**The Learning Environment**

*Stonham Aspal Pre-School respects the child’s right to play, recognising that children are active learners and that they learn through first-hand experiences which they need time to revisit and extend without the fear of failure. The environment is planned to encourage the development of self-identity, self-reliance and self-esteem so that they feel valued as an individual and as part of a social group whilst learning to value the needs and beliefs of others. Each key person will work in partnership with each child and their parents and carers to ensure the provision meets their needs. The adult to child ratio will be at least one to eight for children aged three to five years and one to four for children of two years of age. This ratio will be enhanced when needed. Members of staff work within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012).*

Staff undertake risk assessments on a daily basis to maintain a safe environment for the children to play and learn in (refer to the Health and Safety Policy).

The aims of the Pre-School will be:

* To provide a flexible framework of inclusive and diverse activities both in the indoor and outdoor environment, that motivates the child to investigate and explore. The children are observed and the environment is adapted to meet their individual developmental needs and interests.
* To provide the children with the freedom to move freely between the indoors and outdoors, enabling them to extend their play and encourage different types of play by freely moving between different areas and bringing toys, resources and materials from one area to another.
* To recognise the importance and special features of outdoor play.
* To provide an environment that is safe and clean and where children are taught to use materials safely and where the assessment of risk is part of children’s learning.
* To contribute to the child’s social, physical, intellectual, cognitive and emotional development through independence, discovery and adult led provision.
* To advocate equality and diversity for all children and their families irrespective of gender, race, ability or disability and reflect such policy as an integral part of the environment.
* To manage behaviour to encourage positive experiences through praise of their efforts and achievements and to encourage children to recognise their rights and responsibilities.
* To treat sensitively issues such as ‘gun play’, acknowledging that children may have parents or carers in the armed forces or in the farming related industries and understanding the importance and value of imaginative and social play.
* To provide clean resources that reflects all abilities and developmental levels that meet safety regulations.
* To ensure all children have their personal hygiene needs met by respectful adults.
* To promote the role of children and adults in seeking to protect and conserve the Earth’s environments and resources.
* To promote the children’s knowledge of the natural world, its animals and other living creatures as part of The Learning and Development Requirements of the EYFS. This may include contact with animals, either in the setting, such as family pets, or on visits. We aim to ensure that this is in accordance with appropriate hygiene and safety controls.

**All About me books**

* We have created a section in our all about me book which gives parents or carers the opportunity to tell us about their own observations on their child’s development. keypersons use these observations/comments as starting points for a child’s development, we can use these to assess their development when first starting Pre-school.

**Assessments**

* A summative assessment is made at the age of two years or soon after. This will provide information for the child’s parents/carers about their areas of development which include communication and language, physical and personal, social and emotional development. It also ensures the early identification of any developmental delays so that additional support can be put into place if needed. This information will be shared with the parent/carer and their health visitor.
* A formative assessment is carried out (through observations) by the child’s Key Person on a daily/weekly basis and then summative assessments are made two to three times a year once the child is 3 years old. Key persons keep a record of each individual child’s learning and stage of development using trackers and data monitoring forms. The information collated on the data monitoring forms is reviewed by our setting manager and discussed at staff meetings to see if there are any areas of learning/development that we need to particularly focus on, or if there are certain areas of strength.
* The key person will plan activities to meet the child’s needs and follow their interests and developmental level within the setting and will support parents to understand the child’s needs in order to enhance their development at home.

Furthermore, the aims of Stonham Aspal Pre-School intend the child to gain confidence and curiosity to learn without fear of failure; to acquire a sense of achievement through the mastery of skills that may foster independence and increase self-esteem and to feel valued as an individual and as part of a social group whilst learning to value the needs and beliefs of others.

**To achieve these aims we provide a safe and stimulating environment in which the child may:**

* Move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments and experience continuity in their play in the resources found in both areas.
* Play and be creative, using a variety of equipment, manmade and natural, reflecting a number of different cultures.
* Be respectful, co-operate, take turns and share with others.
* Gain knowledge about the beliefs of others through positive imagery and experiencing a wide range of resources, festivals and celebrations reflecting a range of ethnic and cultural groups without gender bias.
* Feel accepted and included as individuals through being supported, encouraged and reassured by trained members of staff.
* Listen and respond to stories, songs and drama.
* Participate in ‘messy’ activities and other sensory play.
* Play with open-ended resources such as fabrics, crates, planks and boxes.
* Separate from their main carer with support.
* Develop language and communication skills and experience their own language in the setting (refer to Equality and Diversity policy).
* Bring their play to a natural end within the time limits of each session.
* Discuss and take part in issues concerning the environment, i.e. recycling and re-using growing food, valuing the countryside, not being wasteful.
* Children will be encouraged to take part in a range of activities so that they can gain diverse experiences and skills.

**Links into other Policies**

Admissions

Behaviour Management

Documentation

Equality and Diversity

Health and Safety

Safeguarding Children

Settling in/Transition

Special Educational Needs

Staffing and Employment

Visitors to Pre-school

Working in Partnership with Parents

**Responsibility:**

* Stonham Aspal Pre-School will ensure that all staff, parents/carers, volunteers and others involved in its work will follow and implement this policy.
* The managerial responsibility for this policy will lie with the Stonham Aspal Pre-School management committee and staff team.
* This Learning Environment Policy will be evaluated and reviewed by the management committee. Staff contribute on an annual basis and parents/carers will also be invited to contribute.
* We will listen to children’s points of view and consider this when making and reviewing policies.

**This Learning Environment Policy was adopted at a meeting of the Stonham Aspal Pre-School Committee:**

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| **Date** | **June 2021** |
| **To be reviewed again by:** | **June 2022** |
| **Chairperson signature** |  |
| **Pre-School Managers signature** |  |