

15. Early Learning Opportunities Policy

At La Petite Academy we promote the learning and development of all children in our care. We have a quality workforce with highly qualified staff who recognise that each child is an individual, focusing on their needs, interests, learning and development. Staff plan challenging and enjoyable experiences across the seven areas of the curriculum. Our staff are ambitious for our children, and guide and plan what children learn reflecting on the different rates at which they develop and adjust practice appropriately. Our aim is to support all children attending the nursery to attain their maximum potential within their individual capabilities.

We provide a positive inclusive play environment for every child, so they develop good social skills and an appreciation of all aspects of this country's multi-cultural society. We plan learning experiences to ensure, as far as practical, there is equality of opportunity for all children and a celebration of diversity.

We maintain a personalised record of every child's development, showing their abilities, progress, interests and any areas requiring further support, see Tapestry policy for further information.

For children whose home language is not English, we will take reasonable steps to:

- Provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning and support their language development at home; and
- Ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring that children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin year one.

We ensure that the educational programmes are well planned and resourced to have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning. They provide interesting and challenging experiences that meet the needs of all children and reflects the wide range of skills, knowledge and attitudes they will need as foundations for learning. Planning is based on a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can achieve. We may use the Development Matters and

Birth to 5 Matters documents for guidance to support staff to plan and deliver the EYFS learning and development requirements.

We implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) set by the Department for Education that sets standards to ensure all children learn and develop well. We support and enhance children's learning and development holistically through play-based activities. We review all aspects of learning and development and ensure a flexible approach is maintained, which responds quickly to children's learning and developmental needs. We develop tailor-made activities based on observations, which inform future planning and draw on children's needs and interests. This is promoted through adult-led and child-initiated opportunities both indoors and outdoors.

High quality care leads directly to better outcomes for our children and all staff are committed to providing children with the best possible start in life and enable them to reach their full potential. As part of our quality practice, we ensure children receive the highest quality care and education by:

- Having high expectations for all children so they can achieve the best outcomes
- Building close attachments with children so they feel safe, secure, happy and can thrive
- Developing close relationships with families so together we can best support the child's individual learning and development
- Implementing all the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Ensuring that the EYFS learning and development requirements are embedded including providing a curriculum that is underpinned by the EYFS principles, educational programmes and seven areas of learning and development
- Reflecting on all areas of practice and striving towards the Ofsted grade descriptors for outstanding quality indicators
- Ensuring all the EYFS assessment requirements are met including the planning, observation, assessment and next steps and that they are linked to each individual child's needs and interests and are evaluated for effectiveness
- Having a highly qualified, skilled staff team that understand what is meant by high quality practice and interaction and how to deliver this, deploying staff appropriately to meet the individual needs of all children
- Creating and achieving the nurseries quality vision, mission and outcomes

- Consistently delivering high quality practice and teaching that makes a difference to children's daily experiences
- Ensuring a solid understanding of the importance of pedagogy and child development amongst all practitioners
- Ensuring that the environment, resources and provision is of high quality both indoors and out; monitoring resources and equipment ensuring these are risk assessed and fit for purpose
- Providing children with wonderful experiences and opportunities giving them the best start in life
- Valuing continuous professional development for all staff and accessing a variety of training and development to support the needs of the children in the nursery
- Appropriately assessing children's learning and development and recognising where children may need support and acting on this quickly
- Evaluating the effectiveness of training and link to the outcomes for children
- Ensuring all staff are confident and supported in their roles and have the training and skills they need to be able to perform their roles
- Conducting regular supervision meetings with all team members to ensure all staff are supported to be the best they can be
- Using peer on peer observations to share, discuss and improve practice across the setting
- Monitoring all practice and feedback ideas for improvement
- Engaging with families and carers and supporting the home learning environment
- Operating a robust and embedded quality improvement and evaluation process across the whole setting that includes all parties such as practitioners, children, parents and external partners, to ensure that quality is embedded throughout the nursery.

If we are concerned about a child's progress in any areas of learning, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and agree how best to support the child. Staff will consider whether a child may require any additional support, or if they may have a special educational need or disability which will require specialist support. (See SEND Policy)

Assessment is an integral part of our practice: we carry out ongoing (formative) assessment through daily observations and ensure that this does not take us away from interacting with the children.

Summative assessment is carried out at set points of the year including:

- Assessment on entry (starting point), including parental contributions.
- Progress check at age two (where applicable).
- Transition to school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (where applicable)

We acknowledge parents as primary educators and encourage parental involvement as outlined in our Parents as Partners policy. We build strong home links to enhance and extend children's learning both within the nursery environment and in the child's home and have regular meetings with parents to keep them up to date with their child's progress.

We share information about the EYFS curriculum with parents and signpost them to further support via the following website:

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/>

Gun and Superhero Play

We support all children's interests to further develop their play, learning and development, including the use of gun and superhero play, in line with the EYFS requirements. Children will often take part in gun and superhero play to make sense of the world around them. They may develop this interest from:

- Watching their favourite movie or TV characters involved in physical battles with weapons
- Witnessing an older sibling or parent playing an online game with weapons
- The child's parent working with guns as part of their professional job role
- First-hand experience of witnessing or involvement in traumatic experiences.

