



Approaches to Play Policy

Purpose

To encourage a common understanding of the role of play in learner development and to foster a common approach to the supervision and nurturing of play.

We will do this by making learning experiences child led and by briefing all participating adults on the forest school ethos on play.

Why do we need a policy?

Children interact with, and come to understand, the world around them through play. Play cultivates their curiosity and is central to their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Play allows them to experiment with roles and tasks, develop judgement, conquer fear and master their tools, their environment and themselves.

Play has become increasingly adult initiated and controlled due to smaller families, pressures on parents, busy lifestyles and heightened risk awareness. Play deprivation crosses class and cultural boundaries, but can be particularly harmful to the development of children who live in poverty or who have additional needs.

In the light of the above, the policy is needed:

- To ensure that the benefits of play remain central to our planning;
- To ensure that all adults understand the benefits of play and foster play in a consistent way;
- To ensure that play can take place in a safe environment which manages risks without detracting from the freedom to explore.

How will we promote play?

Adults will:

- Set clear and reasonable boundaries which promote a safe environment for play.
- Resist the temptation to interfere with, control or direct play, except where, not to do so, would lead to:
 - Unacceptable levels of risk;
 - Bullying of members of the community.
- Include learners in their own planning, so that activities reflect the learners' interests.
- Respond to the tears, dirt and scrapes that result from play in a calm and commensurate way.
- Use review and reflection to capture the benefits of play on mental development, whilst fostering an understanding of possible hazards and how the learner can minimise the risks of these occurring.

Children will:

- Respect the three "Look Afters";
- Follow the behaviour boundaries set in the behaviour code;
- Have fun.

How will we implement this policy?

- All participating adults will be provided with a play guidance card when first attending;
- The impact of adults on play will be part of the reflection and review at the end of each session;
- Planning proformas will encourage reflection on this play philosophy so that it is embedded at the beginning of the planning process.

This policy was implemented on **January 1st 2019**

The policy will be reviewed and updated in **January 2020**.