



Meltham School's Out

Play, Learning and Participation Policy

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Approved by:	Meltham School's Out Committee		
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1.0 Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline how the club supports and promotes safe and quality play opportunities through following statutory guidance (Early Years Foundation Stage, 2023) and involving parents/carers.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the club manager's responsibility to:

- ensure that the statutory guidance being followed and referenced in this policy is up-to-date, and any changes are communicated to staff.
- ensure that this – and related policies and procedures – are reviewed and adjusted following any changes to statutory guidance.
- ensure that staff have read and fully understood this policy in relation to their responsibilities within the club.

It is the responsibility of club staff to:

- read, understand and follow this policy in relation to their responsibilities within the club.
- challenge, or raise concerns to the manager about this policy in terms of daily club operation and suggest adjustments for review.
- be positive role models for the children through interaction and adult-led activities.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Play

All children are entitled to play; it is intrinsic to their quality of life and an important part of how they learn and enjoy themselves. According to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023):

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”

At Meltham School’s Out we recognise the importance of play to a child’s development and follow the Overarching Principles of the EYFS:

- Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Learning and Development
- Enabling Environments

As play workers we support and facilitate play, and do not seek to control or direct it. Children are never forced to participate in play and are given the opportunity to initiate and direct the experience for themselves.

3.1.1 Supporting and Facilitating Play

Club staff support and facilitate play by:

- Providing an environment which is safe and suitable for playing in.
- Setting up the club so that activities are ready before the children arrive.
- Providing a range of equipment and activities that ensure varied play opportunities are available.
- Encouraging children to request additional or alternative equipment, and explaining to them the reason if requests cannot be fulfilled.
- Not expecting children to be occupied at all times.
- Making outdoor play available every day, unless the weather is particularly bad.
- Involving children in the planning process, to reflect their own interests and ideas.
- Planning activities that enable children to develop their natural curiosity and imagination.
- Allowing children freedom of creative expression, as appropriate.
- Only intervening when necessary, for instance reducing the risk of accident or injury, or encouraging/reinforcing appropriate social skills.
- Warning children in advance when an activity or game is due to end.

3.1.2 Play Areas and Equipment

Meltham School’s Out is fortunate to have its own purpose-built space, in which play ‘areas’, resources and equipment can remain always set up. However, this does not detract from staff continuously ensuring the highest possible standards of safety, accessibility, learning and fun.

- All indoor and outdoor play areas are checked daily before the children arrive in line with the club’s Health and Safety policy.
- The club has a toy/equipment Risk/Benefit Assessment, which outlines the resources the club has and the risk or benefit it has in terms of children’s play (EG age appropriate, safe, etc.) Children are involved in selecting additional equipment and resources for use at the club.
- The resources used at the club promote positive images of different ethnic backgrounds, religions, and abilities, in line with Fundamental British Values and the club’s Equality

Policy.

- The club has a selection of fiction and non-fiction books, suitable for all relevant age ranges.

3.2 Participation

At Meltham School's Out we believe that promoting the participation of children in the decision-making process creates a sense of partnership and benefits all members of the Meltham School's Out community.

Consulting with, and involving children helps them to develop new skills and understand how decisions are made, and shows them that their opinions are important. Club staff do this by:

- Asking questions and paying full attention to the child's response, which may be verbal, by visual aids or through body language.
- Holding group discussions.
- Gathering feedback on the club and its activities through regular questionnaires.

The degree of children's involvement in decision-making is determined by the age and maturity of each child, together with the type of the decision being made, however, the overall assumption is always that children are involved. We make sure that we act on – and provide feedback for - any consultation with the children so that they can see their input has been taken seriously. On a day-to-day basis at the club, the children have the opportunity to participate and make decisions on:

- choosing freely what type of play to engage in.
- selecting new equipment for the club.
- drawing up club rules.
- activity planning e.g. 'What do you want to do?'

