

Staffing Arrangements



Policy statement

It is essential for all Little Elms Nurseries to adhere to regulations set out within the Statutory Framework at all times. A vital piece of this framework is ensuring we are able to maintain staff to child ratios at all points throughout the nursery day as well as maintaining compliance with the national minimum qualification criteria set out within this framework.

Statutory Framework

Little Elms complies with the following requirements as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage:

Staff: Child ratios

For children aged under two:

- *there must be at least one member of staff for every three children*
- *at least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification, and must be suitably experienced in working with children under two*
- *at least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification*
- *at least half of all staff must have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies*
- *where there is an under two-year-olds' room, the member of staff in charge of that room must, in the judgement of the provider, have suitable experience of working with under twos*

For children aged two:

- *there must be at least one member of staff for every four children*
- *at least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification*
- *at least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification*

For children aged three and over in registered early years provision where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children:

- *there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children*
- *at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification*

For children aged three and over at any time in registered early years provision when a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working directly with the children:

- *there must be at least one member of staff for every eight children*
- *at least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification*
- *at least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification*

What does this look like at Little Elms?

1. All children under the age of 2 year old are on 1:3 ratio
2. All children between 2 years old and 3 years old are on a 1:4 ratio
3. All children who are 3 years + are on a 1:8 ratio
4. At least one Qualified Level 3 + practitioner is present in each playroom at all times.
5. At least 50% of all other practitioners within each playroom are Qualified Level 2 + at all times.

Little Elms does not plan for, or encourage the use of 1:13 ratio unless in exceptional circumstances and will in any event, only be used in accordance with the requirement set out in the Statutory Framework.

Staffing Minimum Qualification Requirements

In group settings, the manager must hold at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification and at least half of all other staff must hold at least a full and relevant level 2 qualification.

The manager should have at least two years' experience of working in an early years setting, or have at least two years' other suitable experience. The provider must ensure there is a named deputy who, in their judgement, is capable and qualified to take charge in the manager's absence.

What does this look like at Little Elms?

1. The Nursery Manager and Deputy Manager holds a full and relevant Level 3 + qualification
2. Little Elms has a Named Deputy Manager within each nursery who is deemed capable and qualified to take charge in the Nursery Managers absence.
3. Alongside the person named in charge, at least 50% of staff on site responsible for providing care and education to the children within the ratio requirements are qualified to at least Level 2 or above.

Little Elms Contingency Procedures

Management teams must ensure they have adequate cover for their nursery to ensure ratios are compliant with the Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage at all times of the nursery's daily operating hours.

Staff to child ratios must be planned for weekly and revisited daily. For example, nursery management teams must be confident they will be able to meet their ratio obligations for the following day prior to leaving site.

In the event of staff absence / staffing gaps, the following contingency arrangement/plans must be followed:

Staffing Contingency Arrangements for Nurseries
1. Contact any of your existing team to work - Bank staff, staff on a rest day and pay overtime, can staff start earlier/stay later.
2. Contact all Little Elms nurseries as a matter of priority to request support. Email out to wider group of nurseries and make verbal contact via phone to more local nurseries to seek staffing support.
3. Place the Deputy Manager (usually supernumerary) in ratio.
4. Consider the following: Do I have any EYP/EYT qualified staff who you can use as a 1:13 ratio in the event of staff absence? Note: EYT/EYP can be classed as 1:13 ratio, and so can any qualified Level 3 or above practitioner working alongside the EYT/EYP in the playroom. Are there any children who can attend another playroom for a settling in session (only those children who have already planned movement to the next playroom)
5. Contact Operations Manager to seek authorisation for agency cover if all other avenues explored means you may still be out of ratio.
6. If agency cover if not sufficient to cover ratios or they are unable to provide required staffing to cover ratios, manager to go into ratio (ensure Operations Manager is aware that this is the case so she can organise rescheduling of diary appointments if necessary).

In the event all of the above has been implemented and the nursery are still not able to meet ratios:

Operations Manager Contingency Arrangements
1. Contact all nurseries within the group to seek staff support.
2. In the event that nurseries are unable to support under usual circumstances, the Operations Manager will insist Deputy Managers and Nursery Manager's go into ratio within their own nurseries to provide appropriate support for their neighbouring Little Elms Nursery.
3. In exceptional circumstances the Operations Manager will pull on wider Little Elms employees (including covering in ratio him/herself) to ensure we meet our statutory obligation to maintain ratios and ensure children are kept safe (this includes office support staff).

