09 Early years practice policy

Alongside associated procedures in 09.1-09.15 Early years practice, this policy was adopted by Maidenbower Preschool Playgroup on 7th September 2026.

Aim

Children are safe, happy, eager to participate and to learn, and supported to reach their full potential.

Objectives

- Babies and young children need to form a secure attachment to their key person when they join the setting to feel safe, happy and eager to participate and learn. It is their *entitlement* to be settled comfortably into a new environment.
- The needs of part-time children are considered.
- There is a procedure for when children do not settle and for prolonged absences.
- Introductions and induction of the parent/carer is carried out before children start.
- Information is gathered from parents and carers prior to start regarding the child's likes, dislikes, interests, routines, family structure and birth history (see training regarding pre-term births www.pretermbirth.info)
- *Key parts of the day such as meal and snack times, nappy changes and intimate care* make the very best of routine opportunities to promote 'tuning-in' to the child emotionally and create opportunities for learning. We actively promote British values, inclusion, equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity.
- Sleep and rest times are based on the needs of the child and in line with safe sleep practices pertaining to sleep equipment, sleep space and sleep checks. Staff knowledge and training is up to date and all staff understand the associated risks around Sudden Infant Death (SIDs).
- We operate a positive behaviour management approach. Behaviour management procedures cover how staff should respond to all aspects of behaviour, including children who exhibit challenging behaviour towards other children. These procedures build on the Early Years Alliance's approach to learning based on three key statements:
    1. Learning is a lifelong process, which enables children and adults to contribute to and shape their world.
    2. We want the curriculum we provide to help children to learn to:
        - be confident and independent
        - be aware of and responsive to their feelings
        - make caring and thoughtful relationships with other people

- become increasingly excited by, interested in, and knowledgeable and curious about the world around them.

3. We provide a wide range of interesting child-chosen and adult-initiated activities which:
    - give children opportunities to use all their senses
    - help children of different ages and stages to play together
    - help children be the directors of their own learning
    - help children develop an inquiring and questioning attitude to the world around them

The *EYFS* is used as a framework to provide care and learning for babies and children under two years.

Older Children (2-5 years)

To feel securely settled and ready to learn, children from two to five years need to form attachments with adults who care for them, primarily to a key person, but with other adults and children too. In this way children feel part of a community of learners; they can contribute to that community and receive from it. The three-stage model referred to in procedure 9.4 is applicable, but with some differences in the procedures for children moving up into the next group and for older children.

Waiting list and admissions

Our provision is accessible to children and families from all sections of the local and wider community. We aim to ensure that all sections of the community receive accessible information and that our admissions procedures are fair, clear and open to all parents who apply for places. The availability of a place at the setting considers staff/child ratios, the age of the child and registration requirements.

- We operate in an inclusive manner which enables all children and families to access our services.
- We also have regard for the needs of parents/carers who are:
    - looking to take up work, remain in work or extend their hours of work
    - looking to commence training or education
- We work in partnership with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that our provision is accessible to all sections of the community.
- Services are widely advertised and information is accessible to all sections of the community.
- Where the number of children wanting places exceeds the number of places available, a waiting list is operated using clear criteria for allocation of places, as detailed in section 09.1 Waiting list and admissions procedure.

Funded places

All 3- and 4-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours free childcare and early education each week for 38 weeks of the year. Some eligible two-year-olds are also entitled. 9-month-old babies may be entitled to

the extended working entitlements which parents and carers must apply for. Once a working entitlement code has been applied, parents and carers must re-apply every three months. Settings must make time to explain the funding process to parents. Funded places are offered in accordance with national and local codes of practice and adherence to the relevant Provider Agreement/Contract with the local authority.

Legal References

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE 2014)

Equality Act 2010

Childcare Act 2006