

09 Early years practice policy

Alongside associated procedures in 09.01 to 09.21 Childcare practice, this policy was adopted by Little Doves Christian Pre-School on 2nd September 2021, updated in August 2022, July 2023 and August 2024.

Aim

Children are safe, happy, and eager to participate and to learn.

Objectives

- Young children need to form a secure attachment to their key person when they join the pre-school to feel safe, happy and eager to participate and learn. It is their *entitlement* to be settled comfortably into a new environment.
- There is a procedure for when children do not settle and for prolonged absences.
- Introductions and induction of the parent/carer is carried out before children start.
- *Prime times* of the day make the very best of routine opportunities to promote 'tuning in' to the child emotionally and create opportunities for learning. British values, inclusion, equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity are actively promoted.
- A positive behaviour management approach is operated within the pre-school. Behaviour management procedures cover how staff should respond to all aspects of behaviour, including children who exhibit challenging behaviour towards other children. These procedures build on the Early Years Alliance's and Little Doves approach to learning based on three key statements.
 1. Learning is a lifelong process, which enables children and adults to contribute to and shape their world.
 2. We want the curriculum we provide to help children to learn to:
 - be confident and independent
 - be aware of and responsive to their feelings
 - make caring and thoughtful relationships with other people
 - become increasingly excited by, interested in, and knowledgeable and questioning about the world around them.
 3. We provide a wide range of interesting child-chosen and adult-initiated activities which:
 - give children opportunities to use all their senses
 - help children of different ages and stages to play together
 - help children be the directors of their own learning
 - help children develop an inquiring and questioning attitude to the world around them

To feel securely settled and ready to learn, children from two to five years need to form attachments with adults who care for them, primarily to a key person, but with other adults and children too. In this way children feel part of a community of learners; they can contribute to that community and receive from it. The three-stage model is applicable, but with some differences in the procedures for children moving up into the next group and for older children.

Waiting list and admissions

Little Doves CP is accessible to children and families from all sections of the local and wider community, aiming to ensure that all sections of the community receive accessible information and that the admissions procedures are fair, clear, and open to all parents/carers who apply for places. The availability of a place at the pre-school considers staff/child ratios, the age of the child and registration requirements.

- Little Doves CP endeavours to operate in an inclusive manner which enables all children and families to access the services provided.
- The pre-school also has regard for the needs of parents/carers who are:
 - looking to take up work, remain in work or extend their hours of work
 - looking to commence training or education
- Working in partnership with the local authority and other agencies ensures that the pre-school is accessible to all sections of the community.
- Services are widely advertised and information is accessible to all sections of the community.
- Where the number of children wanting places exceeds the number of places available a waiting list is operated using clear criteria for allocation of places as detailed in section 09.01 Waiting list and admissions procedure.

Funded places – funded entitlement

All 3 and 4 year olds in England are entitled to 15 hours funded childcare each week for 38 weeks of the year. Some eligible 2 year olds are also entitled. Funded places are offered in accordance with Essex County Council codes of practice and adherence to the Provider Agreement/Contract with Essex County Council.

Legal References

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE and DHSC 2014)

Equality Act 2010

Childcare Act 2006