognised work placement programmes
- other appropriate educational or training organisations

Placements will be considered individually, taking account of:

- the student's age
- the purpose and length of the placement
- the student's course or programme
- the activities the student will undertake
- the level of contact they will have with children
- their maturity and experience

- any additional needs or reasonable adjustments required
- DBS eligibility and suitability requirements
- the capacity of the setting to provide appropriate supervision and mentoring
- the safeguarding and welfare of children attending the setting

Kingfisher Kindergarten reserves the right to decline a placement where we are unable to provide an appropriate, safe or sufficiently supervised experience.

Work Experience Placement Agreement

Before a placement begins, the setting will seek appropriate information from the school, college or training provider.

Where appropriate, this will include:

- student's full name and date of birth
- emergency contact details
- dates and expected hours of the placement
- details of the student's course or programme
- intended learning outcomes
- information about any additional support needs
- relevant medical or health information that may affect the placement
- relevant risk information
- contact details for the school, college or training provider
- arrangements for reporting absence
- confirmation of insurance arrangements
- confirmation of the educational provider's placement requirements

Where the student is under 18, parental or carer involvement will be obtained where appropriate and required. The setting will work with the placement organiser to ensure that responsibilities are clearly understood before the placement starts.

DBS and Suitability Checks

From 1 September 2026, the legal definition of regulated activity with children changed following the removal of the previous supervision exemption. Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children can constitute regulated activity where it is undertaken frequently or overnight, even where the person is supervised by someone else. The relevant frequency condition is more than three days in a 30-day period, or once overnight between 2am and 6am.

DBS eligibility must therefore be assessed according to the actual role and activities being undertaken, rather than simply the length of the placement.

Students Aged 16 and Over

The EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026, requires registered group and school-based providers to obtain an enhanced criminal records check and barred-list check for people aged 16 and over who work directly with children, subject to the provisions and exceptions set out in the framework.

The current DBS guidance also confirms that people aged 16 and over who live or work on premises where childcare takes place and have the opportunity for regular contact with children can be eligible for an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information, even where the role is not itself regulated activity.

Therefore, a student aged 16 or 17 who will work directly with children or have regular contact with children as part of their placement will normally require the appropriate enhanced DBS and Children's Barred List check before undertaking those activities.

A student aged 18 or over will be subject to the same suitability assessment, and an Enhanced DBS with Children's Barred List information will be obtained where the role is eligible and the EYFS or DBS rules require it.

The setting will assess the exact placement arrangements and will only request a level of DBS check for which the student is legally eligible. Where the required check cannot legally be obtained, the placement will not involve activities for which that check is required.

A DBS check is only one part of the suitability process and does not replace appropriate references, identity checks, risk assessment, induction and supervision.

The DBS states that organisations must not request a level of check for which a role is not legally eligible.

Students Under 16

DBS checks cannot be obtained for children under the age of 16.

Where Kingfisher Kindergarten accepts a student under 16:

- the placement will be risk assessed before it begins
- the student will be closely and appropriately supervised
- the student will not be left alone with children
- the student will not have sole responsibility for a child or group of children
- the student will not undertake intimate or personal care
- the student will not administer medication
- the student will not be responsible for managing challenging behaviour
- the student will not be used to meet statutory staffing ratios
- the setting will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place

The placement organiser will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements and any restrictions that apply.

DBS Checks for Staff Supervising Work Experience Students

Kingfisher Kindergarten ensures that all staff working directly with children meet the EYFS suitability and DBS requirements applicable to their roles.

The removal of the supervision exemption from 1 September 2026 means that organisations must consider whether people who teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children are undertaking regulated activity. However, DBS checks must only be requested where the law permits the relevant level of check.

