HARLANDS EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Play and Children's Choice Policy

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Our approach

Play is essential to children's enjoyment, health, learning and relationships. Harlands Explorers will provide time, space and materials that allow children to make choices, test ideas, be creative and relax. Adults will enable play rather than control it, and children will not be compelled to join an activity.

What children can expect

- A welcoming environment that is checked for safety and arranged to support independent choices.
- A varied programme including physical play, creativity, games, drama, STEM, practical skills and opportunities suggested by the children.
- Resources suited to different ages, interests, abilities and stages of development.
- Access to quieter areas for children who need rest, reflection or time away from a busy group.
- Outdoor opportunities on a regular basis, normally every day where conditions and risk assessments permit.
- Advance warning before activities finish wherever this is reasonably possible.

The role of staff

Staff will observe and listen so that planning reflects children's current interests. They may introduce possibilities, provide encouragement or help children solve a problem, but they should avoid taking ownership of the play. Requests for different equipment will be considered positively; if something cannot be provided, the reason will be explained.

Planning and inclusion

Children will be invited to contribute ideas and select resources. Activities should leave room for imagination rather than requiring one correct outcome. Materials, books and displays should reflect a broad range of cultures, families, religions, abilities and experiences, in keeping with the Equal Opportunities policy.

Safe and suitable resources

- Indoor and outdoor play spaces must be checked before use and managed in line with the setting's risk-assessment arrangements.
- Damaged, unsuitable or incomplete equipment will be removed, repaired or replaced.
- Staff will review the success of activities and adjust future provision rather than repeating a plan that no longer meets children's needs.
- The available stock of fiction and non-fiction books should cover the age range attending the club.

Related documents

Safeguarding Children; Equal Opportunities; Risk Assessment; Behaviour Management.