

NETHER GREEN JUNIOR BREAKFAST AND AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

Play Policy

Policy statement

We are a child centred setting who adheres to the play work principles (playwales 2005). We will ensure that we give all children/young people the best possible opportunities for play. Our club is committed to children's right to play, as outlined in Article 31 of the United Nations declaration in 'The Rights of the Child' 1989, which states that every child has the right to rest, leisure, to engage and play in recreational activities appropriate to the age and stage of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. All staff are to work with the play work principles in mind.

Aims

All children and young people need to play; the impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, a psychological and a social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.

The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate play. To play is to allow one to freely explore and make sense of the world, experiment, and express things without fear of judgement.

To best facilitate children's play

1. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
2. The environment will be set up prior to children arriving and will include a range of play opportunities whether this be inside or outside. The environment can be manipulated to suit the needs of play (within reason).
3. Children will be confident in making requests for other equipment. Equipment may be used in conjunction with other equipment, if it doesn't pose a high safety risk.
4. Children are not required to be occupied at all times.
5. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound and up-to-date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
6. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and on the impact of children and young people's play.
7. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.
8. A record of activities and play opportunities will be kept and reviewed to ensure that appropriate ranges of play types are offered.
9. Playworkers recognise that children need to put their own creative style and ideas into their creation such as cooking, arts, crafts, sports and gardening.
10. Children will be involved in planning activities so that the programme reflects their opinions. Activities will be carefully planned to allow children to build on the natural curiosity, advance their thinking and use their imagination.
11. Children will be given notice when their play must come to an end. If a play request is refused, an explanation will be given.

To give all children/young people the best possible opportunities for play, by ensuring that:

- We will provide a diverse selection of play opportunities which will contribute to children's development of a variety of skills.

- Making best use of the space we have both indoors as well as outdoors, to allow a variety of activities, such as chill out areas, arts and crafts and outdoor games etc.
- Parents should provide appropriate clothing for both messy play and outdoor play.
- We will ensure that play is supervised by trained staff.
- We will ensure that all children/young people are consulted with, to plan and provide a range of activities to meet their needs. We will also consider and value all children/young person opinions. We have an active child parliament which gives the children the chance to negotiate comprises and to give ideas from a young person's perspective.
- All children/young people are fully included in, and have equal access to play opportunities, that are safe and offer challenges and risk.
- That play is freely chosen by the children/young people.
- NGJASC will do their best to hire staff with a range of hobbies and skills that could be of interest to our children.

Risk in Play

The Club will facilitate and encourage play opportunities for children, which are deemed to be risky. We recognise that risk is different for individuals, e.g. racing down the school yard hill on scooters when there is a big wall at the bottom is risky for a 6-year-old, whereas a nine-year-old may not deem that to be a risk, unless they were not sure of how to stop on the scooter. We support the need for risky play and recognise that it is an important aspect of child development. Children often crave risk when playing; they want challenge and excitement in their play. They need to experience challenging play opportunities to develop in their daily lives more effectively. However, opportunities for children to take such risks are often limited due to our risk-adverse culture and a preserved increase in health and safety constraints. Practitioners however need to reflect on whether they have a genuine reason to stop risky play, or if they are simply intervening out of habit or due to their personal limitations (*please refer to the Risk Benefit guidance – playengland.org.uk*). Staff will use discussion about risk to help children understand what risks are too high and what are appropriate and why. Children are encouraged to know themselves and how well they can manage a task – staff will however step in if they clearly make too risky of a choice. Children are asked to seek guidance from staff when they are unsure if they are allowed to do something or not.

The Health and Safety Executive understands and accepts that children will often be exposed to play environments which, whilst well managed, carry a degree of risk and sometimes potential danger (HSE, 2012)

'Play is great for children's well-being and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool'. (HSE, 2012)

- **Further Reading**

- Playwork principles 2005
- No Fear by Tim Gill
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/childrens-play-july-2012.pdf>

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	<u>Nethergreen Junior ASC</u>	name of setting
Held on	<u>May 2020</u>	(date)
Date to be reviewed	<u>May 2021</u>	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee		

Name of signatory	<u>Tammy Nelson</u>
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	<u>Manager</u>