



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies

1.16 Play Policy

Policy Statement

At Hopton school house, we believe that play is fundamental to children's learning, development, health, and wellbeing. We recognise that children learn best through meaningful play experiences that allow them to explore, investigate, create, imagine, and make sense of the world around them.

We are committed to providing a stimulating, inclusive, and nurturing environment where all children can engage in high-quality play opportunities that support their individual learning and development.

Play is at the heart of our curriculum and is central to the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

At Hopton school house we use the development matter for our early year's children. Staff use Hopton school house's personalised Curriculum to ensure the different age ranges are meeting their developmental goals.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Recognise play as a fundamental right of every child.
- Promote learning through play.
- Support children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development.
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, and independence.
- Foster confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills.
- Provide inclusive play opportunities for all children.
- Ensure children have access to both indoor and outdoor play experiences.

Legal Framework

This policy is based on:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 31
- Equality Act 2010



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice

• The Importance of Play

We recognise that through play children:

- Learn about themselves and others.
- Develop language and communication skills.
- Build relationships and friendships.
- Explore ideas and solve problems.
- Develop creativity and imagination.
- Learn to manage risks.
- Improve physical coordination and strength.
- Build confidence and self-esteem.
- Develop emotional resilience.
- Develop wonder and curiosity

Play enables children to learn at their own pace while following their interests and individual developmental pathways.

Types of Play

The setting values a wide range of play experiences, including:

Physical Play

Children are encouraged to:

- Run, climb, balance, jump, and move freely.
- Develop gross and fine motor skills.
- Build physical confidence and coordination.

Creative Play

Children are provided with opportunities to:

- Paint and draw.
- Explore music and movement.
- Use open-ended materials.
- Express ideas creatively.

Imaginative and Role Play



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies

Children can:

- Explore different roles and experiences.
- Develop communication skills.
- Act out real-life situations.
- Use their imagination and creativity.

Exploratory Play

Children are encouraged to:

- Investigate and discover.
- Ask questions.
- Experiment with materials.
- Develop critical thinking skills.

Social Play

Children learn to:

- Share and cooperate.
- Negotiate and compromise.
- Develop empathy.
- Build positive relationships.

Sensory Play

Children can explore:

- Water.
- Sand.
- Natural materials.
- Textures, sounds, smells, and visual experiences.

Child-Led and Adult-Supported Play

We recognise the importance of both child-initiated and adult-supported play.

Child-Led Play

Children are encouraged to:



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies

- Make choices.
- Follow their interests.
- Lead their own learning.
- Explore independently.

Adult-Supported Play

Practitioners will:

- Observe children's interests.
- Extend learning opportunities.
- Introduce new vocabulary and concepts.
- Encourage thinking and problem-solving.
- Support children when needed without dominating play.

Learning Through Play

Play supports all areas of learning and development within the EYFS, including:

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

Staff will carefully plan environments and experiences that support children's progress across all areas of learning.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an essential part of children's learning and development.

Children will have regular opportunities to:



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies

- Explore the natural environment.
- Develop physical skills.
- Take managed risks.
- Investigate and problem solve.
- Experience all seasons and weather conditions.

Outdoor play will be available daily wherever possible.

Appropriate clothing and footwear are encouraged to support outdoor learning throughout the year.

Inclusive Play

We are committed to ensuring that all children can access play opportunities regardless of:

- Age
- Ability
- Disability
- Gender
- Language
- Culture
- Religion
- Family background

Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure every child can access play fully.

Risk and Challenge in Play

We recognise that children benefit from opportunities to experience challenge and take appropriate risks.

Staff will:

- Carry out risk assessments.
- Supervise appropriately.
- Encourage children to assess risks for themselves.
- Support children in developing confidence and resilience.

We aim to balance safety with opportunities for exploration and challenge. (Reasonable risk)



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies

The Learning Environment

The setting will provide:

- A welcoming and stimulating environment.
- Accessible resources.
- Open-ended materials.
- Opportunities for independent choice.
- Quiet spaces for reflection and relaxation.
- Opportunities for collaborative play.

Resources will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain safe, engaging, and inclusive.

The Role of Practitioners

Practitioners will:

- Value and promote play.
- Build positive relationships with children.
- Observe and assess learning through play.
- Respond to children's interests and needs.
- Support language development.
- Encourage creativity and curiosity.
- Maintain safe and stimulating environments.

Practitioners act as facilitators of learning rather than directors of children's play.

Working in Partnership with Parents

We recognise parents and carers as children's first educators.

The setting will:

- Share information about the importance of play.
- Encourage play-based learning at home.
- Celebrate children's achievements.
- Involve parents in supporting children's interests and development.
- Encourage parents to share achievements made at home to be developed in setting.

Monitoring and Evaluation



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies

The Manager and staff team will monitor:

- The quality of play opportunities.
- Children's engagement and enjoyment.
- Progress and development outcomes.
- The suitability of resources and environments.
- Inclusion and accessibility.

Feedback from children, families, and staff will inform ongoing improvements.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Curriculum Policy
- Learning and Development Policy
- Outdoor Play Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy