Care, Learning and Play Policy (0–5 Years) Auckland House Day Nursery

Intent

At Auckland House Day Nursery, we are fully committed to providing consistently high-quality care, learning and play experiences that meet the individual developmental, emotional, cultural and physical needs of all children from birth to five years. We recognise that every child is unique and develops at their own pace, and we are committed to ensuring that practice is flexible, inclusive and responsive to individual needs.

The welfare, safety and well-being of each child is our highest priority and is embedded across all aspects of our provision. We aim to create a secure, nurturing and stimulating environment where children feel safe, valued and confident to explore, investigate and learn.

We understand that early childhood experiences form the foundation for lifelong learning and development. Positive, consistent and responsive relationships with caring adults are essential in supporting children's emotional security, communication skills, and cognitive development. We therefore prioritise strong attachments between children and key persons to support continuity of care and learning.

Through a carefully balanced combination of child-led play, adult-guided learning and purposeful teaching interactions, we support children in developing independence, curiosity, resilience and a positive sense of identity. We place strong emphasis on developing communication, emotional regulation and physical development as key foundations for future learning.

Children's progress is closely monitored through ongoing assessment and observation, ensuring that their individual needs are identified early and effectively supported in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Implementation of the Policy in Auckland House

Management Responsibilities

The management team holds overall responsibility for ensuring that the nursery provides a safe, high-quality, and compliant early years provision that meets all statutory requirements of the EYFS framework. This includes ensuring that all staff are suitable, qualified, trained and supported to carry out their roles effectively and safely.

Robust recruitment and safer recruitment practices are implemented to ensure that all staff, volunteers and students working with children are appropriately vetted and cleared in line with safeguarding requirements. Induction processes ensure that all staff are fully aware of policies, procedures, safeguarding expectations and their responsibilities prior to working independently with children.

Management ensures that ongoing supervision, appraisal and professional development opportunities are in place to support continuous improvement in practice. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice, identify areas for development and engage in training that enhances their knowledge and skills in early years education and care.

Leadership ensures that the EYFS curriculum is implemented consistently across all rooms, with a clear focus on intent, implementation and impact. The curriculum is designed to be ambitious, inclusive and responsive to children's interests, needs and developmental stages.

Effective systems are in place for communication with parents and carers, ensuring that they are fully informed and involved in their child's learning and development. Safeguarding procedures are consistently reviewed and embedded into daily practice to ensure the safety and welfare of all children.

EYFS Curriculum and Areas of Learning

We follow the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which provides a framework for learning, development and care for children from birth to five years. The EYFS is delivered through seven areas of learning and development which are interconnected and equally important.

The prime areas of learning—Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, and Physical Development—are prioritised, particularly in the early years, as they underpin all future learning and development. Staff place strong emphasis on developing secure emotional attachments, communication skills and physical confidence.

The specific areas of learning—Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design—are carefully planned and delivered through purposeful play and adult-led experiences that build knowledge and skills progressively over time.

The curriculum is designed to be ambitious for all children, including those with additional needs, ensuring that every child is supported to achieve their full potential. Staff use their knowledge of child development to plan learning experiences that are appropriately challenging and meaningful.

Learning Through Play and Experiences

We strongly believe that children learn best through play, exploration and active engagement with their environment. Our provision is designed to offer a rich variety of experiences that support curiosity, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Children are provided with continuous access to high-quality resources and experiences that reflect their interests and developmental needs. Play opportunities are carefully planned to ensure progression in learning while allowing children the freedom to explore and make independent choices.

The curriculum is enhanced through real-life experiences, including cooking, gardening, role play, community visits and cultural celebrations. These experiences help children to make sense of the world around them and develop a broader understanding of society and diversity.

Staff interact purposefully with children during play, using skilled questioning, modelling language and extending thinking to support deeper learning. Sustained shared thinking is used to challenge and extend children's ideas and understanding.

Outdoor learning is an integral part of our curriculum and is used to promote physical development, risk-taking, exploration and environmental awareness.

Planning, Observation and Assessment

Planning at Auckland House is flexible, responsive and informed by ongoing observation and assessment of children's learning and development. We use a structured planning cycle that ensures all children are supported to make progress in line with their individual needs.

