

Artisan's Kindergarten Operational Plan

1. Aims and Objectives

Artisans aims to provide an excellent and inclusive education for 2 - 5 year olds. Our primary goal is to nurture and establish each child's sense of self worth and place within a community. To equip them with the abilities to embark on a fulfilling and life long journey of discovery about themselves and the world around them, to be constantly curious and excited to learn. To be able to have a positive outlook on all experiences.

We aim to create a stimulating environment which maximizes a child's natural curiosity and desire to discover and learn more. We take our moral foundations from Christian precepts. We draw predominately from Montessori principles for this age group. Recognizing that most of our children will move on to traditional educational methods we ensure we cover the Early Years Foundation Stage and prepare our children for a happy and successful ongoing education.

We aim to offer a fully professional service to both children and their families. In order to achieve this we have an objective of using almost exclusively trained teaching staff, with a minimum of 50% fully qualified teachers, and to provide ongoing training to all staff as appropriate. We also have an objective to ensure all aspects of the customer experience are created according to detailed procedures that can be followed by all staff, giving parents and children a consistent and personal level of care.

We hope that the children in our care can learn to

- Respect and value themselves and others
- Enjoy their independence safely
- Follow dreams and expand their imagination
- Laugh and be at ease
- Express themselves successfully
- Receive and give affection
- Protect and care for themselves in mind and body
- Be proud of themselves and know others are proud of them
- Ask for help.

2. Policies and Procedures

Copies of full policies and procedures are available as individual documents.

They cover the following areas.

- Lost and uncollected children
- Staffing information
- Registration procedures for children
- Registration procedures for staff
- Curriculum areas
- Visitors record
- Fire safety procedures and records
- Administration of medicines
- Emergency medical care
- Accident records / incident record
- Ill children
- No smoking policy
- Food and drink
- Equal opportunities policy
- Policy for those with special educational needs
- Behaviour management policy
- Admissions policy
- Complaints procedures for parents and staff
- Safeguarding policy
- Policy in the event of allegations against staff
- Confidentiality policy
- Non payment policy
- Settling in procedures
- Children's Learning
- Parental Involvement
- Mobile phone policy
- Media policy
- Staff protection policy
- Security policy
- Physical restraint policy
- Bereavement policy
- Classroom etiquette

3. Use of Space

Crabtree fields Scout HQ is a brand new building, our involvement in the process from the planning stage ensured that all legal requirements were met and that additional safety precautions such as high level sockets and under floor heating so as to remove hot water pipes have been included in the building.

The main room is very spacious with large windows facing west across common land and additional skylights. This amount of natural light benefits the children's health and minimizes our use of electricity. The natural light and high ceiling height gives it a very airy feel with large amounts of natural light throughout the day. The amount of space allows the children a freedom of movement between different activities and plenty of room to accommodate quieter and busier occupations. It is set out in the Montessori learning areas, with all equipment available to all children. There is a cosy area for quiet moments. Cushions and blankets, room partitions are available should children feel tired or be taken unwell. Another area is used for role play and other imagination based activities. We also have a creative area and small world areas as well as a dressing up space and we have a nature table. The amount of room available also allows for space to be created for dance, music and drama activities where the children need a large space to express themselves.

There is a well equipped stainless steel kitchen. The kitchen can be kept securely out of bounds except for supervised activities. The kitchen is equipped with a new cooker, dishwasher and microwave as well as a fridge/ freezer. We provide all necessary utensils and toasters and kettles for the use of Artisans. The décor and hygiene standards are high with all units being newly fitted and walls newly decorated. We work with the Department for Environmental Health to ensure high standards.

There are 3 ladies toilet and sinks and two gentleman's toilets and sinks with 3 additional urinals. These all have water mixers fitted to control the temperature of the water output. Steps and trainer seats are available to the children. A separate disabled toilet is primarily used as a staff toilet and for nappy changing. Access to the toilets is visible and audible from the hall area and all on the same level.

The store area is large enough to provide space for securing equipment, staff breaks and meetings and areas for confidential discussions with parents, which can also be had in a separate meeting room if necessary.

The store area space is accessed from the hall and is for the sole use of artisans. It is locked.

The external grounds include a grassed area, a safety surface area and a tarmac area. The outer boundary is enclosed with permanent 2.1m fencing and gates. There is space to allow for gardening as one of the activities on offer to the children. The area is fully resourced to operate as an outdoor classroom including shade and rain cover.

There is a large car park and a direct footpath to the hall. The hall is fitted with security lighting and alarms.

4. Grouping the children

Each child has a designated key worker. Time is found during each child's attendance sessions to work and play with their key worker whenever possible. In this way each child has the opportunity to create a special bond with a particular staff member with whom they may then choose to spend time, share treasures or seek reassurance. The key worker is responsible, under the guidance of the fully qualified teaching staff if necessary, for monitoring the child's needs and achievements in areas of development. They will then be responsible for planning future experiences to further the child's development and self esteem. The key worker is also expected to develop a trusting relationship with parents and carers. All records and plans for individual children are overseen by a senior member of staff, who hold a full teaching qualification.

The children all share the main space. Individuals and groups are worked with by the staff during each session so that all children have some focused adult time and well as supported free play. The amount of time spent on guided activities will vary according to the child's individual needs and moods. Circle times will involve larger groups but usually between 6 and 16 children in any one circle. Children will be invited into different circles on different days. Circle times may vary in the level of their pitch, i.e. for abilities, or they may vary by content so that children are given as broad as possible a range of experiences. We also provide extended work cycle time to increase focus in preparation for circle time and extension work circle times.

The outdoor area has equipment and materials for all areas of the curriculum but 3 distinct spaces within it and will be operated as inside with different staff being responsible for it on a rotational basis.

5. Activities and Experiences

The Montessori Method

Maria Montessori lived from 1870 to 1952. She began by pioneering new ways to teach handicapped and socially deprived children in Italy. Further study, observation and experimentation proved the value of these methods in the education of all children. Many of the ideas she developed are now part of the common approach to child care and education worldwide.

The Montessori philosophy believes that a child given carefully organized exposure to experiences and possibilities will develop not only

a knowledge of the world but a way of responding to it and moving with it. The main precepts of Montessori education are

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other.
- The child possesses an unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to absorb and learn from their environment that is unlike that of an adult in both quality and capacity.
- The most important years of a child's growth are the first six years during which learning gradually becomes a conscious process.

"The child has a deep love and need for purposeful work. He works, however, not as an adult for the completion of a job, but for the sake of an activity itself. It is this activity which enables him to accomplish his most important goal: the development of himself - his mental, physical and psychological powers."

The Montessori curriculum covers the following areas: practical life; sensorial; mathematics; language; culture; art; outdoor play; grace and courtesy.

The senior teaching staff have overall responsibility for planning the curriculum. This is built around half termly or monthly projects, such as; colours, feelings, journeys, continents of the world, senses, flowers, vehicles.

Planning is done in accordance to the 6 areas of the Foundation Curriculum: Personal, Social and Emotional learning; Communication, Language and Literacy; Mathematical learning; Knowledge and Understanding of the World; Physical development; Creative Development. Alongside this we also plan for the outdoor area, role play areas. We have specific planning for ongoing creative activities and cooking as well as number and letter planning.

Each week has planned activities / circle times to cover all curriculum areas, as well as full access to all the Montessori equipment and outdoor space every day. The entire EYFS is divided into half terms over a 2 year period to ensure all its objectives are covered; this forms the basis of the weekly planning. Plans are responsive working documents that may change slightly or completely in response to the children's interests and continual monitoring of the successfulness of the plans.

6. Staffing Structure

Artisans is managed by Ruth Martin MA Oxon, BSc, QTS, who supports staff and is involved in the planning and organization. In most situations she does not form part of the staff: children ratio.