We will therefore:

- ensure all relevant existing staff have the required DBS checks
- assess any changes to staff roles or duties
- not request unnecessary DBS checks
- ensure that no person who is barred from regulated activity works in regulated activity with children
- seek appropriate advice where DBS eligibility is unclear

EYFS Suitability Requirements

The current EYFS requires providers to ensure that people looking after children are suitable and have the relevant qualifications, training and checks required for their role. The EYFS also requires providers to obtain appropriate criminal-record and barred-list checks for relevant people aged 16 and over and states that individuals whose suitability has not been checked must not have unsupervised contact with children.

Kingfisher Kindergarten will therefore ensure that work experience students:

- are appropriately assessed before starting
- receive a suitable induction
- understand the setting's safeguarding procedures
- understand professional boundaries

- understand confidentiality requirements
- know how to raise concerns
- have appropriate supervision
- are allocated a named mentor
- do not undertake duties beyond their competence
- do not have unsupervised responsibility for children
- are monitored throughout their placement

References and Pre-Placement Checks

In accordance with the EYFS, the setting will obtain an appropriate written reference for students where required. The reference may be obtained from the student's:

- school
- college
- university
- training provider
- current or previous employer, where relevant

The setting may contact the referee to clarify any information provided. The setting will also verify the student's identity and any information necessary to establish their suitability for the placement.

The EYFS specifically requires references for members of staff, including students and volunteers, and sets out expectations regarding appropriate referees and the verification of information.

Pre-Placement Meeting and Induction

Before the student begins their placement, they will receive an induction. This may take place during a pre-placement meeting or on the first day of the placement, provided all necessary safeguarding and suitability requirements have been completed before the student undertakes any relevant activities.

The induction will cover:

the setting's safeguarding and child protection procedures

- the identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- how to report a safeguarding concern
- whistleblowing procedures
- the staff code of conduct
- professional boundaries
- confidentiality and data protection
- use of mobile phones and electronic devices
- photography and recording
- social media
- appropriate language and behaviour
- health and safety
- fire and emergency procedures
- accident and first aid procedures
- infection control
- appropriate clothing and footwear
- attendance and punctuality
- absence and sickness procedures
- break arrangements
- toileting and personal needs
- appropriate interaction with children
- behaviour management
- restrictions on intimate/personal care

- manual handling and physical safety
- who the student reports to
- what to do if they have a concern about a child, member of staff or another adult

The student must confirm that they understand the induction and the expectations placed upon them.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Work experience students must follow Kingfisher Kindergarten's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and all related procedures.

Students will be informed that:

- they must immediately report any safeguarding concern
- they must never promise a child confidentiality
- they must never investigate a safeguarding concern themselves
- they must never use inappropriate language or behaviour towards children
- they must maintain professional boundaries at all times
- they must not communicate with children through personal social media accounts
- they must not exchange personal contact details with children
- they must not photograph or record children using personal devices
- they must not take children off the premises without explicit authorisation
- they must not be alone with a child
- they must not physically intervene with a child unless instructed and appropriately trained and where necessary to prevent immediate harm
- they must not undertake intimate or personal care unless specifically authorised, appropriately trained and permitted by the setting
- they must report any allegation, concern or disclosure immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another appropriate senior member of staff

The EYFS requires providers to have safeguarding policies covering concerns about children, allegations against staff, use of mobile phones and electronic devices, recruitment and suitability procedures and whistleblowing. The framework expressly includes students and volunteers within the arrangements for raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice.

Supervision and Mentoring

Each student will be allocated a named member of staff who will act as their mentor or placement supervisor.

The mentor will:

- welcome and support the student
- explain their responsibilities
- provide appropriate guidance and feedback
- monitor the student's progress
- ensure the student understands professional boundaries
- ensure the student is not placed under inappropriate pressure
- ensure activities remain appropriate to the student's age, experience and competence
- check regularly on the student's wellbeing
- provide opportunities for the student to ask questions
- liaise with the student's school, college or training provider where required
- report any concerns to the manager

Students will receive appropriate supervision throughout their placement. Young people may require greater supervision than adults because they may have less experience and may be unfamiliar with workplace risks. HSE

guidance requires employers to provide clear instruction, training and supervision appropriate to the young person's needs and the risks involved.