Staff carry out regular observations, both planned and spontaneous, to capture children's learning in meaningful contexts. These observations are recorded through EYlog and used to inform future planning and next steps in learning.

Assessment is continuous and formative, focusing on what children can do and what they need to do next to progress. Staff use professional judgement, alongside developmental milestones and EYFS guidance, to assess children's progress accurately.

The two-year progress check, transition reports and ongoing learning summaries provide formal opportunities to share progress with parents and ensure early identification of any additional needs.

Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey by sharing experiences, achievements and observations from home, which are valued and incorporated into planning.

Key Person Approach

Each child is allocated a key person who plays a central role in supporting their care, learning and emotional well-being. The key person develops a strong, trusting relationship with the child and their family, ensuring continuity and consistency of care.

The key person is responsible for observing, assessing and planning for the child's individual learning needs, ensuring that next steps are identified and supported effectively. They act as the main point of contact for parents, sharing information about development, routines and well-being.

This approach supports secure attachments, which are essential for children's emotional security, confidence and ability to learn effectively.

Behaviour, Relationships and Emotional Development

We promote a positive, respectful and nurturing approach to behaviour management that is rooted in understanding children's developmental stage and emotional needs.

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and may reflect unmet needs, emotions or developmental stages. Staff are trained to respond calmly and consistently, supporting children to understand and manage their feelings appropriately.

We support children in developing emotional literacy by helping them to identify, express and regulate their emotions in a safe and supportive environment.

Conflict between children is used as a learning opportunity, with staff guiding them to understand the impact of their actions and develop strategies for resolving disagreements positively.

We ensure that all children are treated with respect and dignity, and that behaviour management strategies are always fair, consistent and appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.

Organisation of Resources and Environment

We provide a carefully planned and well-organised environment that promotes independence, exploration and active learning. Resources are selected to reflect children's interests, cultural backgrounds and developmental needs.

All resources are clearly labelled with words and images to support early literacy, independence and organisational skills. Children are encouraged to access and return resources independently, supporting responsibility and self-help skills.

The learning environment is regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure it remains stimulating, safe and reflective of children's evolving interests and learning needs.

Both indoor and outdoor environments are used as continuous learning spaces, supporting all areas of development.

Communication and Language Development

Communication and language development is a key priority across all age groups. Staff provide a language-rich environment where children are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary and meaningful interactions.

Staff model clear, expressive language and engage children in conversations that extend thinking and understanding. Books, stories, songs and rhymes are used daily to promote early literacy and communication skills.

We support children with additional language needs by providing inclusive strategies that promote understanding and participation.

Babies and Children Under 2 Years

We provide highly responsive, nurturing and individualised care for babies and children under two years of age. We recognise that this stage is critical for emotional development, brain development and attachment formation.

Each child is assigned a key person who builds a strong attachment relationship with both the child and their family, ensuring consistency and emotional security.

We follow individual care routines including feeding, sleeping and nappy changing, ensuring that each child's needs are met sensitively and consistently.

The environment is carefully designed to support exploration, sensory development and physical milestones, while ensuring safety and comfort at all times.

Staff engage in frequent, high-quality interactions with babies, supporting early communication, language development and social interaction.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are the primary educators of their children and we are committed to working in close partnership to support learning and development.

We maintain open and regular communication with families through digital systems, meetings, daily feedback and informal conversations.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey and are actively involved in sharing information about their child's experiences, interests and development at home.

We aim to build strong, respectful and trusting relationships with families to ensure continuity between home and nursery environments.

Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our practice. We ensure that all children and families are treated with respect and valued for their individuality.

We adapt our provision to meet the needs of all children, including those with additional needs or disabilities, ensuring that all children have equal access to learning opportunities.

We actively promote cultural awareness and understanding through resources, experiences and celebrations that reflect the diverse society in which we live.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is our highest priority and underpins all aspects of our practice. We are committed to ensuring that all children are protected from harm and that their welfare is promoted at all times.

