

Auchinairn Early Years Centre



Volunteer and Student Placement Policy

Policy Statement

At Auchinairn Early Years Centre, we are committed to supporting the development of the future early years workforce by providing high-quality placement experiences for students and volunteers.

We believe placements should be welcoming, supportive and meaningful. Students and volunteers bring enthusiasm, fresh ideas and opportunities for reflection, while also developing the skills, knowledge and professional values required to work with children and families.

The safety, wellbeing and rights of children remain our highest priority at all times.

Our Commitment

At Auchinairn Early Years Centre, we are proud to support the next generation of early years professionals. We provide a welcoming, nurturing and reflective learning environment where students and volunteers can develop the confidence, skills and values needed to provide high-quality care and education.

By investing in future practitioners, we strengthen our profession and continue to provide outstanding experiences for children and families.

Our Vision

We aim to provide a placement experience where every student and volunteer feels:

Welcome.

Valued.

Included.

Supported.

Challenged to develop professionally.

Confident to ask questions and reflect on practice.

Together, we help develop skilled practitioners who make a positive difference to children's lives.

Aims

We aim to:

Provide high-quality placement experiences.

Promote professional values and reflective practice.

Support students to achieve course outcomes.

Develop confidence and professional skills.

Model excellent early years practice.

Promote children's rights, wellbeing and inclusion.

Ensure children remain safe and protected.

Build strong partnerships with colleges, universities and the local community.

Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

College students

University students

School work experience placements

Volunteers

Community volunteers

Supported employment placements (where appropriate)

All placements are subject to suitability checks and local authority procedures.

Before a Placement Begins

Before starting, all students and volunteers will:

Meet with a member of the Leadership Team.

Receive an induction.

Be introduced to their mentor.

Read key centre policies.

Understand safeguarding responsibilities.

Be familiar with health and safety procedures.

Understand confidentiality expectations.

Receive information about daily routines and expectations.

Where required, PVG and local authority procedures must be completed before the placement begins.

Induction

Every placement begins with an induction.

This includes:

Our Vision, Values and Aims.

Children's Rights.

Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Health and Safety.

Infection Prevention and Control.

Emergency procedures.

Confidentiality.

Professional conduct.

Daily routines.

Staff introductions.

Tour of the centre.

Students should feel welcomed from their first day.

Learning Through Experience

Students learn by:

- observing experienced practitioners
- building positive relationships with children
- supporting play experiences
- planning learning opportunities
- reflecting on practice
- receiving feedback
- asking questions
- gradually increasing responsibility

Learning should always be supported by a mentor.

Mentoring and Support

Every student will have an identified mentor.

The mentor will:

- provide guidance
- explain practice
- model high-quality interactions
- provide regular feedback
- complete placement documentation
- support reflective discussions
- liaise with training providers where required

Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek support whenever needed.

Professional Expectations

Students and volunteers are expected to:

- demonstrate professionalism
- treat everyone with respect
- maintain confidentiality
- follow nursery policies and procedures
- arrive on time
- dress appropriately
- communicate respectfully
- contribute positively to the team
- be willing to learn
- reflect on their practice
- ask for support when required

They should always work within their level of competence and seek guidance if unsure.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

Students and volunteers must:

follow the Child Protection Policy

report concerns immediately to the Designated Child Protection Coordinator

never investigate concerns themselves

maintain professional boundaries

understand that safeguarding overrides confidentiality

Students and volunteers should never be left solely responsible for children unless this forms part of an agreed and supervised assessment and complies with local authority procedures.

Confidentiality

Students and volunteers may learn confidential information about children and families.

They must:

keep all information confidential

never discuss children outside the nursery

not use social media to share placement experiences involving children or families

follow GDPR and confidentiality procedures

Confidentiality continues after the placement ends.

Working with Children

Students and volunteers are encouraged to:

build positive relationships

interact through play

support children's learning

promote independence

encourage children's voices

support inclusion

celebrate children's achievements

They should always work under the guidance of experienced practitioners.

Professional Learning

Placements provide opportunities to develop knowledge in areas such as:

Curriculum for Excellence

Realising the Ambition

SCERTS

Up, Up and Away (CIRCLE)

Nurture

Children's Rights

Learning through Play

Observation and Assessment

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Practice

Students are encouraged to reflect on how theory links to practice.

Feedback and Reflection

Regular feedback supports professional growth.

Students should receive opportunities to:

discuss progress

celebrate strengths

identify next steps

reflect on learning

ask questions

Feedback should always be constructive, respectful and supportive.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

Will:

approve placements

ensure appropriate induction

allocate mentors

maintain quality of placements

liaise with training providers

Leadership Team

Will:

support mentors

monitor placement quality

provide additional support where required

ensure safeguarding procedures are followed

Mentors

Will:

welcome students

provide guidance

model best practice

complete assessments

support reflective practice

Students and Volunteers

Will:

engage positively

act professionally

follow policies

maintain confidentiality

seek support when needed

reflect on their learning

Quality Assurance

We evaluate placements through:

student feedback

mentor evaluations

college or university feedback
reflective discussions
leadership monitoring

We continually improve the placement experience for future learners.

Legislation and National Guidance

Legislation

- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024)
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

National Guidance

- SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers
- A quality improvement framework for the early learning sector
- Realising the Ambition
- Building the Ambition
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- East Dunbartonshire Council Volunteer and Student Placement Procedures

Signed.....

April 2026