



Silverhill School

Parent Handbook

Our setting aims to:

- provide high quality care and education for children below statutory school age;
- work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop;
- offer children and their parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity.

Parents

Parents are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected;
- kept informed;
- consulted;
- involved; and
- included at all levels.

We aim to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment;
- is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children.
- has the chance to join with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together;
- is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do;
- has a personal key person who makes sure each child makes satisfying progress;
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop; and
- is in a setting in which parents help to shape the service it offers.

Children's development and learning

The provision for children's development and learning is guided by The Early Years Foundation Stage (DCFS 2007). From September 2008 the Early Years Foundation Stage became law. This brings together Birth to Three Matters and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. Our provision reflects the four key themes and 16 commitments of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

How we provide for development and learning

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The practice guidance also sets out in 'Development Matters' the likely stages of progress a child makes along their learning journey towards the early learning goals. Our setting has regard to these matters when we assess children and plan for their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- positive approaches to learning and finding out about the world around them;
- confidence in themselves and their ability to do things, and valuing their own achievements;
- their ability to get on, work and make friendships with other people, both children and adults;
- their awareness of, and being able to keep to, the rules which we all need to help us to look after ourselves, other people and our environment;
- their ability to dress and undress themselves, and look after their personal hygiene needs; and
- their ability to expect to have their ways of doing things respected and to respect other people's ways of doing things.

Communication, language and literacy

Our programme supports children to develop:

- conversational skills with one other person, in small groups and in large groups to talk with and listen to others;
- their vocabulary by learning the meaning of - and being able to use - new words;
- their ability to use words to describe their experiences;
- their knowledge of the sounds and letters that make up the words we use;
- their ability to listen to, and talk about, stories;
- knowledge of how to handle books and that they can be a source of stories and information;
- knowledge of the purposes for which we use writing; and
- making their own attempts at writing.

Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy

Our programme supports children to develop:

- understanding and ideas about how many, how much, how far and how big;
- understanding and ideas about patterns, the shape of objects and parts of objects, and the amount of space taken up by objects;
- understanding that numbers help us to answer questions about how many, how much, how far and how big;
- understanding and ideas about how to use counting to find out how many; and
- early ideas about the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Our programme supports children to develop:

- knowledge about the natural world and how it works;
- knowledge about the made world and how it works;
- their learning about how to choose, and use, the right tool for a task;
- their learning about computers, how to use them and what they can help us to do;
- their skills on how to put together ideas about past and present and the links between them;
- their learning about their locality and its special features; and
- their learning about their own and other cultures.

Physical development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- increasing control over the large movements that they can make with their arms, legs and bodies, so that they can run, jump, hop, skip, roll, climb, balance and lift;
- increasing control over the small movements they can make with their arms, wrists and hands, so that they can pick up and use objects, tools and materials; and
- their understanding about the importance of, and how to look after, their bodies.

Creative development

Our programme supports children to develop:

- the use of paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play to express their ideas and feelings; and
- their interest in the way that paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories and role-play can be used to express ideas and feelings.

Our approach to learning and development and assessment

Learning through play

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. Our setting uses the practice guidance Early Years Foundation Stage to plan and provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity. In all activities information from the practice guidance to the Early Years Foundation Stage has been used to decide what equipment to provide and how to provide it.

Assessment

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs or videos of the children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children like to do at home and how they as parents are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our ongoing development records. These form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school.

Tracking Document

The setting keeps a tracking document for each child. Staff and parents working together on their children's tracking document is one of the ways in which the key person and parents work in partnership. Your child's tracking document helps us to celebrate together her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work with you to keep this record. To do this you and she/he will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of progress. You and the key person will then decide on how to help your child to move on to the next stage.

How parents/carers take part in the setting

Our setting recognises parents and carers as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as partners with parents/carers in providing care and education for their child. There are many ways in which parents/carers take part in making the setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

- exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff;
- sharing their own special interests with the children;
- helping to provide, make and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities;
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting;

- joining in community activities in which the setting takes part; and
- building friendships with other parents in the setting.

Key persons and your child

Our setting uses a key person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that what we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the setting, she/he will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at the setting, she/he will help your child to benefit from the setting's activities.

Learning opportunities for adults

As well as gaining qualifications in early years care and education, the setting staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to-date with thinking about early years care and education. The setting also keeps itself up-to-date with best practice in early years care and education, as a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, through the Under 5 magazine and publications produced by the Alliance. The current copy of Under Five is available for you to read. From time to time the setting holds learning events for parents. These usually look at how adults can help children to learn and develop in their early years. Courses on similar topics are held locally by the Pre-school Learning Alliance; watch out for information about these.

The setting's timetable and routines

Our setting believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in the setting are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting;
- ensure the safety of each child;
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group; and
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

The session

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others.

Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in

outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom(s).

Snacks and meals

The setting makes snacks and meals a social time at which children and adults eat together. The catering staff plan the menus for snacks and meals so that they provide the children with healthy and nutritious food. Do tell us about your child's dietary needs and we will make sure that these are met.

Policies

Copies of the setting's policies and procedures are available for you to see at the setting.

The setting's policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the setting is a high quality one and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her/his parents.

The staff of the setting work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling the setting to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

Safeguarding children

Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'.

Our employment practices ensure children against the likelihood of abuse in our settings and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents ensures we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

Special needs

As part of the setting's policy to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have. The setting works to the requirements of the 1993 Education Act and The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001).

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is Miss Zoë Paramore

Making a complaint

Policy statement

Our setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the setting leader.

Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the setting leader and the owner or chair of the management committee.

For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints in the above-mentioned publication; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.

Further detail of our settings complaints procedures are available in the policies and procedures file, available upon request.

Equality of opportunity

Valuing diversity and promoting equality

Policy statement

We will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children, particularly those that arise from their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, gender, ability or

