**Play, Learning and Care**

**Play and Learning**

All children are entitled to play; it is intrinsic to their quality of life and an important part of how they learn and enjoy themselves. It is also a key component of a healthy lifestyle, enabling good physical, emotional, mental and social development. At its most successful it offers children and young people as much choice, control and freedom as possible.

At The Club we recognise the importance of play to a child’s development and learning. As play workers we support and facilitate play, and do not seek to control or direct it. We will never force children to participate in play, but allow children to initiate and direct the experience for themselves.

**Play work Principles:**

These Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for play work and as such must be regarded as a whole. They describe what is unique about play and play work, and provide the play work perspective for working with children and young people. The Playwork Principles were endorsed by Skills Active in 2004 and are being incorporated into the Play work National Occupational Standards to replace the Assumptions and Values.

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of play work is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For play workers, the play process takes precedence and play workers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult-led agendas.
5. The role of the play worker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The play worker’s response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up-to-date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
7. Play workers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people’s play on the play worker.
8. Play workers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All play worker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well being of children.

Staff at the Club endeavour to use these principles during sessions. The Club also recognises that by adhering to these principles we would also be meeting the play-based principles set out in the EYFS.

**Facilitating play**

We will support and facilitate play by:

* Providing an environment which is suitable for playing in
* Providing a range of equipment and resources
* Allowing children to request additional or alternative equipment as they choose
* Not expecting children to be occupied at all times
* Having the Daily Routine available to the children so they know when they will have time to play.
* Involving children in the planning of activities, to reflect their interests and ideas
* Intervening in play only when necessary: to reduce risks of accident or injury, or to encourage appropriate social skills
* Allowing children freedom of exploration, creative expression, particularly in artistic or creative play
* Planning activities to enable children to develop their natural curiosity and imagination
* Explaining the reasons for refusing to provide an activity or resources
* Providing equipment and resources which promote positive images of culture, ethnicity, religion, gender and disability
* Keeping an inventory of resources and equipment, which is updated regularly and reviewed to identify where any additional resources are required

**Planning and Evaluation**

At The Club it is the responsibility of the Club Manager and level 3 staff to plan and evaluate activity plans. Plans are prepared termly and will reflect the interests, diversity, needs and development of all the children attending.

We will keep records of plans and evaluations, and encourage contribution and feedback from the children and their families. The ASCs Equality of Opportunities and Diversity Policy, the EYFS themes, and the Play Works Principles will be referred to when developing new activity plans.

Toys and resources are available for children of all ages. For more information see *Toys, Equipment and Resources Section*

**Playing Outdoors and Active Play**

At the Club we understand the importance of outdoor and active play for the children in our care. Outdoor play will be available each day, except in severe weather conditions. We ask that families ensure that children are properly attired for outside, i.e., gloves in the snow, hat in the sunshine etc; the outdoor area will be checked and risk assessed before the children go outside.

At The Club we acknowledge that active play is essential for the healthy development of our children. We will encourage the children to participate in active experiences indoors and out. All active and outdoor play will be appropriately supervised.

**Care and Respect** Staff and children will strive to create a caring and mutually respectful environment. The Club staff will provide care that promotes responsibility, independence and confidence in the children.

The Club also has an Intimate Care Policy to outline best practice and procedure. More information about promoting a positive atmosphere at the Club can be found in our **Behaviour Management** policy.

| This policy was adopted by: AYA | Date: 01/09/23 |
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| To be reviewed: 01/9/24 | Signed |