In the event that you are waiting for covering staff, parents must be politely informed they need to wait at the nursery with their child until such staffing arrangements have been met.

We recognise that the final point is a final resort and not something that would ever happen regularly. In the event families are requested to wait with their child prior to them leaving them in our care for a short time a follow up meeting should be arranged by the Nursery Manager with those parents. This meeting will be for the Nursery Manager to share circumstances of the situation, as well as sharing their immediate plans to prevent reoccurrence of such event in the future.

Limited Service

In the event all of the above steps fail, and it remains that staffing arrangements cannot meet the statutory requirements, the nursery will operate a 'limited service'. This will be agreed by the Operations Manager.

Usually, this will be done a 'first come, first serve basis'; however, consideration will be given to prioritising places for parents of critical workers (such as those who work in the NHS).

Any instances of Limited Service must be notified to the Head of Operations as soon as reasonably practical.

Monitoring of Staff to Child Ratios

All staff are responsible for continuously checking they are working within ratio throughout each day. Staff must alert management immediately if ratios of staff to children are not being met for any reason.

Management teams are responsible for regularly checking staff to child ratios throughout each day and adjusting staffing arrangements accordingly if unexpected circumstances arise (e.g. a member of staff is taken unwell and cannot complete their shift).

Agency Staff Suitability

From time to time in order to ensure we are compliant with the Statutory Framework; Little Elms may call upon agency staff to work in our nurseries to maintain ratios.

It is Little Elms policy for agency staff to be requested in order of sourcing in line with our preferred agency company suppliers as detailed on Agency Staff Cost Analysis Spreadsheet to ensure it is most cost effective.

Agency staff **must not start work** in any Little Elms Nursery until the nursery has received written confirmation that appropriate checks have undertaken to confirm the individual's suitability to work in an Early Years Setting.

The Nursery Management Team must ensure they physically check the individuals DBS certificate and identification upon attendance at the nursery (whether or not they have been in attendance at the nursery before). This check should always include:

- Review of all sections of the DBS certificate to confirm clear.
- Check that the individual is of the correct age in order to be counted in ratios (must be 18 or over). We will not accept a 17-year-old agency staff, unless we have already assessed their competency to be counted in ratio and are satisfied that they are competent.

Agency staff must be made aware on the day they attend and prior to starting work of their responsibilities in relation to Little Elms Safeguarding, Child Protection and Allegations Against an Adult Policies.

No agency staff member should ever be left unsupervised with children.

Management Hours / Deployment

Nursery Management Team hours must be deployed to best meet the needs of the nursery. Little Elms expectations of working hours by the Nursery Manager and Deputy Manager are detailed below:

- Nursery Manager / Deputy Manager will normally work opposite shifts. With one opening the nursery, and one closing (unless otherwise agreed by the Operations Manager). In the event of Manager / Deputy annual leave or sickness, the third in charge can open and close the nursery without the prior agreement from the Operations Manager.
- Management working hours are usually 7.15-4.15, and 9.15-6.15 (unless otherwise agreed by the Operations Manager).

Nursery Manager – Time Owed in Lieu

- TOIL accrual / taken hours must be recorded on the Server.
- TOIL accrual for the Nursery Manager must be recorded and agreed in advance by the Operations Manager. For example, if the Nursery Manager needs to work additional hours, this should be agreed in advance as to the reason for the TOIL accrual. Generally, TOIL will only be agreed for work that cannot reasonably be done within normal working hours, or for reasons of staff absence/sickness.
- TOIL can only be taken with the prior consent of the Operations Manager. This can be requested by sending the Operations Manager a calendar invitation, detailing how many TOIL hours are available, and how the nursery will be managed effectively in their absence.

Opening and Closing

Little Elms employs a Third in Charge within each nursery. During periods of absence from the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager, the Third in Charge will support the nursery by acting in the capacity of the Deputy Manager, specifically in relation to Opening and Closing the nursery.

This arrangement is a contingency, and the Third in Charge will only be required to open/close when necessary due to absence, unless otherwise agreed by the Operations Manager.

Room Managers should not be left responsible for Opening/Closing the nursery, unless otherwise agreed by the Operations Manager.