Students Must Not Be Left Alone With Children

As a setting policy, work experience students will not be left alone with children or given sole responsibility for a child or group of children.

This applies regardless of:

- the student's age
- length of placement
- qualifications
- previous experience
- DBS status

A DBS check does not, by itself, make a student competent or authorised to take sole responsibility for children. Students will work alongside appropriately qualified and suitable members of staff.

Activities Students May Undertake

Subject to their age, suitability, DBS status, competence and the requirements of their placement, students may:

- observe practitioners
- support children's play
- participate in appropriate learning activities
- read stories
- support creative activities
- assist with setting up activities
- support outdoor play under supervision
- assist with tidying and maintaining the learning environment
- engage positively with children under supervision
- undertake appropriate tasks agreed as part of their placement programme

Activities will be selected according to the student's age, experience and learning objectives.

Activities Students Must Not Undertake

Unless specifically authorised, appropriately trained and permitted under the setting's procedures, students must not:

- be left alone with children
- take sole responsibility for children
- be used to meet statutory staff-to-child ratios unless all EYFS requirements for students counting in ratios are satisfied
- administer medication
- undertake intimate or personal care
- change nappies
- assist children with toileting
- manage significant behavioural incidents independently
- undertake physical intervention
- transport children
- take children off the premises
- supervise children during sleep periods without an appropriate member of staff present
- access confidential records unnecessarily
- take photographs or videos of children using personal devices
- contact children through personal social media
- give parents professional advice on children's development or welfare

- undertake any task that the setting considers inappropriate or unsafe

Staff-to-Child Ratios

Work experience students will not normally be counted within the statutory staff-to-child ratio. The current EYFS states that providers must not include anyone aged under 17 in ratios, except apprentices who may be included from age 16. Students aged 17 or over on long-term placements may be included at the level below their level of study where the provider is satisfied that they are suitable, competent and responsible and they hold a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification.

Therefore, a student may only be included in the statutory ratio where all applicable EYFS requirements are met. A DBS check alone does not make a student eligible to count within the ratio.

Kingfisher Kindergarten will not use a short-term school work-experience student as a substitute for an appropriately qualified member of staff.

Even where a long-term student is legally permitted to count within the ratio, Kingfisher Kindergarten will ensure that they are appropriately supported and will not place them in a position where they are solely responsible for children.

Risk Assessment and Health and Safety

Before a student starts their placement, the setting will consider the health and safety risks associated with the placement.

The assessment will take account of:

- the student's age
- maturity
- experience
- physical capability
- emotional wellbeing
- learning needs
- disability or additional needs
- medical requirements
- the activities they will undertake
- the environment in which they will work
- any specific risks associated with working with young children

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made to support the student. HSE guidance confirms that employers have the main responsibility for the health and safety of work experience students and should consider the particular risks associated with young people, including lack of experience, maturity and awareness of workplace risks. The student will receive appropriate health and safety information and will be told how to raise any concerns.

Insurance

Kingfisher Kindergarten will maintain appropriate insurance cover for work experience placements. Where required, the setting will provide evidence of insurance to the school, college or training provider. HSE guidance confirms that employers have primary responsibility for workplace health and safety for work experience students and recommends checking that insurance arrangements cover work experience students.

Attendance, Punctuality and Conduct

Students are expected to:

- arrive on time
- follow reasonable instructions
- dress appropriately for working in an early years environment
- maintain professional behaviour

- treat children, families and staff respectfully
- follow all setting policies and procedures
- keep information confidential
- inform the setting promptly if they are unable to attend
- remain within agreed areas of the setting
- ask permission before leaving the premises during the placement day
- take responsibility for their own conduct and learning

Students will have appropriate breaks in accordance with their age, placement arrangements and relevant requirements.

