

Staff Qualifications, Training, Support and Skills Policy

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Date Written: 28 July 2025

Next Review Due: July 2026

Our Values

At Young Friends, the quality of the provision is the quality of the people. We don't see training as something you attend — we see it as a mindset. Every team member is a reflective, thoughtful educator, with the professional curiosity to keep learning and the integrity to apply it.

- **Sustainability** – Long-term staff development reduces turnover and nurtures excellence.
 - **Respect** – Every team member is seen as a learner, not just a worker.
 - **Authenticity** – We expect real change, not just certificates.
 - **Supportive Leadership** – Training is embedded in relationships and daily coaching.
 - **Community** – Team culture is open, honest, intelligent, and deeply human.
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Policy Statement

This policy sets out our commitment to ensuring that all staff at Young Friends are:

- Suitably qualified.
- Appropriately inducted.
- Ongoing learners.
- Supported in safeguarding, pedagogy, and reflective practice.
- Supervised and appraised in line with current EYFS requirements and best practice.

We invest in our team's development but expect dedication, professionalism, implementation of new knowledge into the setting, and high standards in return.

Staff Qualifications

As a minimum:

- We follow all EYFS requirements for qualifications and ratios.
- Our team includes Level 3+ practitioners in all rooms.
- Room leaders and mentors are highly experienced and trained in key areas.
- All senior leaders are qualified in leadership, safeguarding, and curriculum practice.

Where possible, we exceed the statutory minimum and employ staff with:

- Degree-level or QTS backgrounds.
- Specialist skills in SEND, communication, or environmental education.
- Training in forest school, Steiner, sustainability, or outdoor learning.
- Knowledge of educational influences that we respect and use such as:
 - Steiner's nature and rhythm
 - Froebel's play and loose parts
 - Montessori's independence and real skills
 - Reggio Emilia's environment and projects
 - Te Whāriki's belonging and family partnership
 - Pikler's respectful care and movement

Recruitment and Suitability

Before starting work, all staff:

- Undergo a full enhanced DBS check, barred list check, and reference process.
- Complete a detailed induction and probation with safeguarding at the centre.
- Are supported by an experienced mentor during their early months.
- Are only left with children unsupervised once deemed safe and ready.

DBS Repayment:

If a staff member leaves before completing their probationary period, they will be required to repay the cost of their DBS check.

We maintain robust records of qualifications, training, and suitability checks.

Ongoing Training and Professional Development

All staff receive regular, relevant CPD. This includes:

- Annual mandatory updates: safeguarding, FGM, Prevent, first aid, GDPR.
- Training on our ethos, sustainability, and curriculum values.
- Sessions on loose parts, sustained shared thinking, behaviour, and interactions.
- Access to external or online learning where appropriate.
- Targeted coaching and mentoring during supervision and appraisal cycles.

Staff are encouraged to:

- Take part in discussions in team meetings (leaders lead).
 - Research and apply new knowledge.
 - Reflect on how training changes their practice.
 - Bring ideas and questions to leadership.
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Safeguarding Training

All staff must:

- Hold up-to-date safeguarding and child protection training.
 - Know who the DSL is and how to report concerns.
 - Understand whistleblowing, online safety, low-level concerns, and Prevent duty.
 - Be assessed for safeguarding confidence during supervision and appraisal.
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Induction and Support

New staff:

- Complete a structured induction.
- Shadow experienced colleagues.
- Receive additional supervision for their first 3 months.
- Are introduced to Young Friends' values and expectations with care.

Staff returning from leave, illness, or extended absence are also re-inducted where appropriate.

Apprenticeships and Qualifications Pathway

- We actively support apprenticeships and give government-mandated study time.
- Study time is balanced with written study or project time to ensure meaningful progress.
- All staff are **first aid trained upon completion of their probationary period**.
- We can fully support up to **two members of staff completing Early Years Teacher Status (EYT)** at one time due to the time off required for university attendance.

- We are advocates of high-quality educators in the field — we will only support courses where the individual has shown they are ready and capable.
 - For example, while you can apply for an EYT course with a degree and no experience, at Young Friends we require sufficient nursery experience first to ensure quality practice.
 - In some cases, we may recommend completing a Level 3 (or other NVQ) before progressing to higher-level qualifications to build competency and practical skill.
 - Once we agree to support a course, we will fully commit to funding and mentoring to ensure success.
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Staff with Additional Roles

Where team members have additional responsibilities (e.g., SENCO, DSL, Fire Warden), they:

- Receive role-specific training and support.
 - Are released for appropriate time and resources.
 - Are monitored through supervision and leadership check-ins.
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Monitoring and Evaluation

We:

- Track training attendance and qualifications.
 - Keep CPD logs for each staff member.
 - Use observations, coaching, and appraisal to review impact.
 - Regularly review what the team needs, what's working, and what needs adjusting.
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Linked Policies

- Recruitment Policy
 - Supervision and Appraisal
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Staff Wellbeing
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Authorisation

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Owner and Director

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