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## **STATEMENT OF AIMS**

Barton is a small, friendly playgroup which aims to offer an interesting and enjoyable education for two and a half to four year old pre-school children in a safe and happy environment.

All the activities we offer are carefully chosen with thought being given to the age range we serve, and emphasis is placed on each child developing at their own pace.

We welcome all children irrespective of their background, and look forward to providing them with an excellent pre-school experience.

## **HISTORY OF BARTON PLAYGROUP**

### *PAST*

Barton Playgroup started in the early 1970s as a group of parents meeting with their toddlers and babies in each other's homes. By 1974, the group had grown so large that a bigger play space was needed and so the Playgroup moved to Barton Village Hall.

In 1981 Barton Playgroup became a member of the Pre-School Playgroups Association and with this change a committee of parents and interested others evolved.

As time went on it was felt that the village hall was becoming unsuitable; the daily setting up and cleaning away was not only hard work but detrimental to the activities of the Playgroup. Discussions began in 1983/84 about the possibility of acquiring its own premises and news of a discarded classroom from a school in Great Gransden provided the extra impetus to raise the money needed to purchase the mobile building.

Once the building was up and running fundraising was intensified to maintain the playgroup. It had a very high profile in the village and within a short time Barton Playgroup was known as one of the best equipped and well run groups in the county with the building being used as a venue for county training courses to show how playgroups should run.

The building is owned by the Playgroup Trustees and Playgroup is managed by an active committee of parents and interested others.

### *PRESENT*

In early 2006, the Barton Playgroup building was replaced by a second interim mobile building, at the same place in the grounds of Barton School. The new building has better toilet facilities and a ramp in order to make the Playgroup accessible for the disabled. Whilst Playgroup has remained independent of Barton School, there is close liaison between the two and Playgroup is able to use the school grounds and the school hall for activities. We also share weekly story time with the Reception children.

The Playgroup is well equipped and welcoming; children's work is always carefully displayed. We feel this

encourages the children, and they often show their parents and carers their contributions with pride.

The staff are enthusiastic and approachable, and have many years experience of working with children. The legal staffing ratio is 1:4 for two year olds and 1:8 for three to five year olds. We prefer to limit our sessions to twelve children in order to preserve the quality of our provision.

## **ADMISSION TO PLAYGROUP**

### *INTRODUCTION*

Starting at a playgroup is a very significant point in a child's life. It brings them into a whole new world of discovery and social interactions. At Barton, we believe that each child brings with them their own individual character, developed over the preceding years with guidance and influence from parents and carers. We are here to help the children develop skills which will eventually lead them to a successful integration into school life.

As children are very different, the ways in which they settle and adapt to a playgroup will also be different. It is important that they feel comfortable in their environment before parents can feel happy to leave them there. We encourage parents and carers to take as long as necessary to settle children into Barton Playgroup and we work with parents to achieve this.

It is often helpful to bring children along for a free introductory session in the term before they wish to start and we welcome and encourage this.

### *PARENTS' ROLE*

Parents are the most influential people in young children's lives as they know their children better than anyone else. Therefore we place great value in the contribution parents can make to Playgroup.

When children start Playgroup it is helpful for parents to share relevant information with staff who will then continually feed back to parents how their children are progressing. This is done informally, at the end of sessions, and more formally, with continual assessment and parent consultations in the Autumn and Summer terms. These written records are passed on to the child's school with parental permission. If parents do not wish their child to be formally assessed, however, we will not do so.

There is a Learning Tree in the entrance to Playgroup where parents/carers are asked to write news on a paper leaf that their child would like to share with the other children. This might include things they like doing, books they have enjoyed, places they have visited or achievements they have made. We will then share the news at Circle Time and staff will use the information to inform planning of activities.

Parents and carers are welcome to help at Playgroup sessions on a one off or a more regular basis. Parents often have skills which Playgroup can utilise, such as playing a musical instrument, computer or cooking skills and we are always pleased to find parents willing to share them for part of a session.

Parents should always feel that they can bring new ideas to Playgroup. The committee and staff run Playgroup according to best current practice and receive regular and updated broad training, but we are always open to suggestions as to how our service can be improved.

### *FEES*

We believe that the Playgroup should be as inclusive as possible; one way in which we try to fulfil this aim is to keep the fees at a level which covers our costs but is not profit-making. At the beginning of each term parents are sent a letter detailing the sessions for which their children have been registered and requesting the appropriate fee. This should be paid promptly either by cheque to 'Barton Playgroup' or in cash. In instances where fees may cause a problem, then weekly payment arrangements can be made with the Treasurer.

All sessions for which children are registered must be paid for.

### *BOOKING FEE*

There is a non-refundable booking fee of £50 to secure your child's place. If this would prove to be a problem, please talk to a member of staff in confidence. This would not apply to those in receipt of Two Year Funding.

### *LATE COLLECTION FEE*

There is a fee charged for late collection of children.