All staff are trained in safeguarding and understand their responsibilities in identifying and reporting concerns. Clear procedures are in place for reporting and recording concerns in line with statutory guidance.

We ensure that children are always supervised appropriately and that safe recruitment practices are followed at all times.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains compliant with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Ofsted requirements and current safeguarding legislation.

Practice is continuously monitored through observation, supervision, audits and reflective practice to ensure high standards are consistently maintained across the setting.

Ongoing evaluation ensures that the nursery continues to develop and improve its provision in line with best practice in early years education and care.

Ofsted Outstanding Alignment (EYFS Quality of Education, Behaviour & Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management)

This section explicitly aligns Auckland House Day Nursery practice with the current Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) expectations for **Outstanding provision**, ensuring that intent, implementation and impact are consistently ambitious, coherent and embedded in daily practice.

Quality of Education (Intent, Implementation and Impact)

The curriculum is designed with **exceptional ambition for all children**, including those with SEND and disadvantaged backgrounds. Learning is carefully sequenced so that children build knowledge and skills over time in a logical and progressive way. Staff have a deep understanding of child development and use this to ensure that all learning experiences are purposeful, meaningful and tailored to individual needs.

Implementation is highly effective because practitioners consistently use high-quality interactions, sustained shared thinking and precise questioning to extend children's thinking. Learning is not incidental but deliberately planned and embedded across all routines, play opportunities and environments. Children are engaged, motivated and demonstrate high levels of curiosity and concentration.

The impact of the curriculum is evident in children's rapid progress from their starting points. Children demonstrate secure foundations in communication, emotional regulation and physical development, enabling strong readiness for the next stage of learning. Assessment is accurate, timely and used effectively to inform next steps.

Behaviour and Attitudes

Children demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to learning and high levels of engagement across all activities. They show strong independence, resilience and confidence in exploring new experiences. Behaviour is consistently well managed through highly effective relationships, clear boundaries and emotionally supportive interactions.

Staff understand behaviour as communication and respond sensitively and consistently to children's emotional needs. Children are supported to develop self-regulation, empathy and respect for others, resulting in a calm, purposeful and inclusive learning environment. Transitions are well managed and children feel emotionally secure throughout the day.

Personal Development

Children's personal development is exceptional because the curriculum is designed to promote confidence, independence and emotional well-being from the earliest stages. Children are supported to develop strong self-care skills, make independent choices and develop a secure sense of identity.

The nursery provides rich opportunities to develop cultural awareness, social understanding and respect for diversity. Children are actively supported to understand the world around them through meaningful real-life experiences, celebrations and community engagement.

Emotional well-being is prioritised through strong attachments with key persons, consistent routines and nurturing interactions, ensuring that children feel safe, valued and confident.

Leadership and Management

Leadership at Auckland House demonstrates a clear and ambitious vision for high-quality early years education and care. Leaders have a strong understanding of the EYFS and ensure that all staff are supported to deliver consistently high standards of practice.

There is a culture of continuous improvement driven by reflective practice, supervision, coaching and ongoing professional development. Staff are well supported to develop their knowledge and skills, resulting in highly effective teaching and care across the setting.

Safeguarding is robust, effective and embedded in daily practice. Leaders ensure that all staff understand safeguarding procedures, whistleblowing processes and their professional responsibilities. Recruitment, induction and ongoing monitoring systems ensure that children are always safe and well cared for.

Leaders actively monitor the quality of education through observation, learning walks, data analysis and staff supervision, ensuring that any gaps in practice are addressed promptly and effectively.

Summary Statement (Outstanding Practice Characteristics)

Auckland House Day Nursery demonstrates the characteristics of Outstanding provision where:

- Children make exceptional progress from their starting points
- Teaching is highly effective and responsive to individual needs
- The curriculum is ambitious, well-sequenced and consistently implemented
- Behaviour is exemplary and children show high levels of engagement
- Personal development is prioritised and highly effective
- Leadership is strong, reflective and drives continuous improvement
- Safeguarding is robust and fully embedded in practice

This ensures that all children receive the highest quality of care, learning and development, enabling them to thrive and succeed.

Policy Written By: A Gregory

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