

Willow Dene

TOUCAN

Specialist Provision for Two Year Olds



'Seeing possibilities, realising dreams'
Exceptional teaching for exceptional learners

Reviewed policy agreed by GB on :

Reviewed policy shared with staff on:

Policy to be reviewed again on:

Committee responsible for review:

Policy for Toucan – Specialist Provision for Two Year Olds

Rationale

Toucan is a specialist childcare setting particularly suited to children aged two years who are coping with a range of challenges to their health and/or development.

Our belief that early intervention is important is based on research showing that this sort of early provision can provide best outcomes for children and also avoid some problems from occurring e.g. postural problems.

Staff in Toucan are experienced in working with young children with a range of special needs. They include a teacher and level 3 LSA who have specialist knowledge of early child development.

Provision

We are fortunate to be based at Willow Dene School which allows us to share both expertise and also training and research opportunities to enhance our knowledge and skills. This has a positive impact on our work with children attending Toucan. This includes areas such as the MOVE programme, sensory processing, music therapy, specialist technology and learning journeys which helps inform our assessment of children.

Working with families

Toucan provides a variety of groups for parents and families will also have access to a family support worker.

In Toucan we are committed to working closely with families. We believe that this helps us to find out about what children enjoy, what helps them to learn and what their families see as important in their child's life. We encourage families to spend as much time as they want to with us particularly as their child settles.

We know that offering the optimum environment for learning involves a partnership with the professionals supporting the child and their family. We work to incorporate ideas and strategies from therapists and others working with the child and family into the child's natural play experiences.

Enabling Environments and Positive Relationships

Toucan offers rich, exciting and motivating play experiences which take into account the child's strengths and interests and help them develop to their full potential. Children are offered a key adult to help them feel secure with an adult outside their family. We want our children to feel comfortable, secure

and loved. Staff have a calm and gentle approach and support children to gradually gain independence, form friendships, enjoy, explore and play. Offering play experiences at the right developmental level with just the right level of support and taking into account preferences and learning style offer children what they need to feel safe and make progress.

Children attending Toucan are offered 5 sessions each week either am or pm.

Toucan has an entrance separate from the school and is a self-contained unit including a play area, outside play space, toilet area and storage areas for big equipment and toys.

Children attending 'Toucan' are also able to access a sensory room, ballpool, sensory garden, warm water pool and pre-school playgroup all part of Willow Dene and on site. These experiences enrich each child's experience and enhance learning.

A unique child

We recognise that helping a child to be comfortable and feel as well as they can will allow them to focus on all the learning experiences offered. This is very difficult for children who feel poorly, suffers pain or has problems with feeding or sleeping. The impact of these issues can have a profound effect on the child and their family and cause a high level of stress and upset. Toucan builds a partnership with families to support them as they work through these issues. This may involve liaison with medical professionals, appointments, monitoring medications, specialist equipment and therapy and joint attendance at on site clinics such as feeding and dietetics. Aspects of their life such as specialist feeding and administering medication which may have seemed overwhelming and worrying are shared in Toucan.

In Toucan we believe that listening and giving time is vitally important. Our children are very young and families are sometimes still in the early stages of acceptance and understanding of their child's needs. They may have spent very long periods in hospital and the demands of their child's 24 hour care can be exhausting. For many families the first year to 18 months may have been very turbulent with the priority being to stabilise their medical conditions.

Toucan celebrates and shares children's enjoyment and achievements. This is captured for families through shared conversations, observations, photos and videos a home contact book and home visits. As we learn more about a child we offer ideas to carry over ideas and activities between home and school. This may involve practical ideas such as setting up a play area at home. We offer help in using communication support such as touch cues,

objects of reference, signing and the use of pictures or symbols. Again this will be practical e.g. putting together a pack of objects of reference and showing how they are used.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Toucan offers a high adult child ratio to support learning and ensure safety. We offer sessions where children have 2 adults available which allows one adult to observe closely and helps us to plan next steps based on this knowledge. When video is used we are able to look back and discuss the child's responses and what the next steps might be. We recognise that responses may be very subtle and children may need lots of opportunities practice.

Safeguarding and welfare are our highest priority. Toucan work within the established policies of Willow Dene School and within the guidelines of the governments statutory guidance 'Working together to safeguard children 2013'

Learning and Development

We use the Early Learning Goals with particular focus on the prime areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Communication and Language
- Physical development

Because many of our children have very complex learning needs the goals at the earliest levels have been looked at in more detail to recognise smaller steps of progress. The characteristics of effective early learning help us to consider how individual children learn.

- Playing and Exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

The specific areas enhance and enrich learning experiences

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

We reflect carefully as a team including families and therapists to think about what we can offer that will have the most positive impact on children's learning. This may be offering very frequent visually stimulating activities which are carefully planned to develop fixing or tracking. Developing visual

skills and awareness will have a very positive impact in all areas. For another child the priority may be to look at equipment which helps them to sit comfortably and to control their tone. This will have a positive impact in allowing them to use their head control, remain relaxed and use their hands.

We recognise that we need to offer children plenty of time to respond and to show us what they are able to do.

Feedback to families is ongoing. A written summary of a child's progress is written for families. This may also form part of the child's EHC plan if appropriate. Where possible, links are made with the child's health visitor with particular regard to the Healthy Child Programme Check.

Support is given as families prepare for their child to move into their next setting. This may include visiting a setting with families and ensuring clear information is passed onto the new setting. We welcome visits from staff in the new settings.

October 2014