

The Strawberry Patch Nursery and Pre-School

Learning and Development Policy

Policy Statement

“The Strawberry Patch is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at all times and expects everybody working within this setting to share this commitment”

The Strawberry Patch Nursery and Pre-School believes that children learn best through play and when they are having fun. In order to learn, children need to be engaged and motivated in order to think and develop. We facilitate this by using a free flow system allowing children to have access to both the indoor and outside environment at all times.

The Strawberry Patch Nursery & Pre-School recognises every child is an individual and unique, we are supportive to every child and aim to assist in every child's growth and development. This means we will always work to:

- Recognise children's interests and plan the environment accordingly.
- Provide an environment which encourages independence and individuality, which is safe and secure enabling children to thrive, taking risks and overcoming difficulties with supportive adults and demonstrating the importance of having boundaries and understanding rules.
- Provide an environment where children can self select resources.
- Being supportive towards every child's learning and development and never being judgmental or demoralising.
- Welcome parents/carers and families contributions throughout their child's learning journey at the setting.
- Recognise any areas of development which can further be supported from outside agencies.
- Adapting activities for every child's own developmental stage, promoting inclusive practice within the setting.
- Ongoing training for staff which supports the development and learning of the children.

This policy clearly explains learning and development within the setting, making it explicit for all to understand. It applies to all staff, students, children, parents/carers and volunteers.

Planning

Starting at the Nursery

On booking a place for your child at the setting, you will arrange settling visits (see transition policy.) These visits are vital for your child's key person to get to know your child and of course you as the parent/carer.

The child's first four visits will consist of:

- The child having opportunities to explore the environment and meet their key person.

- For parents/ carers to meet the key person and ask any questions they may have.
- Parents/ carers will be given an 'all about me' book to complete which invites them to tell the key person about their child's interests, routines and family life, providing foundations for relationships to be made between the key person and child as well as beginning a supportive fun learning journey whilst at the setting.
- The child's key person, during the visits, will capture photos and observations of the child playing in order to gain some insight into the child's interests.

Once the child has started the setting, the key person will continue to record observations on the child's interests and development, consisting of a long observation (usually a page long) written approximately after 6 weeks of being at the setting.

- The longer observation provides a more detailed record of your child's interests and will include a next step; this is a small goal which is achievable for your child over a period of time decided by your child's key person.

The learning story

Each child will be provided with a learning story (on line journal **Ref to Learning Journal Policy**) when they join the nursery, it is a collaboration of each child's achievements and progress whilst at the setting. It will include:

- Photos of the child's key person and key buddy
- Completed all about me books
- Snap shot written observations
- Monthly interest and next step
- Long observations (usually a page long)
- Observations recording where the child is playing/ what they are doing at 10 minute intervals to support in providing information on the child's interests
- Information provided from parents on events at home
- Photographs of children engaged in activities
- Child's own work

Child's individual interests

The observations recorded will be presented neatly into each child's learning story. After approximately six weeks of the child starting the setting, staff will have gained a wealth of information and have some insight into the child's interests.

At the beginning of each month the practitioner will:

- Consider what the child's interest is and how the child learns best. e.g. being active or calmer activities.
- Record the child's interest in the child's learning story along with an achievable next step. This 'next step' is a goal to work towards which is achievable for the child with some guidance and support linking closely to the child's development.
- No child will be given targets which are unrealistic. The next steps are used by the adult to plan for progress, the child will be learning through a good balance of

adult led and child initiated play activities and through having fun. If this is jeopardised, the activity will be stopped.

- The practitioner will also record the child's interest as well as inviting parents/carers to write any other interests or events that may be occurring at home so that the key person can plan activities accordingly and continue to develop an ever growing relationship with the child.

The practitioners at The Strawberry Patch use a rigorous planning process, they evaluate every resource which they have planned, reflecting on whether it was beneficial for the child and/or how it can be altered and adapted to aid progression.

Assessment

We believe children learn best through play, in order for children to be able to learn they need resources and activities that interest them, keeping them engaged in activities offering motivation as well as providing foundations for them to develop curiosity and enquiry based play known as the characteristics of learning.

The childrens' learning and development will be monitored against Development matters guidance and the EYFS (more information on guidelines can be found at <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DEVELOPMENT-MATTERS>)

Characteristics of effective learning: How children learn:

- Playing and exploring **-(engagement)** finding out and exploring, playing with what they know, being willing to have a go.
- Active learning- **(Motivation)** being involved and concentrating, keeping on trying, enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
- Creating and critical thinking-**(thinking)** having their own ideas, making links, choosing ways to do things.
- There are seven learning areas which are expected to be achieved by the time the children reach their fifth birthday.
- The seven areas are split into 3 **prime** areas and four **specific** areas; the focus is particularly on the prime areas of development as these are central to a child's wellbeing. these consist of:
 - **Prime areas:** Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional development and communication and language development.
 - **Specific areas:** Expressive art and design, mathematics, literacy and understanding of the world.