Inclusion and Additional Needs

Kingfisher Kindergarten is committed to providing inclusive work experience opportunities. Where a student has a disability, SEND, medical condition, communication need or other additional requirement, we will work with the student and placement organiser to identify appropriate support and reasonable adjustments.

This may include:

- adapting tasks
- providing additional explanation or instruction
- providing additional supervision
- adjusting the environment
- providing accessible resources
- allowing additional time
- identifying a consistent mentor
- agreeing alternative activities where necessary

The setting will not discriminate against students on the basis of a protected characteristic.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Students will be reminded that information relating to children, families and staff is confidential.

Students must not:

- discuss children or families outside the setting
- share confidential information on social media
- take photographs or recordings of children
- copy or remove confidential documents
- access children's records unless specifically authorised
- discuss individual children with people outside the setting
- use personal devices to record or store information relating to the setting

Any breach of confidentiality will be addressed immediately and may result in the placement being terminated. All information will be handled in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Concerns, Complaints and Whistleblowing

Students will be informed that they have the right and responsibility to raise concerns.

They may raise concerns with:

- their mentor
- the setting manager
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- another senior member of staff
- their school, college or training provider

Students will be given information about the setting's whistleblowing procedures.

They will be encouraged to speak up if they have concerns about:

- the safety or welfare of a child
- unsafe practice
- inappropriate behaviour by an adult
- bullying or harassment
- discrimination
- poor supervision
- breaches of confidentiality
- any other matter that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable

The EYFS requires whistleblowing procedures to be available to students and volunteers and requires providers to ensure concerns about unsafe practice can be raised and taken seriously.

Absence or Illness

Students must notify the setting and their school, college or training provider as soon as possible if they are unable to attend. Students must not attend the setting if they are unwell in a way that may pose a risk to children, staff or other students. The setting's infection control and exclusion procedures will apply.

Safeguarding Allegations or Concerns About a Student

Any concern or allegation relating to a work experience student will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with the setting's safeguarding procedures. Where an allegation indicates that a student may have harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm, the setting will take immediate steps to safeguard children and will follow the appropriate local safeguarding procedures. The setting will work with the student's school, college or training provider and relevant safeguarding agencies where appropriate.

Registered early years providers must notify Ofsted of allegations of harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises, in accordance with the EYFS requirements.

DBS Changes During a Placement

DBS eligibility will be reconsidered if there is a significant change to the student's:

- age
- role
- responsibilities
- frequency of attendance
- level of contact with children
- activities undertaken
- placement arrangements

A change in role or activities can affect the appropriate level of DBS check. The DBS specifically advises organisations to reassess eligibility when the role or activities change. A student must not undertake activities requiring a higher level of DBS clearance until the appropriate suitability requirements have been met.

Records

The setting will maintain appropriate records relating to work experience placements, including:

- placement agreement
- student's details
- emergency contact information
- school/college/training provider details
- risk assessment
- DBS information where applicable

- reference information where applicable
- attendance records
- significant incidents or concerns
- placement review
- final evaluation

Where a DBS check has been completed, the setting will record the required information in accordance with EYFS requirements and its data protection procedures. The EYFS requires providers to keep records of qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references, including the DBS reference number, date of the check and who obtained it. The setting will not retain unnecessary copies of DBS certificates and will handle DBS information confidentially.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is implemented with reference to the legislation and statutory guidance applicable in England, including:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers – effective from 1 September 2026
- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Crime and Policing Act 2026, including the removal of the supervision exemption for regulated activity with children from 1 September 2026
- Police Act 1997, in relation to DBS checks
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, as applicable
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, where relevant to schools and colleges arranging work experience
- current Disclosure and Barring Service guidance on DBS eligibility and regulated activity with children

The current EYFS framework is mandatory for registered group and school-based early years providers and includes specific safeguarding, suitability, staffing and supervision requirements.

Date to be reviewed	Annually
Signed on behalf of the provider	La-Ryne van der Westhuizen
Role of signatory	Owner