EYFS CURRICULUM, TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY

This policy: *applies to all nursery practitioners, students and volunteers.*

Policy Statement

At Dots & Tots Day Nursery, we believe children learn best when they feel emotionally secure, valued and confident in themselves. Personal, social and emotional development is central to our curriculum and underpins all other learning. We offer an authentic childhood experience through everyday play, meaningful relationships, nature, real-life experiences and opportunities to explore at each child's own pace. Our approach is inclusive, child-led and ambitious for every child.

Our Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is rooted in nature, guided by play and designed to help children grow for life. We prioritise secure attachments, communication, independence, resilience, curiosity, positive relationships and practical life skills. Children are encouraged to make choices, solve problems, take appropriate risks and develop confidence through hands-on experiences rather than adult-directed tasks or predetermined outcomes. Digital technology is used selectively to enhance learning and never as a substitute for meaningful play, face-to-face interactions, outdoor exploration or real-life experiences. Any screen use is purposeful, supervised and appropriate to each child's age and developmental needs. Children will also be introduced to online safety in an age-appropriate way, helping them develop an early understanding of how to use technology safely, recognise potential risks and seek support from a trusted adult when needed.

The EYFS Seven Areas of Learning

Our curriculum encompasses all seven EYFS areas, woven together through play and daily routines. The prime areas are Communication and Language; Physical Development; and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. The specific areas are Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; and Expressive Arts and Design. Children are encouraged to explore, investigate, experiment and discover through meaningful play and real-life experiences. Our practitioners support their natural curiosity, encourage independence and provide opportunities for children to develop confidence, creativity and problem-solving skills at their own pace.

Teaching Through Play and Real-Life Experiences

Children learn through sustained, child-initiated play supported by responsive adults who observe, listen, model language, introduce ideas and extend thinking when appropriate. Experiences include gardening, caring for animals, preparing food, setting tables, cleaning up, sorting materials, using real tools with suitable supervision, exploring the natural world, imaginative play, full continuous provision accessibility at all time and local community outings. Adults balance child-led exploration with purposeful extension to learning and ensure that activities remain meaningful, safe and appropriate to each child's development.

Learning Environments and Outdoor Experiences

Our indoor and outdoor environments offer open-ended, accessible resources, natural materials, books, creative opportunities and spaces for both active exploration and calm reflection. Resources are adapted to children's

interests, developmental stages and individual needs. Outdoor learning is part of everyday provision and supports movement, investigation, collaboration, confidence and care for living things. Sensory experiences and appropriate risk-taking are supported through careful supervision and risk assessment.

Our Rooms, Our Curriculum

Chicks – Babies (Approximately 3–18 Months)

Our youngest children are supported through warm, consistent key-person relationships and individual care routines. Curriculum priorities include secure attachments and emotional reassurance; early communication through eye contact, babbling, songs, rhymes and books; creating spaces to encourage rolling, crawling, standing and other emerging physical skills; quiet and calming environments to support sensory exploration; curiosity and early social interaction. Feeding, rest and personal care are unhurried opportunities for communication, trust and growing independence. Experiences are responsive to each baby's cues and developmental readiness.

Ducklings – Waddlers (Approximately 18 Months–2½ Years)

Ducklings develop confidence through movement, investigation and increasing independence. Curriculum priorities include vocabulary and emerging words and short sentences; expressing and learning about our individual needs and feelings; developing independence in daily routines and toilet-learning readiness; building our gross and fine motor skills; early mathematical ideas through exploration of shapes, weights, number counting etc; promoting imaginative and exploratory play to promote language and communication as well social interactions and confidence; sharing, turn-taking and beginning to understand early emotional regulation. Real-life experiences such as carrying, pouring, tidying, preparing snacks, looking after our animals and exploring nature provide purposeful opportunities to learn by doing, taking appropriate risks and growing confidence to ‘give things a go’.

