



The Butterfly Rooms (Incorporating Woodlands) LTD

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Registered Charity Number: 1148068 | Ofsted Number: 453859 | Company Number: 7984150 | *Limited by Guarantee*

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Staff Deployment and Ratio Policy (EYFS & Ofsted Compliant)

Policy Statement

This setting is committed to maintaining safe, effective, and legally compliant staff-to-child ratios at all times in accordance with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework** and Ofsted requirements. We recognise that staff deployment is crucial to safeguarding children, supporting their learning and development, and ensuring high-quality care. Ratios will always be maintained across the setting as a whole and staff will be deployed according to children's needs, activities, and risk assessments. Ofsted confirms that staff-to-child ratios apply to the whole provision rather than individual rooms, and providers may deploy staff flexibly where children's needs continue to be met.

Statutory Ratios

The setting will maintain the following minimum ratios:

Children Under 2 Years

- **1 adult : 3 children**

Children Aged 2 Years

- **1 adult : 5 children**

Children Aged 3 and Over

- **1 adult : 8 children** where a Level 3 qualified practitioner is present.
- **1 adult : 13 children** where a qualified teacher, Early Years Teacher (EYT), Early Years Professional (EYP), or another suitably qualified teacher is working directly with the children.

All qualification requirements outlined within the EYFS must also be met.

Staff Deployment

The EYFS recognises that ratios apply across the entire provision rather than separately within each room. This provides settings with flexibility to deploy staff according to children's needs and the operational requirements of the day.

This means staff may move between rooms and areas to support:

- Children's transitions.
- Settling-in procedures.
- Nappy changing and toileting.
- Outdoor play supervision.
- Mealtimes.
- Sleep supervision.

- Individual support for children requiring additional assistance.
- Emergencies and unexpected situations.

Staff deployment decisions will always be based on:

- Children's safety and wellbeing.
- The ages and needs of children present.
- The layout of the provision.
- Risk assessments.
- The experience and qualifications of staff.
- The quality of interactions available to children.

Managers must be able to explain and justify deployment decisions at any time.

Exceptional Changes to Ratios

The EYFS states:

"Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made."

This wording acknowledges that providers may occasionally need to make temporary adjustments to staffing arrangements.

Important Clarification

This statement **does not permit settings to operate routinely below statutory ratios.**

Any flexibility must be:

- Exceptional.
- Short-term.
- Necessary due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Risk assessed.
- Closely monitored.
- Consistent with maintaining children's safety, security, wellbeing and quality of care.

At no point should children be placed at risk or receive reduced quality care due to staffing arrangements.

Examples of situations that may require exceptional temporary adjustments include:

- A practitioner becoming suddenly unwell.
- A medical emergency involving a child.
- Immediate safeguarding concerns.
- Emergency evacuation procedures.
- Unexpected delays in staff arrival due to circumstances outside their control.

The setting will never rely on exceptional measures as part of normal staffing practice or to address predictable staffing shortages.

Managing Exceptional Situations

Where an exceptional situation arises, the Manager or Person in Charge must:

1. Assess the immediate risks.
2. Consider the ages, numbers and needs of children present.
3. Review available qualified staff.
4. Determine whether children's safety and quality of care can be maintained.
5. Record the decision made and rationale.
6. Restore normal ratios as quickly as possible.
7. Inform senior leaders where appropriate.
8. Notify parents if the situation has had a significant impact on the provision.

If safety or quality cannot be maintained, the setting will:

- Restrict admissions.
- Reorganise groups.
- Contact parents for early collection where necessary.
- Close affected areas of the provision if required.

Qualification Requirements

The setting will ensure that:

- Managers meet EYFS qualification requirements.
- Required numbers of staff hold approved Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications.
- Staff included in ratios meet current EYFS requirements.
- Apprentices, students and trainees are included in ratios only where permitted under the EYFS and all associated requirements are met.
- Required paediatric first-aid qualifications are maintained.

Risk Assessment

Ongoing risk assessments will consider:

- Children's ages and stages of development.
- Number of children present.
- Building layout.
- Indoor and outdoor activities.
- Supervision arrangements.
- Staff experience and competence.
- Children with SEND or additional needs.
- Sleep areas and intimate care routines.

Higher staffing levels may be required where risk assessments identify additional support needs.

Ofsted Expectations

Ofsted's focus is not solely on headcounts but on whether children are safe, well cared for, and receiving high-quality experiences. Providers should be able to demonstrate that staffing arrangements enable them to meet children's needs effectively and safely.

Inspectors may ask leaders to explain:

- How ratios are maintained.
- How staff are deployed.
- How risks have been assessed.
- How exceptional circumstances were managed.
- How children remained safe and supported.

Monitoring and Review

The Manager will monitor ratio compliance through:

- Daily registers.
- Staff rotas.
- Room occupancy checks.
- Risk assessments.
- Supervision and quality assurance processes.

Any breaches or exceptional ratio decisions will be recorded and reviewed to identify trends and prevent recurrence.

Key Principle

Staff deployment may be flexible across the provision, but statutory ratios remain the legal minimum. Exceptional deviations may only occur temporarily, in genuinely unforeseen circumstances, and only where children's safety, security, wellbeing and quality of care remain fully protected

This policy was adopted by

The Butterfly Rooms Ltd

On

24th July 2025

Date to be reviewed

24th July 2026

Signed on behalf of the Management
committee

Name of signatory

Miss Aimee Thompson