The benefits of supporting gun and superhero play are:

- Supporting children to follow their interests
- Developing imagination
- Resolving conflicts
- Building self-esteem
- Language development
- Supporting emotional development by making sense of their experiences
- Developing physical skills.

We believe all children should be free to follow their play in a safe environment with adults who can positively support their play. We implement the following procedures to ensure that this type of play is appropriately supported:

- Ensure staff give the same positive praise for children engaged in gun and superhero play as they do for children engaged in other activities
- Engage with children and agree rules for gun and superhero play so everybody can play safely
- Allocate an agreed zone for this type of play so children who do not want to get involved can play undisturbed if necessary
- Use superhero play to tell stories
- Look at real life heroes who help the children. Talk about what makes somebody a hero. Create our own display of heroes in the children's lives
- Include action figures and capes (e.g. squares of material) in our continuous provision. Ask parents for donations of unwanted superhero costumes
- Talk about conflict resolution (age and stage appropriate) and different solutions for solving conflicts
- Be sensitive to the needs of children and families who may have experienced trauma, seeking the support of external professionals if required.

Outdoor Play

We recognise the importance of daily outdoor play and physical development and are committed to ensure all children have daily access regardless of their age or stage of development. Where possible this includes the children having free access to the outdoors allowing them the freedom to choose whether to play indoors or out. We provide an inclusive outdoor play environment with areas for non-mobile children to freely explore. We make reasonable adjustments where required, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We go out to play with all children every day in all weathers (unless it is deemed unsafe by the manager on duty). If a child is well enough to attend nursery, then they will take part in outdoor play.

We understand the vital role that learning outdoors has on children's learning and development as well as the importance of regular access to outdoor play in order to keep fit and healthy, develop children's large and fine motor skills, experience learning in a natural environment and access sunlight in order to absorb vitamin D more effectively. We also refer to the Chief Medical Officers guidance on physical activity.

The outdoor areas, both within the nursery grounds and in the local community, have a wealth of experiences and resources, which help children to learn and develop in a variety of ways, including independence, exploration and investigative skills, risk taking and self-esteem, all of which support children to develop skills now and for the future.

We take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children through risk assessments whilst balancing the benefits to learning through providing an element of 'risky play.' This type of play allows children to explore and find their own boundaries in a safe environment with supportive practitioners. Staff are informed of the importance of safety procedures and are trained appropriately to ensure these procedures are followed effectively.

We ensure outdoor play is adequately supervised and we have robust safety checks in place, including regular head counts.

We obtain parental permission before any child leaves the nursery during the day. This includes short outings into the local community.

We plan all outdoor play opportunities and outings to complement the early years curriculum. This includes providing children with purposeful activities and quality resources that support and follow their individual interests and the seven areas of learning and development. We plan both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours. Where possible and in line with the children's needs we will also often have snacks and meals outdoors and sometimes children will sleep outdoors.

Where activities take place away from the setting (e.g. in the local park and wood, at the Care Home and Library) then a nursery mobile phone and first aid kit will be taken to always ensure the safety of children. A trained paediatric first aider will be present when children are away from the main setting.

More Able and Talented Children

We recognise and support the needs of those children in our nursery who have been identified as 'more able' and/or 'talented' and extend their learning to challenge them further. 'More able' refers to a child who has a broad range of

achievement at a level well above average, typically in the more academic subjects. 'Talented' refers to a child who excels in one or more specific fields, typically those that call for performance skills, such as sport or music, but who does not necessarily perform at a high level across all areas of learning.

We will ensure all children are fully supported and challenged by:

- Working together with parents to establish starting points on entry to nursery
- Observing, assessing and planning activities in line with the individual child's needs and interests
- Providing challenging next steps to enhance the learning opportunities
- Where applicable, working with the nursery SENDCO (see SEND policy), other services and professionals to ensure we can fully support the child's individual needs
- Working with the child's future primary school to provide activities that will stretch the child further in line with the child's future curriculum
- Support transitions by providing key information to the next provision.

We ensure staff are aware of some early development signs of children that may be more able or talented including the following indicators.

More able children in language and literacy:

- Are able to read and respond to a range of texts at a more advanced level
- Use a wide vocabulary and variety of words in conversations and play
- Are able to write fluently and with little support

More able children in mathematics:

- Explore a broader range of strategies for solving a problem
- Establish their own strategies for problem solving
- Are able to manipulate numbers in a wide range of ways, e.g. adding, subtracting.

Managers monitor outcomes for children by tracking cohorts and individual children across the whole setting. This will include more able and talented children. Managers will ensure that all children are progressing at an appropriate rate from their starting points through challenging and supportive activities and opportunities.

We use this policy alongside the following policies to ensure the safety and welfare of children throughout their time at nursery:

- Health and Safety policy
- Sun Care
- Caring for Babies and Toddlers
- Parents and Carers as Partners
- Supervision of Children
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection
- Visits and Outings.

| This policy was adopted on | Signed on behalf of the nursery | Date for review |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 13/05/25 | <i>C. A. Daly</i> | 30/04/26 |