### *FUNDING FOR TWO YEAR OLDS*

Barton Playgroup is registered to provide places for Funded Twos but only accept children once they are 2½ years old.

### *FUNDING FOR THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS*

Barton Playgroup is registered to provide places under the Government's Early Years Education Funding Scheme. This funding is available for children from the term following their third birthday and can be claimed for up to 15 hours a week. Playgroup holds the claim forms and issues them to parents as their children become eligible. Please ask staff for hand out on Flexible Funding.

### *ADMISSION CRITERIA*

There is a maximum of 12 places per day. In case the number of children on the waiting list exceeds the number of available places at any time, an admission committee will decide about placing. Relevant criteria for the placing of your child include his or her age, how close to the Playgroup you live etc. Be assured the committee strives to make a fair assessment of these criteria at all times.

### **TYPICAL DAY**

9.00am                      Free choice - choice of activities e.g. sand/water play, play dough,

	imaginative play.
9.30am	Directed activity in small groups related to weekly theme. This may be Related to any of the 7 areas of learning
10.30am	Tidy Away. Circle Time
10.45am	Milk or water and fruit
11.00am	Toilet, wash hands and dressing for outside
11.10am	Outside play for all, music and movement or drama, dependent on the weather. Outdoor play includes play equipment, ball games, ring games or more structured P.E. games in the Playgroup garden, the school's climbing frames. We try to allow as much free flow between indoor and outdoor play as possible.
11.45am	Storytime and Songtime
12.noon	Home
12. - 1.pm	Lunch Club (See Separate Entry)

## **CURRICULUM**

### *CURRICULUM STATEMENT and THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE*

Children learn through play. It is the most important tool that they have for making sense of the world and for developing skills to deal with it. Play helps them to acquire knowledge, learn how to interact with others, to increase language and the ability to communicate, and how to grow and develop their own identity. Barton Playgroup aims to provide an environment in which children can achieve these most vital of skills.

In recent years much more importance has been attached to the quality of provision for pre-school children and this has resulted in guidelines being set up in key areas of learning and experience for pre-school providers. A new 'Early Years Foundation Stage', which caters for children until the end of the Reception year, was introduced by the Government in September 2008 and updated in 2012. We aim to fulfill these requirements in a creative way, and sometimes share ideas with Barton School to this end. Barton has welcomed the clarity that the Early Years Foundation Stage has given to playgroups.

The Foundation stage is composed of 7 Areas of Learning which are all important and interconnected. There are 3 Prime Area concentrating on establishing skills which develop a child's capacity to learn. Once these are established, we move onto 4 Specific Areas.

## **PRIME AREAS**

1. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

This area of learning helps children to start to learn about who they are and how the adults who are not their parents or carers, help them to develop skills to make friendships with others. It helps give them the confidence to question, discover and discuss the world around them.

2. **Communication and Language**

Children's first language skills of listening and verbal/non-verbal communications are learnt at home. By the time they reach Playgroup they are ready to continue developing that language through a variety of looking, listening and talking experiences.

3. **Physical Development**

Every activity a child pursues gives them the opportunity to develop their physical skills, coordination, and body awareness so increasing their confidence and ability to control their bodies for large and small tasks. At Barton we have the climbing frame and ball pit within the Playgroup building and those in the Playgroup garden and we have equipment such as balance bikes and trikes, scooters, stepping stones, seesaws, large gardening tools in mud corner, footballs, big streamers, parachutes and bean bags. We can also use the school climbing frames and fields.

## **SPECIFIC AREAS**

4. **Literacy**

Children are surrounded in everyday life by words, symbols and signs. Playgroup aims to help children start to decode these and recognise their significance: telling stories and talking about books enables children to explore and expand their vocabulary.

Those children who are starting to form letters on paper are encouraged in the correct letter formation. We use Letterland materials and characters to help pre-school children learn letter sounds, and to stimulate an interest in language and literacy. All forms of mark making are valued and encouraged such as using chalk, paint or drawing with sticks in mud as these are vital pre-writing skills.

5. **Mathematics**

Many children come to Playgroup with rich mathematical experiences of numbers, size and shapes. Playgroup expands on this through activities which, for instance, encourage sorting, matching and sequencing. Children become familiar with number rhymes, songs, stories, counting games and activities. They begin to recognise patterns and start to develop broader mathematical language, e.g. circle, bigger than, and behind. We enjoy lots of forms of practical maths, especially the measuring involved in cooking.

6. **Understanding of the World**

Children are naturally curious and this area of learning utilises curiosity and exploration to develop a deeper and broader knowledge and understanding of their environment. We

provide ample opportunities for children to use their senses, to make observations, note similarities and differences, and to draw conclusions. We explore the natural world outside and also bring it in through, for instance, a wormery, tadpole tank and maintaining the Playgroup garden. Use of technology includes a touch screen computer, a light board, phones and remote controlled cars.