Squirrels – Transition Room (Approximately 2½–3 Years)

Squirrels build on independence skills, imagination and building social friendships. Curriculum priorities include conversation, listening and understanding; cooperation and social relationships; problem-solving; counting, sorting, patterns and shapes; early mark-making and fine motor control; dressing and personal care; self-regulation and emotional awareness; and promotes curiosity about nature, the wider world and the community around them. Children are supported to make choices, negotiate challenges and develop practical life skills. We listen to the voice of the child and tailor activities and learning experiences based on their interests. We teach them mistakes will be made and lessons are learnt only when we try new things and challenge ourselves. Through risk assessments and practitioner supervision children have full access to our continuous provision of the arts and are able to test their hand eye coordination, physical ability and risk awareness in our construction area and other outside areas.

Butterflies – Preschool (Approximately 3years–School Transition)

Butterflies further extend their confidence as communicators, critical thinkers, problem solvers and independent learners. Our curriculum priorities include providing experiences and surroundings to encourage rich conversation and storytelling; listening and awareness of sounds in language; early literacy and meaningful mark-making; number, pattern and shape recognition as well as problem-solving skills; investigation and creativity; emotional

regulation, resilience, cooperation and responsibility. Children take part in authentic life tasks such as planning projects, gardening, caring for animals, food preparation and community partnership experiences. We support readiness for life's next experiences through growing independence, language development, meaningful social relationships and building confidence, without narrowing learning to just formal school preparation. Again, a child led approach where full continuous provision is available to our little learners at all times means that we follow the interests of the children and allow them space to explore, push appropriate boundaries and grow as individuals and independent learners.

Observation, Assessment and Next Steps

Practitioners use their knowledge of each child, everyday interactions, discussions with families and meaningful observations to understand children's development, monitor progress and identify individual next steps.

Our observations and assessments are guided by the EYFS and the Development Matters framework, considering children's progress across all seven areas of learning and development. Assessment is purposeful and proportionate, ensuring practitioners spend their time engaging with children rather than completing unnecessary paperwork.

We are committed to ensuring that every child has opportunities to experience all seven areas of learning each day, through child-led play, natural exploration, everyday routines, carefully considered activities, authentic real-life experiences, outdoor learning, community outings and sessions with external providers.

The statutory progress check at age two will be completed and shared with parents, identifying children's strengths, developmental progress and any areas where additional support may be required.

Planning remains flexible and responsive to children's individual interests, abilities, developmental needs and emerging experiences, ensuring that learning is inclusive, meaningful and appropriate to each child's stage of development.

Inclusion, SEND and Equal Opportunities

Inclusion is embedded in all aspects of our curriculum. We adapt environments, communication, routines, resources and teaching approaches so that children with SEND, disabilities, English as an additional language or additional emotional/confidence needs can participate fully. Staff work with families, the SENCo and relevant professionals to identify barriers, agree support and review progress. The nursery may draw on advice from a registered clinical psychologist where appropriate. Every child's culture, identity, home language and family experience is respected and celebrated.

Key Persons, Partnerships and Transitions

Each child has a Key Person who develops a secure relationship with them and works closely with their family. Parents' knowledge and children's voices help shape the care and provision provided. Information is shared through daily handovers, progress discussions, next steps/ observationsand the Ovivio parent app. Transitions between rooms or into other settings are planned around individual readiness, with familiarisation opportunities and additional support where needed.

Roles, Quality Assurance and Review

The Nursery Manager oversees curriculum implementation, staff support and the quality of teaching. Room Leaders ensure that provision reflects each room's priorities while responding to individual children. All practitioners are responsible for nurturing interactions, safe supervision, inclusive teaching and reflective practice. Staff review the effectiveness of learning environments and approaches through discussion, observation, family feedback and professional development. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following significant changes to EYFS guidance or nursery practice.

Related Policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; SEND Policy; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy; Parents as Partners Policy; Transition Policy; Health & Safety Policy; Risk Assessment Policy; Outdoor Learning procedures; Records, Confidentiality & Data Protection Policy.

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Signed

Christie Patton

Company Owner