**St Joseph’s Pre-school Playgroup**

**Operational Plan**

1. **The Aim & Objectives**

Our aims are to:

* Provide high quality care and education for children aged 2 to 5 years
* Work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop
* Promote Fundamental British Values of:
* Promoting Democracy (making decisions together)
* Promoting the Rule of Law (understanding rules and boundaries)
* Individual Liberty (freedom for all)
* Mutual Respect and Tolerance (treat others as you want to be treated yourself)
* Complement the education and care provided by St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School.

1. **Policies & Procedures**

Our policies and procedures form an essential framework which governs how we run our setting. All policies are available on our website [www.stjoeplaygroup.edublogs.org](http://www.stjoeplaygroup.edublogs.org). Policies are reviewed annually by the owner or managers.

1. **Use of Space**

The setting is based in a purpose-built stand-alone classroom which comprises a lobby area where children’s coat pegs are located, an open plan play area, a kitchen area, a low-level sink, three toilets (including one disabled toilet allocated for staff use but accessible to children as and when required) and an adjacent outdoor play area.

The use of space is as follows:

**Lobby:** This area is used for coats, spare clothes, wellies, families board, suggestion box. It is also used for small group time for Key People and visiting professionals that need to work with specific children. A parents’ noticeboard is available and information which parents need to know, including the complaints procedure, summary of the week’s planning, staff photo board, which staff are due in that day is all displayed here. Wider community information for parents is also kept here, e.g., family magazines, free courses for parents, discount vouchers, exhibitions suitable for families. We have a ring binder with advice and guidance on Healthy Eating.

**Kitchen area**: This is used to prepare snacks and lunches during the day.

**Bathroom area:** The children’s bathroom has two toilets suitable for young children, two wash basins with antibacterial soap and thermostatic blenders on the taps to reduce the risk of scalding, two hand driers, potties, a nappy changing table for very young/light children and a nappy changing mat. The children can also use the staff/disabled toilet (see below) when required with adult supervision. In practice, due in part to the number of children in nappies, this is rarely required.

**Staff/disabled toilet:** For use by staff and occasionally by children (see above).

**Self-registration area:** This is where the children find and put their names up when they arrive and use our colour monster emotion system with pictures to communicate how they are feeling (more information is in our Behaviour Management Policy). The children’s boxes with name labels in are also in this area, as well as a storage trolley for lunch bags and a tray for water bottles. There is a storage unit with the children's drawers for pictures and letters to be sent home. This area is also used as a ‘movement area’.

**Movement area:** This is a temporary area set up as required, consisting of movement mats and ‘props’ such as large pieces of stretchy fabric as well as our indoor climbing frame.

**Open Plan Play Area**: This is floored in non-slip vinyl throughout for ease of cleaning and optimum safety when wet. It is set out in different areas:

1. Creative and mark making areas, with an art trolley containing mark-making implements, paper and card, etc.
2. A book area which doubles up as a quiet corner with cushions and a sofa, behind the sofa is a large cushion where children may rest and sleep if necessary. We have a range of books which we own, and we circulate which ones are on display regularly.
3. Role Play with a changing theme such as ‘doctor’s surgery’, ‘shop’, ‘vet’ etc.
4. A home corner with kitchen equipment, crockery, cutlery, play food, ironing board, iron etc.
5. A dressing up area with a variety of outfits including multicultural and superhero costumes
6. A maths area with numerals, calculators, weighing scales, compare bears, puzzles, matching and sorting activities etc.
7. A small world and construction area with trains and track, large foam bricks, cars and roads, bricks, mobilo, lego, duplo, small world buildings and people including a farm and animals. We have science equipment in this area too such as torches, magnifying glasses, colour paddles, magnetic construction toys.
8. Sand and water (either inside or out) are provided daily and are located between the other equipment in the play area
9. A tablet computer is available to the children on occasion with access to age appropriate programs and games

**Outside Play areas**:

We are lucky to have a large outdoor space with a grass area with equipment such as a rickety bridge, balance beam, slides, tyres ect. We have an artificial grass area and a large, covered deck area with chalkboards for mark making. We ensure daily opportunities for outdoor play unless the weather is dangerously bad. This is set up daily in consultation with the children.

We have storage boxes to keep the outdoor equipment in. We have a selection of balls in different sizes, weights and textures, hoops, tunnels, parachute, bean bags, balance beams, rackets and scooters.

