

Play Policy

The Pre-school understands that play is something that a child best enjoys. A child's play has a purpose and can be a step towards the learning and understanding of valuable skills. It can help the child fit into the world physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially, and grow to be a healthy and competent individual. The Preschool will endeavour to provide children with a stimulating environment, where playing and learning go hand in hand. A varied selection of activities will be provided throughout the session, using both indoor and outdoor activities.

Consideration will be taken to ensure that provision is made for children with special needs and abilities. We aim to provide open ended resources which will allow the children to develop their play incorporating their own interests. Planning is done on a weekly basis so we can identify the children's interests and provide resources to develop their interests.

Outdoor Play

- ↗ We believe that all children have the right to experience and enjoy the essential and special nature of being outdoors.
- ↗ Young children thrive and their minds and bodies develop best when they have access to stimulating outdoor environments for learning through play and real experiences.
- ↗ Knowledgeable and enthusiastic adults are crucial to unlocking the potential of outdoors.
- ↗ Play is the most important activity for young children outside.
- ↗ Outdoor play can, and must, offer young children experiences that have a lot of meaning to them and are led by the child.
- ↗ Young children need all the adults around them to understand why outdoor play provision is essential to them and adults who are committed and able to make its potential available to them.
- ↗ The outdoor space and curriculum must harness the special nature of the outdoors, to offer children what the indoors cannot. This should be the focus for outdoor provision, complimenting and extending provision indoors.
- ↗ Outdoors should be a dynamic, flexible and versatile place where children can choose, create, change and be in charge of their play environment.
- ↗ Young children must have a rich outdoor environment full of irresistible stimuli, contexts for play, exploration and talk, plenty of real experiences and contact with the natural world and with the community.
- ↗ Where possible, young children should be able to play outside, when they want to and develop their ideas for play over time.
- ↗ Young children need challenge and risk within a framework of security and safety. The outdoor environment lends itself to offering challenge, helping children learn how to be safe and to be aware of others.
- ↗ Outdoor provision must support inclusion and meet the needs of individuals, offering a diverse range of play-based experiences. Young children should participate in decisions and actions affecting their outdoor play.
- ↗ It is the role of adults to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable risks and remove any hazards.

Staff accompanying children outdoors should be able to communicate with any staff who come indoors to take children to the toilet. Facilitating correct ratios/ safe supervision. Because wear and tear is greater outside, there is a systematic maintenance programme and daily check of equipment. By observing children carefully and knowing them well we will be able to recognise those who need greater challenge and those who need support. Children should be assisted to learn how to assess risk. Children have many opportunities to be outside in the fresh air. Staff are keen to support children in the outdoor area and use the Early Years Outcomes guidance to identify and plan for children's learning. Children are able to be either active or enjoy a quiet moment outdoors. Staff have a positive view of the outdoor area and ensure that the area is used in all weathers. This helps children to appreciate different seasons and stimulates their sensory awareness. Outings are planned so that children can gain an appreciation of their local and wider community.

Indoor Play

Messy Play - A large variety of different mediums, such as shaving foam, cornflour, jelly, spaghetti and dough will be made available. These will provide different tactile and imaginative experiences and will encourage expressive language.

Sand and Water - These provide opportunities to experience scientific and mathematical concepts as well as encouraging social and language development.

Creative Activities - Activities such as painting, sticking, chalking and box modelling will be regularly made available. The children are encouraged to select their own resources to encourage independence. Our investigation area encourages language and conversation by exploring the sensory bottles, matching the puzzles or finding out how things work.

Imaginative Play - The Preschool recognises the importance of imaginative play to children and will aim to provide rich opportunities to widen the imagination. These will include dolls and accessories, road maps and cars, trains, dressing up clothes and a home corner. There is also a selection of construction toys which additionally encourage good hand/eye coordination, counting, sorting, etc. Super hero play is encouraged however we do not encourage weapons or play which emphasises harm.

Books - A variety of books are available for children to look at and read, both under supervision and alone. In any event children will be read to as a group each day. Children are able to take a book home to share with their parents after every session.

Additional Equipment - Musical instruments will be available so that in addition to hearing and responding to music children will be encouraged to think about how sounds are produced.

Links to Legislation and Guidance, Children Act 1989 and 2004, Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF) 1989, Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986 and Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999, Human Rights Act 2000,

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pickering Pre-School Playgroup held on 31st August 2023.

Date to be reviewed – Before end of August 2024.

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory – Richard Allenby (Chairperson).