**St Christopher’s Playgroup Curriculum**

**‘Growing Together, Learning Through Play’**

At St. Christopher’s Playgroup, we believe that every child deserves both the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. We recognise that a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances, and we offer inclusive, high quality care for all children.

Our activities are planned and developed in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage of the UK, 2021. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early year’s providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure the children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

**The EYFS seeks to provide:**

• Quality and consistency in all early year’s settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind

• A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child, and which are assessed and reviewed regularly

• Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers

• Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

* the educational programmes, which are the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experience for children in all early year’s settings.
* the role of providers, who must help children reach the Early Learning Goals. These encompass the knowledge, skills and understanding that children should have by the end of the year in which they turn five.
* the assessment arrangements by which progress is measured, along with requirements for reporting back to parents and/or carers.
* the safeguarding and welfare requirements, which detail the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

**The areas of learning and development**

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, known as the ‘prime’ areas, are:

• communication and language • physical development • personal, social and emotional development

We also support children in four ‘specific’ areas, through which the three prime areas are further strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are: • literacy • mathematics • understanding the world

• expressive arts and design

All educational programmes must involve activities and experiences for children, as follows:

• **Communication and Language Development** underpins all seven areas of learning. It involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to regularly engage in high quality back-and -forth interactions and conversations in a range of situations

• **Physical Development** focuses on the development of both gross and fine motor skills, and it involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children need to recognise that good physical development is important to their all-round health and development, including their social and emotional well-being.

**• Personal, Social and Emotional Development** emphasises the importance of forming attachments with others within strong, warm, respectful and supportive relationships. It involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, to develop social skills, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups, and to have confidence in their own abilities. A child’s developing Executive Function, which includes their ability to focus their attention and develop patience and resilience will contribute towards their growing ability to manage their behaviour and self-regulate. They also need to be encouraged to make healthy choices in relation to food.

**• Literacy Development** states that developing a lifelong love of literacy is crucial**.** Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials), both at playgroup and at home in order to ignite their interest. Comprehension begins at birth, whilst later in their development children are encouraged make the meaningful marks which will eventually lead to recognisable writing and to link sounds and letters.

• **Mathematics** now includes a greater depth in understanding the concept of numbers to ten, and in being able to recognise groups of items (subitise) without actually counting them. It involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers and calculating simple addition and subtraction problems. Working with shapes, spacial reasoning and measuring are also important. Children are supported in developing a love of mathematics, without being afraid to make mistakes.

• **Understanding the World** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through regular opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the local environment. Experiencing a broad selection of books and rhymes, and their associated vocabulary, will also foster their understanding of ‘our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world’.

• **Expressive Arts and Design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of high-quality media and materials on a regular basis, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

At St Christopher’s Playgroup, we are also guided in our judgements by our knowledge of the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These are:

**Playing and Exploring**, where we notice the ways in which children ‘have a go’ and investigate new things, and their levels of engagement.

**Active Learning**, where we notice how they are motivated to keep concentrating, keep on trying when facing difficulties, and finally enjoy their achievements.

**Creating and Thinking Critically**, where we notice their ways of thinking, such as having and developing their own ideas, making links between ideas and developing their own strategies for doing things.

Through our key workers making close observations and building up warm and respectful relationships with children and parents, we are able to build up a picture of each individual children’s interests and levels of development, so that we can support them by scaffolding their learning in the most effective way.

In this way, any Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) issues can be identified early on, and children are then given the additional help that they need. The observation checkpoints detailed in our comprehensive Curriculum Document, which are taken from ‘Development Matters 2021’, in conjunction with their own professional experience and knowledge, support practitioners in recognising that a child might be falling behind and what actions might be taken to support them. We will engage in sensitive dialogue with parents/carers to ensure that the most effective decisions regarding any intervention can be made.

Our aim is to maximise outcomes for all children and to help close the gap for children who are disadvantaged in any way.