

## **Communication Policy**

Angmering Village Preschool aims to enable all children to develop the skills of effective communication, as we recognise that this is the foundation of relationships and the ability to speak and listen is fundamental for learning, playing and social interaction. Communication is 'everything', essential to developing and forming both personal and professional relationships. Children need to be able to understand and be understood.

### **Communicating with Children**

The way we communicate in terms of our tone of voice, body language, facial expression and attitude impact on what we say and how we it is perceived. Active listening is key to communicating effectively; being in the moment and giving full attention to what is being said contributes to the child's personal, social and emotional development. Where possible our staff are physically on a child's level when communicating, encouraging eye contact whilst supporting conversation skills. For example; getting down to welcome a child at drop off time, whilst changing nappy or at snack time.

Our staff are trained to give children space to describe and explain their activities and feelings. Children are given time to think considering their level of knowledge and understanding, use of spoken language, both home and English and breadth of vocabulary. Staff remember that some children require significantly longer to translate, think, respond and/or communicate. For example; possibly a child with English as an additional language or a less confident child.

Children have their feelings validated; it's okay to feel sad and miss parents or feel cross there isn't a spare bike to ride. Having affirmation for feelings can support a child to self-regulate, make sense of their feelings and grow emotionally. Children never have their feelings belittled.

Children have opportunities to think and answer questions. Using open questions helps the child to think and formulate ideas to express himself and engage in two-way communication. Closed questions limit or close down the need to think and express ideas. Our staff are trained to give children opportunities to talk to them and are ready to 'listen' to a child who has something to communicate which supports our Safeguarding Policy. Our staff are approachable, able to listen and welcome child-initiated conversation. They narrate or provide parallel talk as a child engages in activities to expose them to meaningful language.

We follow the recommended 'Letters and Sounds' Phase One Phonics programme and do lots of small group activities designed to encourage talking, listening and concentration skills. Our 'Rhyme of the Week' is repeated across all activities as we recognise that rhythm and rhyme are a key part of early reading skills. We have a 'Story of the Week', where we read the same story each day for a week. This means that all children will get the chance to hear the words two or three times and start to join in with the story at preschool and at home. We enhance our stories and songs with props/puppets and support children with actions. This helps to focus their attention which is essential for the development of language and aids comprehension. Our 'Sign of the Week' is designed to enable all children to learn Makaton signs to enhance their communication skills.

We closely monitor each individual child's progress to ensure that their speech, language and communications needs are identified and interventions put in place where necessary. We simplify language and use gestures, signs or symbols to help any child struggling to understand. We use a visual timetable to support understanding of the daily routine so each child can understand what is happening and what the expectations of them will be. The same symbols are used around the settings to aid understanding.

We work closely with other professionals and follow any recommended guidelines for training to ensure our staff are enabled to support and progress each child.

### **Pre-Verbal Communication**

Our staff support pre-verbal communication which is dependent on the age and stage of development. They are able to 'communicate' with children noticing pointing, staring, facial expressions, Makaton signs or symbols etc. All our staff initiate or support the development of pre-verbal conversation skills as a child plays peekaboo or takes turns to pat a drum. Pre-verbal / non-verbal communication is particularly relevant to babies, children with English as an additional language or children with additional needs.

### **Adult Communication**

Our staff maintain effective communication channels with setting team members, parents, other professionals and visitors. They communicate with everyone politely and courteously so children are never exposed to any friction between staff.

It is accepted that some adult conversation will take place within the play areas, but as professionals providing 'Quality childcare' we monitor how much conversation is carried out whilst working with the children. Lengthy or inappropriate personal conversations **do not** take place over the heads of the children. When working in the play areas discussions / conversations should be in relation to the preschool, routines, planned play activities or experiences. Staff **do not** discuss individual children 'in front' of the children, or where they are able to hear what is being said.

### **Communicating with Parents and Carers**

Parents and staff have a responsibility to share information as they arrive and leave the setting, with particular reference to any specific information relating to the child, also discussing any key event information and incident / accident which has occurred during the day.

Parents will know who their child's key person is and the rest of the staff team who work with their child. Our staff are respectful when they speak to parents, describing how their child has been that day, always trying to end the conversation with a positive point about the day or child. We are conscientious, about how, where and when we discuss issues about a child, if necessary taking the parent out of the play area, e.g. to the Kitchen area if the content of the conversation is private, or better discussed out of the child's hearing.

We encourage parents to share any concerns they may have about their child's speech or development and to use our Preschool Library on a regular basis. Story bags contain props to encourage the child to recall and retell the story in their own words, laying the foundations of early comprehension skills which will be built on at school.

### **Nappy change sheets**

To help feedback to parents we keep a written record of nappy changes throughout the session/s daily.

### **Parents Information Boards / Displays**

Information is clearly displayed on notice boards at both The Village Hall and Scout HQ. Posters may also be displayed in the window at The Village Hall.

### **Pre-school website**

The website provides information to families about the setting. There is the opportunity to meet the team, look at our policies and procedures, see our 'story', 'rhyme' and 'sign' of the week and information around upcoming events. Parents are also able to view pictures of the activities that the children have been involved in on our password protected gallery.

### **Parent Information Sessions**

A range of sessions are held for parents to support and inform on a number of topics. For example; Parent Workshops on the EYFS, The Pre-school Library or Oral Health for example.

### **Further ways in which we will communicate with and involve parents**

- Telephone communication
- Face to face conversations
- Emails to individuals
- Annual Parent Questionnaire/Survey
- Letters
- Parent / Child Review Meetings

Reviewed July 2018