1. **Groups of Children/structure of the day**

Grouping is very flexible. Within the open plan play area children can move from one area to another whilst supervision is maintained. All ages are mixed, and we find that this works well. It is important that children feel confident and happy to choose the activities they wish to undertake. We set up the learning environment each day, but children can ask to add extra resources to enhance their play or change what has been provided. As the age-range using the facility is quite varied we have a range of age-appropriate activities available. The first hour is free play where children can choose what they access. Members of staff are available to support the children and enhance their learning. Key People also plan activities to support children’s learning and development based on their observations and assessments of children. These take place weekly. We have a short group time such as a story around 10.00am. We use Makaton signs and symbols from our visual timetable to remind the children that they need to go to the toilet and wash their hands before snack time. We have a sit-down snack where we offer the children a selection of healthy options such as fresh fruit, pitta bread, wraps and a choice of milk or water to drink. We have a chosen monitor who indicates what the day of the week and the weather is, choosing from a selection of picture cards which are in home languages as well as English. We post photos on the noticeboard of which snack items we have provided each day. We say a short prayer in the form of a rhyme before snack.

All children are allocated to a particular Key Person (who has a ‘buddy’ who steps in when they are not available). Children play individually, in pairs, self-chosen small groups, whole groups, for example for stories, circle time or music. We have two short whole group times each day and staff support children at other times, sometimes working one-to-one, sometimes in small groups, sometimes leading activities but mostly sensitively supporting child-initiated play. We work closely with Bilingual Support Assistants where we have this resource for our EAL children. We also work with BHISS (Brighton and Hove Inclusion Support Service) to support our children with additional needs.

1. **Activities Provided**

We have a wide variety of resources available and as many as possible are stored at child level with photographic or object of reference labels as well as text labels. Key People plan individually for their children, focussing on Support Plan targets where applicable and ensuring the whole curriculum (all Areas of Learning) is covered within each term. This individual planning takes place once a fortnight (with amendments to incorporate children’s changing interests and progress) and activities are observed regularly.

**Staffing Structure**

We have five regular staff (in addition to the owner). There is always at least one member of staff present with a valid paediatric first aid certificate. All staff complete child protection/safeguarding training and update this regularly. We meet all requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, maintaining or exceeding a ratio of 1 adult to 8 children (over 3s) and 1 adult to 5 children (under 3s). We usually exceed the qualification requirements considerably. We have our own Bank Staff who we recruit and vet ourselves.

Our owner is a qualified teacher with Early Years Professional Status. She oversees the whole setting and supports and advises the Managers. One of our Managers has a Level 4 certificate in Early Years and is the Lead Practitioner for safeguarding. Our second Manager is also our SENCO and has a Level 3 qualification in Early Years. The majority of our Early Years Practitioners have Level 3 childcare qualifications.

We sometimes have work experience students and apprentices.

We take the issue of safeguarding extremely seriously. All staff are DBS checked.

1. **Staff Deployment**

Staff will be working with the children for most of the time they are at work. Each Key Person has regular non-contact in order to complete planning and Tapestry updates for their key children. The owner is our Early Years Professional and leads and supports good practice in all areas and supports the Managers with continuous evaluation of the setting. The Managers (Mandy and Chloe) or Owner (Roopal) are available to talk to parents each day. Although we have a key person system, children will be moving from one activity to another and will therefore be under the supervision of a variety of members of staff at different times of the day. If a member of staff is assisting a child with toileting, another member of staff will be within sight or hearing (see Toileting Procedure for more detail). When we are operating free flow (where children can choose whether to play indoors or outside), the most senior member of staff is responsible for deploying staff effectively; if most children are outside, most staff will be outside for example.

1. **Management of Staff**

The setting is a private limited company and Roopal Patel is the owner. Staff Meetings are held every term where possible. Members of staff meet individually with a Manager every term for Supervision meetings. Members of staff are expected to attend regular training as necessary.

1. **Responding to Parents’ and Others’ Feedback**

We issue questionnaires to parents periodically and take on board suggestions and comments made. We have a ‘suggestions box’ in the lobby area. We also ask parents to contribute to their child’s developmental record on our Tapestry online system. Parents/carers can speak to staff informally at the beginning/end of the day, by telephone or by email or text/whatsapp. Any difficulties or problems that parents or carers experience will be dealt with as speedily and sensitively as possible, and we hope that this will normally be sufficient to resolve any dispute/concern. We have a complaints procedure which is available on the setting’s website and on the noticeboard in the lobby.

Signed: Chloe Standing

Role: Manager

Date: 19.09.23