



# Play and Equipment Policy

The United Nations has recognised PLAY as a specific right for ALL children.  
(Children's Act 2006)

Play provides the foundations for learning socially, cognitively, physically, and emotionally.

## Play and the learning environment

Play can be defined in the following way:

*"Play can be fun or serious, through play children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community"* Best Play - Children's Play Council

West Byfleet Nursery recognises that all children are individuals and learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

We aim to ensure that individual children's needs are met in the following ways:

- Each child will have a key person.
- Key persons will make regular observations of their children to assess their level of learning and development and also to find out about individual interests.
- Observations will be used to plan play based activities that are appropriate to support and extend the child's needs, interests, and next steps.
- Observations will help practitioners to identify teaching moments and opportunities for extending a child's understanding.
- Child initiated play is encouraged and extended by adult observation and participation.
- A wide range of play-based activities are available at all times, both indoors and outdoors.
- Children will have some structured group time and will also be able to free flow across all areas of the nursery during their session.
- Children will have lots of opportunities to benefit from outdoor learning and will have access to a wide range of experiences outdoors, running, climbing, digging, playing games and other physical activities.
- Children are supported to explore the natural world in their own ways in their own time with sensitive support from the adults.
- We do not organise sports events involving parents at West Byfleet Nursery, due to our size and numbers of children attending, it is not possible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all the children in attendance.
- Children are encouraged to self-select activities and resources to support their own learning.
- The following ratios are maintained to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children attending, 1:8 for over three and 1:5 for under threes.

## In the Moment Planning

At West Byfleet Nursery we have been following the ethos of In the Moment Planning (ITMP) since September 2016. We strive to provide a stimulating environment that is specifically equipped and organised to meet the children's needs, interests, and individual levels of development. We promote child-led, adult supported learning, encouraging independence, confidence and a 'can do' attitude. In addition, free flow allows children to move freely inside and outside during each session, every day and in all weathers.

The children are able to lead their own play and learning and yet benefit from adult guidance and support, scaffolding their knowledge in some activities. The environment and resources are carefully planned to enable each child to explore, experiment and learn across all areas of learning and development.

Through ITMP we enable children to take their play forward and to try new challenges with the level of adult support specific for each individual, physically, and emotionally. As their confidence grows along with self-esteem so does their whole attitude to learning. They learn that the world around them has unlimited opportunities and wonderful experiences which they can try in a safe, caring, secure, happy, and healthy environment.

### **The Adult Role**

*The level of children's play rises when adults play with them.*

Adults in the setting help to promote independence and foster self confidence in the following ways:

- Children are given plenty of time to explore the learning environment and the activities on offer.
- Adults use open ended questions to extend children's knowledge and understanding, for example, "how does, what if, what would?"
- Key persons will develop close and supportive relationships with the child so that they feel safe to explore the learning environment from a secure base.
- Adults will frequently engage in sustained shared thinking, listening to the children's ideas, planning activities with them, supporting, and extending their learning by engaging in the 'thinking process' with them.
- Adults in the setting will work in partnership with parents and carers to share information about the child's interests, needs and progress. This is achieved through informal chats about the day's activities and also, more formally, through twice-yearly parents' evenings.
- West Byfleet Nursery operates an 'open door policy', parents are encouraged to actively engage in their child's learning through on-going dialogue.
- Adults model positive attitudes towards play, learning and discovery.
- All achievements are celebrated.

Practitioners work closely together and will share information about children's needs and the effectiveness of play activities through regular open, honest, and respectful communication, to provide continuity of care to the children.

Staff meetings and room leader meetings are held regularly for staff to share and discuss ideas, plans and best practice.

Up to date research on child development and learning is cascaded to all practitioners via the Managers, SENCO and/or Room Leaders.

The Managers and room leaders will provide staff with positive role models and will provide praise and constructive feedback to staff to ensure that staff understand the importance of play.

All staff are expected to undertake training and CPD appropriate to their needs to ensure that all adults in the setting have appropriate knowledge about the importance of play and how they can support children's play experiences effectively.

## **Equipment**

We aim to regularly review, update, and replace resources as necessary, to ensure variety and choice are available to the children.

We provide a range of toys, equipment and real resources that promote all areas of children's learning and development.

Resources are displayed where children can freely access them and self-select. Resources are rotated on a regular basis thereby providing a fresh range of activities each week.

We provide resources and play based activities based on key person observations of the children's interests to ensure that challenges are provided to meet the needs of all the children attending West Byfleet Nursery.

All resources and equipment are checked as they are put out each session and put away at the end of the day to ensure cleanliness and good condition. Any broken, unsafe, or dirty equipment is repaired, disposed of, or cleaned as appropriate. Damaged items are reported to the Managers who endeavour to replace them as soon as possible.

West Byfleet Nursery will select resources, materials and equipment that promote positive images that are non-discriminatory and avoid racial, gender or other stereotyping.

We aim to ensure that the environment is safe, stimulating, challenging and enjoyable, all resources must be age and developmentally appropriate.

Enabling environments offer:

- stimulating resources relevant to all children's cultures and communities.
- rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching.
- support for children to explore and manage risks.
- reasonable adjustments to the environment when required.

We aim to meet the physical and emotional needs of all children so that they are ready to take advantage of the play and learning opportunities that are on offer.

Staff are deployed in a manner that enables children to flow freely inside and outside at appropriate times during the session.

## **Health and safety**

We provide play equipment and resources which are safe and, where applicable, conform to BSEN safety standards or Toy (Safety) Regulations (1995)

- Providing furniture which is suitable for the children's age range.
- Checking all resources and equipment as they are set out at the beginning of a session and again as they are put away at the end.
- Equipment is cleaned and repaired as necessary and any unsafe, worn out or damaged equipment is replaced.
- All electrical equipment on the premises is PAT tested annually.

## **Practice**

We encourage the children to care for toys, equipment, and the environment and to keep both indoors and outside areas tidy.

We support the children to behave in appropriate and safe ways by talking about personal risks and the safety of others.

We observe children on a daily basis to establish their interests in order to plan appropriate, realistic and fun experiences that build on their interests.

We use the children's home experiences, such as going to the shops, cooking at home, going to the park as the starting point for their learning.

Signed: Ruth Claydon

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Review: March 2026