The practitioners document every child's progress, should there be any concerns that arise due to children's learning and development, staff will work closely with the SENCo lead and parents/carers to develop strategies to give further support to the child which may be in the form of an I.E.P. (Please refer to special educational needs policy.)

The Planning Cycle

The child starts nursery

Parents complete their child's 'all about me' books

Practitioner observes the child during their first 5 visits.

Observations will be recorded in the child's learning story and experiences will be reflected and adapted weekly to support child progression until next step is achieved.

Parents are invited to contribute to their learning through the learning stories and home links.

The child will be observed with both snap shot observations and long observation which will be recorded in the child's learning story

Parents feed back to staff

Child's interest to be recorded on interest balloon by staff and **parents**

Interest and achievable next step recorded in learning story.

The adult will play with the child, sharing the experience and using their expertise in supporting the child throughout in order to progress.

Staff will feedback to parents through yellow books and consultations, providing for a continuous two-way flow of information from nursery to home and home to nursery.

The practitioner will plan resources and activities to meet the child's interests in order to work towards achieving the child's next step.

Parents are able to download a guide to the early year's foundation stage to help them understand how their child learns. (www.foundationyears.org.uk/)

Two Year Checks

When a child turns two, they are required to have a two year development record written to support health visitors. The two year check is a summary discussing the child's progress of the three prime areas. It will identify the child's strengths and any areas where progress is not as expected. In such case, plans will be put in place with the Room leaders and SENCo lead and parent/carers to support future learning and development.

The two year check will only be done when the child is fully settled and comfortable at the setting.

- If the child has recently transitioned from the baby room into the main room, the new key person will wait at least 6 weeks to allow the child to settle before compiling their report and he/she will work with the child's previous key person collating evidence to gain an accurate account of the child.
- If the child is new to the setting, the key worker will wait until the child has been at the setting for at least 2 months and is comfortable in the environment. A child who is unsettled will not be learning or developing at their full potential. Therefore providing an inaccurate development check.
- The completed progress check will be discussed with the parents/carers. We welcome contributions from the parents/carers in completing the report and will request for the parent comment box to be completed giving any further insights that they may have witnessed in the home environment.
- Wherever possible we will endeavour to have the check done to coincide with the health visitors' check.
- If at any point it is felt that outside professionals or agencies need to be contacted then consent will be gained from parents/carers.

Every Child A Talker Monitoring Form

The monitoring form represents children's development from 0-11years in regards to speech language and communication progress. This is divided into four sections;

- Listening and Attention
- Understanding
- Talking
- Social Communication

The practitioners will review where each child is within each area once a term, providing further insight into the children's development. If at any point a practitioner has any concerns regarding development, they will first speak to the Room Leader and then the SENCo lead and the parents/carers to discuss the different types of support that can be provided for the child.

Ongoing learning and development summaries

Staff track the progress of their children by completing a learning and development summary every 6 months to a year. This check tracks the continuing progress of the child focussing on the three prime areas. It identifies the child's strengths and any areas where progress is not as expected. In such case, plans will be put in place with the Room Leaders and SENCo lead and parent/carers to support future learning and development.

- If the child is new to the setting, the key person will wait until the child has been at the setting for at least 2 months and is comfortable in the environment. A child who is unsettled will not be learning or developing at their full potential. Therefore providing an inaccurate summary.
- Summaries will take place every 6 months throughout the child's time at the nursery.
- The completed summaries will be discussed with the parents/carers. We welcome contributions from the parents/ carers in completing the report and will request for the parent comment box to be completed giving any further insights that they may have witnessed in the home environment.
- If at any point it is felt that outside professionals or agencies need to be contacted then consent will be gained from parents/carers.

Transition reports

At The Strawberry Patch we complete two different types of transition forms; these are used as a way of supporting new key workers or teachers with information that could aid them in caring for the child.

- A transition form is completed when a child moves from one room into another room. Their existing key person will write a report for their new room key person providing them with information on the child's development in the three prime areas and information on the child's interests to aid the new key person to support the child.
- Parents/carers are invited to contribute to the report with any further information which could support the new key person and aid a smooth transition into the new room.
- When a child is due to leave the setting for school or to a new setting, they will also have a transition form completed.
- The child's key person will complete the transition form for the new school or setting, providing detailed information on what the child's interests are and their learning style. This supports the new teacher/practitioner in settling the child into their setting through knowing the child's interests. Parents/carers are invited to add their comments to the report.

Safeguarding and data protection

All staff at The Strawberry Patch takes Safeguarding and children's welfare very seriously. All reports, planning, assessments and photographs of the children will not be shown or shared to anyone outside of the setting without consent from parents/carers.

Staff spend a long time on compiling learning stories, these can take many hours and some staff prefer to complete them at home (see our safeguarding and children's welfare policy), all parents/ carers will be asked to grant permission for this. Staff will also be made aware that these are to be kept confidential and are not shared with other outside of the setting.

Signed: RBaillie

Date: September 2020

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