



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT – CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY POLICY

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Governor Lead: Tim Dickinson and Marius Carboni

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LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Care, Learning and Play Policy

The programme of activities and the atmosphere of Sevenoaks Preparatory School's Early Years Department aims to promote and encourage confidence, independence and enjoyment. Our primary goal is to enable children to develop their emotional, social, cognitive, interpersonal and physical skills, and to encourage their desire to explore, discover and be creative.

The Sevenoaks Preparatory School Early Years Department will strive to provide a well-planned and organised play environment that offers rich and stimulating experiences. The children will be encouraged to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves. Children are encouraged to gain confidence and independence, and every effort is made to develop their self esteem and learning through play. The programme of activities is developed following the children's interests, allowing them to build upon their natural curiosity for learning. We take into account the differing ages, interests, backgrounds and abilities of the children, nurturing every child as a unique individual.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in Early Year's settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are called the **prime areas**.

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language;
- Physical Development;
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

The children must also be supported in four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas

- Literacy;
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World;
- Expressive Arts and Design.

The seven areas of learning and development are underpinned by three **Characteristics of Effective Learning** which support the children to become effective and motivated learners.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

Observation

Each child's development is closely observed to ensure they are making progress and any difficulties in any areas of learning are identified and addressed. Based on the EYFS principles, staff will be able to recognise where each child is in their learning and put in place the most effective activity to support each child in extending their development and learning based on their interests and needs.

Staff will help children to bring together what they know in a connected and whole way by:

- Observing children at play.
- Using their observations to support and extend play by planning and resourcing a challenging environment.
- Engaging in play and encouraging the development of communication (both non-verbal and spoken) through play.
- Knowing when to take a 'back seat' and to let the children develop their play without an adult.

Systematic written records of children's progress, which are informed by observations, are compiled for a variety of reasons. At Sevenoaks Prep School, these online records are called the Tapestry Learning Journal and are completed by staff and parents.

The Learning Journals aim to:

- Evaluate progress based on Early Years Outcomes (revised 2013) aiming towards the Early Learning Goals.
- Share knowledge with parents/carers.
- Help plan appropriate projects and activities.
- Identify any special educational needs, liaising with the Early Years Learning Support Coordinator and outside agencies when appropriate.
- Monitor equal opportunities in terms of access to the EYFS.
- Share knowledge among the staff team and provide continuity in case of staff absences or changes.
- Monitor Wellbeing and Involvement of the children in the EYFS.

Assessment

Key persons will complete regular assessments through observations, using their professional judgement. The general principle is that this should be an enjoyable experience for the child.

Based upon regular observations, staff will track the progress of the children using the Kent Tracker. This system is computer based and will be completed at least once a term by the child's Key Person. The tracker will enable staff to see if there are specific groups of children in need of support across the areas of learning. This information will allow them to target these groups and plan activities to develop their understanding and broaden their experiences. The Kent Tracker may be replaced by the Analysis section on the Tapestry program.

Staffing

Staffing arrangements will provide opportunities for:

- Reflection on practice.
- The realisation that working with children is a complex, challenging and demanding task and that often there are no easy answers.
- Learning as a shared process – involving all staff members and the children where appropriate.

Staff will display flexible styles of leadership and respond appropriately to children according to their age, understanding and needs. They will support, recognise and promote achievements by all children.

Children will be offered outdoor play every day, subject to weather conditions, and no child will ever be left unsupervised.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play opportunities are included in the Early Years Foundation Stage and offer opportunities for learning across all areas of learning. Where our buildings allow, the children can flow freely between indoors and outdoors and are able to choose where they would prefer to be. Our Reception classes are situated upstairs and therefore outdoor play is a planned time rather than free flow. This will be rectified with the new building (please refer to building plans).

We encourage the children to take an active part and interest in their external surroundings by observing the seasons and growing cycles.

Outdoor play promotes:

- Physical skills in gross motor movement.
- Opportunities for co-operation, language development and independence.
- Vital mathematical, scientific and creative exploration.

Children will be given the opportunity to play outside in all weathers. Parents are asked to provide suitable outdoor wear. When all the children are outside, staff will position themselves to ensure that all children are adequately supervised and supported.