**Smart Hands Studio – Child-Led Learning Approach Policy**

**1. Policy Statement**

At Smart Hands Studio, we believe children learn best when they are encouraged to take the lead in their own creative journey. Our child-led approach empowers children to make choices, solve problems, and express their ideas through woodwork, while ensuring that activities remain safe, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate.

We aim to create an environment where children feel confident to experiment and proud of what they create, while developing practical skills, independence, and resilience.

**2. Aims of the Policy**

This policy outlines how we:

* Promote child-led learning in a structured, supportive, and safe way.
* Balance freedom of choice with appropriate guidance and boundaries.
* Ensure all children have equal opportunities to participate and express themselves.
* Foster personal growth, creativity, and a sense of achievement in every child.

**3. What We Mean by Child-Led Learning**

Child-led learning at Smart Hands Studio means:

* Children are encouraged to choose what they make, how they decorate it, and which techniques they want to try, within safe and age-appropriate options.
* Staff act as facilitators, offering guidance, demonstrating techniques, and helping children refine their ideas when needed — without taking over.
* Children are given time and space to explore materials and tools, with the flexibility to adapt or change their projects as they go.

We recognise that each child has their own pace, interests, and style of learning, and we respect their autonomy while ensuring safety and engagement.

**4. Roles and Responsibilities**

**Staff Responsibilities:**

* Prepare a safe and inspiring environment with a variety of materials and tools suitable for the age group.
* Offer suggestions, demonstrations, and support where needed while allowing children to make decisions about their work.
* Observe and listen to children to understand their ideas and guide them appropriately.
* Step in when a child’s choice or behaviour compromises safety, wellbeing, or fairness.

**Children’s Responsibilities:**

* Treat tools, materials, staff, and fellow participants with respect.
* Listen to safety instructions and use tools appropriately.
* Take ownership of their projects and be willing to try new things.

**5. Ensuring Safety and Structure**

While we encourage freedom and choice, we maintain clear boundaries to keep everyone safe and to make sure the experience is positive for all.

* Only tools and techniques demonstrated by staff may be used.
* Children must follow instructions on safety, sharing resources, and respecting others’ space.
* Staff retain the right to redirect or stop an activity if it becomes unsafe or inappropriate.

**6. Inclusivity and Support**

We ensure that every child, regardless of ability, background, or experience, can take part and feel successful. Staff adapt their guidance to meet individual needs and to make sure no child feels excluded or discouraged.

**7. Review and Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to reflect good practice and the needs of the children and families we serve. Staff feedback, parent comments, and children’s experiences are all considered when reviewing the approach.

**Signed:**
Charlotte Cala
Date: 16-07-25
Next review date: 16-07-26