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Teaching and Learning Policy

Rationale

Experiences in early childhood are the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives and it is vitally important to get it right for all children.

By providing a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging range of learning opportunities and experiences; developing excellent relationships with parents, children and partners; and ensuring a sensitive, caring and inclusive setting, we will help all children to reach their potential regardless of their starting points.

At Sunflowers Pre-School Experienced Early Years Practitioners work as a team to support and teach all children. Staff engage in regular training and are reflective practitioners.

We will help all children to develop into active, resilient, confident and independent learners who move to Primary School with the knowledge, skills, characteristics, attitudes and love of learning necessary to continue that learning throughout their lives.

We will do this by:

* Learning through play
* Developing warm relationships and initiating high quality interactions
* Working with parents
* Providing an enabling environment
* Ensuring the high profile of outdoor learning
* Planning and providing personalised learning

Learning through play

We understand that childhood is part of life and not preparation for further education and adulthood. Children should feel appreciated, be able to express their feelings, ideas, thoughts, identities and relationship in a positive, caring, playful and stimulating environment.

* Children will be able to explore at their own pace, be respected as autonomous, self-motivated individuals and given consistent boundaries
* Most of the play within the setting will be child-led, with practitioners following children’s interests, helping children to take initiatives, make their own decisions and become active learners
* Some adult-led interactions such as story and songs at the end of the sessions will take place, being aware of children’s individual ability to concentrate
* Staff get to know children’s next steps in their development and can help children to make progress through ‘In the moment planning’ and ‘Child Focus Weeks’. Each child’s individual interests provide the grounding for creating that engaged learner
* At all times staff will be actively engaged with children and their learning either by careful observation of children; listening and watching play or by sensitively joining in children’s play in order to develop it
* Practitioners will work to support children’s reasoning while challenging them to re-examine and extend their understanding of the world. They will do this by using open ended questions, modelling and developing language for communication and for thinking, or modelling play itself
* Practitioners will use children’s interests to move children on by building on and extending children’s skills and knowledge

Developing warm relationships and initiating high quality interactions

Adults are aware that each child’s relationship with other children and adults are integral to their well-being and development.

* All staff are role models in their relationships with other staff, parents and children
* They follow the code of conduct, behaviour management policy and always have regard to all the settings policies and procedures
* Practitioners will sensitively involve themselves in all areas of children’s play and activity supporting development throughout the Early Years curriculum
* We operate a Key Person system, but all adults get to know all the children and will prioritise time for interactions with children as role-models, play partners, listeners and planners
* Staff understand that every child develops individually and therefore different levels of communication and interaction are necessary
* Staff have access to each child’s individual learning journey, both online and folder to ensure they are aware of individuals stage of learning in all areas of the EYFS
* Staff will show a warm and caring attitude towards children in the environment and ensure their non-verbal communication (body language) is open and caring.
* In their interactions, adults aim not to think for children, but instead, using sensitive questions and comments, and modelling thinking out loud, help children to think for themselves.
* Staff will help children to develop resilience by encouraging them to persevere and by providing an environment in which children feel secure in facing challenge
* When children push boundaries, adults respond in a calm and consistent way with a regard to the settings policies
* Feedback to children is action specific, concise and positive

 Working with parents

Research has demonstrated the tremendous impact that the quality of the home learning environment has on a child’s development.  We believe that parents and carers are a child’s first and most enduring educator and that when parents and practitioners work in partnership it is to the great benefit of the children.

* In order to capitalise on children’s preschool and home experience we work closely with parents and carers to share information which can then be built upon in school. Ongoing dialogue between staff and parents begins with flexible settling in sessions before starting and continues with regular formal and informal information sharing via the ‘Development and Learning record’ that is filled out by parents before they begin and regular Child Focus meetings following their focus week
* We will provide support, information and newsletters for parents to keep them up to date with policies and procedures and provide them with documents for them to support their child’s learning at home such as ‘What to expect, when?’
* We will ensure that there is a parent rota for parents to have the opportunity to come and see their child in their learning environment as well as mystery reader opportunities and other events throughout the year
* Tapestry online learning journal is used to create a unique record of each child’s learning which parents can contribute to from home

Providing an enabling environment

An enabling environment includes the emotional environment, indoor environment and outdoor environment. Staff ensure:

* Children are able to access all areas of the nursery building and the outside area as they choose and adults in those areas will support, extend and develop children’s learning taking into account emotional factors for individuals eg, getting tired
* Resources are developmentally appropriate and can be used in a range of ways
* Staff are aware of any packed away resources that can be accessed to enhance the provision at appropriate times
* Staff make themselves familiar with ‘Continuous Provision Planning’ posters placed up in each section providing ideas for questioning and ways to extend the area if necessary
* The environment is safe and well organised into discrete areas of learning where continuous provision is well planned for
* Resources are high quality and safe
* Resources are available for children to select themselves to support independent learning and reflect ‘British Values’ and the world around us
* ‘Choose it, use it and put it away’ philosophy modelled and taught early during settling in sessions with parental input and then a routine of ‘Tidy up time’ is included in the session as a teaching and learning time for all children
* Seasonal changes to our interest table led by the children noticing/talking about different things, eg discussing Diwali or Christmas

Ensuring a high quality outdoor environment

* Continuous provision and focus activities to ensure all children have access to the full curriculum outside too are planned for daily, building on observations of child initiated learning and/or asking children for their ideas.
* Children are taught how to use tools safely and appropriately
* Children are taught how to risk assess when using the climbing equipment
* Staff ensure that all areas of learning are included in the outdoor area
* By parents providing appropriate all weather clothing for children and staff ensuring they bring in appropriate clothing too, the children will have access to the outdoor area whatever the weather, sunshine, rain or snow
* Resources are checked and risk assessed regularly and replenished to ensure the outdoor environment is a rich, safe learning environment with children able to access all 7 areas of learning as indoors

Planning and providing personalised learning

Personalised learning requires staff to carefully plan activities and experiences so that all children can access a broad and balanced curriculum while following their individual interests and learning styles.

Personalised learning does not mean that all children require an individual educational program but that teaching and learning is informed by a thorough understanding of the needs, interests, experiences and diversity of all of our children.

Staff members will:

* Take account of children’s learning styles and the observable patterns of behaviour that children demonstrate when they are playing and exploring (schemas) and work hard to meet those needs in an appropriate way
* Following the target areas during focus weeks and contributing to children’s observation and assessment process to inform next steps and possibly plan for future activities that the child may be interested in
* Prioritise finding suitable spaces for children to explore their play ideas (for example throwing or transporting)
* Develop and maintain a thorough knowledge of their key children and their families and use this information to plan activities and experiences that will raise the level of achievement for all
* Take special care to meet the needs of all children and add to the learning environments accordingly
* Work hard to include all children who wish to participate in an activity, providing appropriate support where necessary
* Implement the school’s equality policy and value, respect and celebrate the diversity of the pre-school and its communities. Promote ‘British Values’ at all times

All Sunflowers Pre-School staff know that the adult’s role is to:

**Notice** – See what the child is really doing

**Recognise** – Understand the significance

**Respond** – Make careful decisions about what to do to support and extend thinking and learning