3.3 Parents and Carers

At Meltham School's Out we recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that every child is happy, healthy and safe whilst in our care. We therefore aim to keep parents and carers fully informed of club updates and activities by sharing information with them via email, newsletters, social media, text message and information displayed throughout the premises. The club operates an 'open door' policy for all staff, children and parents/carers for informal discussion and feedback, as well as providing more formal opportunities for feedback via the Child Satisfaction Questionnaire (Appendix 1, section 4.1) and the Parent/Carer Satisfaction Questionnaire (Appendix 2, section 4.2).

The club actively welcomes parent/carer involvement by:

- collecting required information that helps ensure the child's safety and wellbeing whilst in the club's care.
- inviting parents/carers to help settle their children into the club (see section 3.4 for further details).
- obtaining specific parent/carer permission for things including, but not limited to applying sunscreen, applying hypoallergenic plasters, appearing on social media, etc.
- consulting fully with parents/carers to establish the care requirements for children with

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

- greeting all parents/carers when they arrive and exchanging any relevant information (EG. Accidents)
- having all members of staff wear uniforms so that children and parents/carers can easily identify them.
- making all of its policies available and accessible for parents/carers to consult whenever they would like.
- being contactable at all times via email and/or telephone and/or text message during club hours and school holidays.
- arranging discussions with parents/carers outside of club hours if necessary.
- respecting parent/carer input and opinions by responding promptly and appropriately to any feedback/complaints, in line with our Complaints Policy.

3.4 Induction for New Children

When children first join Meltham School's Out they are given the opportunity to settle in at their own pace. We encourage parents/carers to visit the premises with their children shortly before they are due to start. This gives the children the opportunity to look around the club to become more familiar with it, explore the toys and activities on offer, meet the staff (and be introduced to their Keyworker if an EYFS child) and ask any questions they may have.

For parents/carers, it is an opportunity for them to see the environment that their child/ren will be attending, meet the staff (and be introduced to their child's Keyworker if an EYFS child) and ask any questions, as well as find out more about the club's daily routine. This visit is also useful for obtaining any required information that the parent/carer has yet to complete.

At a child's first session, staff monitor and 'check in' with them regularly. Parents/carers are given an update about their child's first session. If a child seems to be taking an unusually long time to settle in, staff discuss this with the parent/carer to explore what can be done to make the transition easier.

4.0 Appendices

4.1 Meltham School's Out Child Satisfaction Questionnaire

1. Do you like the art and craft activities at the club?	  
2. Do you like the snacks and drinks at the club?	  
3. Do you like the toys and activities at the club?	  
4. Do you like playing outside at the club?	  
5. What do you think about the staff at the club?	  
6. Do you like where the club is held? (the main room, outside, toilets, etc.)	  
7. Do you like doing homework at the club?	  
8. What do you like best about the club?	
9. What do you <u>not</u> like about the club?	
10. If we could change one thing about the club to make it more enjoyable, what would it be?	

4.2 Meltham School's Out Parent/Carer Satisfaction Questionnaire

Meltham School's Out would like to know what you think about the care we offer your child, and our relationship with you.

Please could you spend a few minutes answering these questions to help us improve our service?

- 1. When you were choosing childcare, what was most important to you?**
- 2. What do you like about Meltham School's Out?**
- 3. What do you dislike about Meltham School's Out?**
- 4. Based on your experience, would you recommend Meltham School's Out to another parent?**
- 5. Do you have any concerns about the way in which we care for your child?**
- 6. How could we improve our service?**

Please circle the appropriate number according to how strongly you agree with each statement made.

Please read each statement carefully before answering.

1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree

My child is happy to attend the club	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I have made the right choice of childcare for my child	1	2	3	4	5
My child is encouraged to behave well	1	2	3	4	5
I have a good relationship with the club staff	1	2	3	4	5
Staff are approachable and willing to discuss my concerns	1	2	3	4	5
The club communicates information well	1	2	3	4	5
I am not concerned that my child is bored or unhappy at the club	1	2	3	4	5
The club is helping my child to become responsible and independent	1	2	3	4	5
The club offers a good range of play opportunities and activities	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that the quality of service reflects the fees charged	1	2	3	4	5
The club opening times meet my current childcare requirements	1	2	3	4	5
I am happy with the snacks provided by the club	1	2	3	4	5

Any other comments?