Day to day management is the responsibility of 2 qualified teachers, Ruth Rawlings and Liane Rowlett. They have managerial responsibilities within the organization and for other staff and are key workers for their own groups.

We expect to have approximately 20 members of staff when full.

We have a fully qualified cook to cover lunch and tea preparation and clearing away. We comply with the standards set by Environmental Health and have been inspected and approved by them.

Training opportunities will be given to all staff to enhance and further their abilities and qualifications.

Volunteers and students will be welcome to give their contributions after appropriate assessments have been undertaken by Ruth Martin as to their suitability. Parental involvement will be positively encouraged through structured opportunities to join in activities and celebrations of achievements, as well as regular sessions open to parents and the chance to stay for other sessions at their request.

In the event of staff sickness, Artisans will firstly call upon Ruth Martin or other suitably qualified and assessed person. If the staff numbers are unable to be met then parents will be contacted so that the number of children attending can be reduced as appropriate.

7. Staff Management

The management of all staff is ultimately the responsibility of Ruth Martin. All staff are given a formal termly appraisal by her or a member of the senior staff in the form of an individual and confidential discussion.

The senior teachers have responsibility as line managers for other staff on a daily basis; this role is primarily filled by Katie Dorney. There is a full staff meeting with written agenda every Friday afternoon. Those unable to attend meetings are required to initial each set of minutes / agendas to ensure they are kept fully up to date. All staff are required to pass on any concerns directly and immediately to Ruth. All staff are encouraged to give positive feedback to each other at all times.

All staff are given opportunities to access further training to enhance and develop their abilities and qualifications. This is primarily through Hertfordshire County Council but also through organizations such as the Pre School Learning Alliance and St John's Ambulance.

All staff are given written job descriptions detailing their roles and responsibilities. All staff are given induction training and a handbook of detailed procedures for all aspects of the day both as they relate to the child and in terms of the organizational structure of Artisans. This training is formally continued for as long as necessary for each individual, usually 6 months.

8. Feedback from Parents

Artisans recognizes that it works in partnership with Parents and Carers in the development of the children in their care.

Parents are provided with an information pack when they register their child or earlier if requested.

Artisans has a "Parent Information" board. On display are weekly menus, topic plans, weekly planning, daily learning objectives, as well as legal information, contact numbers, photos and accounts of our activities. Planning is also available online.

On a daily basis it is the responsibility of the key worker to communicate with parents. It is our aim that at the end of each session every parent will be given some positive feedback about their child's time that day. In the absence of the key worker it is the responsibility of the member of staff greeting parents at the door to fill this role group record files are available to assist this. It is also expected that the welcoming adult will check with parents at the start of each session whether the child has had any special events or experiences of note.

Parents are also be given fortnightly newsletters about the Kindergarten, during term time.

Parental involvement is positively encouraged. Each half term we hold an open sessions at the start and end of each day for the last week during which parents are invited to watch the children at work and meet each other. In the spring and Summer terms parents are given a postcard with a brief written record of their child's achievements that term. They are also offered the chance to make an appointment to speak to staff, ordinarily their child's key worker, every Autumn term. We will hold a Project Festival at the end of each project to which the Parents will be invited. Parents are also welcome to request the chance to observe their child or speak to staff at any time.

Parents will be informed if their child has behaved consistently unacceptably or if they have hurt another child.

Parents will be informed if their child has been the recipient of unacceptable behaviour without the perpetrator being named.

Where behaviour is causing concern, Parents will be consulted at an early stage and Parents support will be sought in devising and implementing any plan of action.

Volunteers, students and visitors to nursery will be made aware of behavioural expectations.

We will seek advice from and work with the Early Years SEN Team and the educational psychology team as and when necessary.

Any complaints will be formally recorded and responded to by a senior member of staff, usually Ruth Martin, within 48hrs. The confidentiality of all members of the community will be maintained at all times where possible. Artisans will inform OFSTED/DfES of any complaints against staff. The contact details for OFSTED will be available to parents in the entrance at all times.

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