#### 7. **Creative Development**

When children are given the opportunity to be imaginative and creative through activities such as art, music, dance and role-playing games, they are given a new range of language and ideas with which to respond to and understand their world. Creative development enables children to explore sound, texture, colour, shape and form to respond in different ways to things they see, hear, smell and feel, and to use their imagination through a variety of media. We aim to provide a stimulating environment in which creativity is valued.

### *SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS*

All children are different and sometimes they have special educational needs. At Barton, we endeavour to tailor our activities to meet each individual's needs. We feel the cornerstone in this is getting to know each child really well. In order to facilitate this we aim to limit our session sizes to 12 children. Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is Carrie Cope.

### *EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES*

Barton Playgroup aims to ensure that all children should have equal access to and opportunities for a range of learning experiences regardless of language, race, religion, sex, ability, or cultural background. Our ENCO co-ordinator is Carrie Cope.

### *ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING*

Barton Playgroup keeps records on the children in its care and these are confidential to the establishment and respective families. The aim of these records is firstly to provide factual information on a child's address, family and carer contact numbers and any relevant medical history; and secondly to enable staff to plan activities which meet a child's individual needs in relation to age and ability. They also help the staff to evaluate and further improve future planning for the curriculum. These records are updated regularly and recorded in conjunction with parents. At the end of a child's time at Barton Playgroup some records are passed onto the child's school with parental permission .

### ***PLAYGROUP MATTERS***

#### *HOURS*

The Playgroup hours are 9.00 to 12.00.

Parents must ensure that staff are aware who will be collecting the children. Our registration form includes contact names of people who are all permitted to collect the child in question. If someone not named on the form will be collecting a child, written notification is required in the Collection book.

### *LUNCH CLUB*

Children bring in their packed lunch for Lunch Club that runs from 12.00 to 1.00. If Lunch Club is part of your child's 15 hours Flexible Funding then the days are pre booked at the start of each term. If Lunch Club is in addition to their 15 hours or if your child is too young to receive funding, then attendance can be decided daily and paid for with a half termly bill.

### **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

The staff encourage considerate behaviour by modelling it, by being gentle but clear about expectations and through positive attitudes and encouragement. A group of children in a structured and interesting environment will generally cause no discipline problems. However if there is a need to discipline a child this is of a non-corporal nature. The child will be separated from the action causing the problem and allowed a period of time to 'cool off' before being reasoned with. Explanations will always be given to children as to why certain kinds of behaviour are not acceptable. Any disciplinary action taken in Playgroup will always be reported back to parents. The member of staff responsible for Behaviour Management is Carrie Cope.

### *HEALTH*

If children are ill we would appreciate that Playgroup is informed as soon as possible. In cases of sickness, diarrhoea or infection please do not return children until at least 48 hours after the end of the illness. Naturally, if a child shows signs of the onset of illness during a session, we provide tender loving care and call the parent or carer. We have a policy that all children with asthma who use a Ventolin inhaler keep one in the Playgroup's First Aid Box. Written instructions about its use and permission to administer it must be given.

### *CHILD PROTECTION*

As an agency working with children, our primary responsibility is for the welfare of those children. This means that Playgroup has a duty to refer to Social Services any information which arouses concerns that a child may be at risk from non-accidental injury, neglect, emotional or sexual abuse, even if those concerns are later found to be unsubstantiated. Playgroup hopes that parents understand this is a difficult and sensitive issue for all concerned but that any action taken is with good intention and has the best interests of the child at heart. In order to protect your child, we make stringent checks on any visitors. All our staff and committee are police checked.

## *TOYS*

We prefer that children do not bring toys from home. However, if they are brought we would suggest that they are not toys which can be broken or are precious, as it is necessary for children to share.

## *CLOTHING*

There is no uniform for Playgroup although obviously, as many creative activities can sometimes be messy, it is advisable to dress children accordingly. Children are always asked to wear aprons for messy activities but spills can still occur. We ask that all children wear slippers while indoors for safety reasons.

Children will be encouraged to be as independent as possible in attending to their toilet and other needs and it would be helpful if they come in clothes that they can manage themselves. However help will always be given if needed. It is a good idea to provide spare clothes on their peg, but Playgroup can provide a change of clothes.

As we play outside all year round, a warm coat, hat scarf, gloves and Wellington boots are encouraged in the cooler weather and a sun hat is essential in the warmer weather. We ask parents to apply sun protection cream before children arrive on warmer mornings.

Please name outdoor clothes and jumpers to prevent confusion. Playgroup does have T-shirts and sweatshirts with the Barton Playgroup logo on, which can be ordered at a small cost.

## *COMPLAINTS*

If anything occurs in Playgroup with which parents/carers are unhappy, please let a member of staff or a committee member know. The Complaints Procedures and a list of contact numbers are available on the Playgroup Notice Board.

## *ADMISSIONS*

For reasons of Health and Safety, Barton Playgroup requires that an admission form be filled in by the parent/carer before children begin their first session. Other aspects of our admissions procedures are stated in our Admissions Policy.