

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

### ETHOS

St Bernard's Pre-School Education Centre opened 1983 as a playgroup in the main school library. We are now in our own secure annex building within the Parish Centre enabling access to their large hall for indoor play with vehicles, scooters and bikes, footballs and a portable climbing frame.

We also have a garden in St Bernard's Primary School, enabling the children to move around freely in a bigger outdoor space; giving the children the freedom to let off steam in a secure open environment.

In Autumn 2020, we created our own direct outdoor space that children can use daily in small groups as part of their continuous learning through play activities. This includes play areas such as our mud kitchen, painting easel, sand tray area and grassed construction area. This area is securely fenced and padlocked and has direct access to the Pre School classroom. It may be small – but it certainly packs a punch!

We have a Management-Parents Committee that comprises of current staff and parent's whose child attend/attended the Pre-School. We believe in working in partnership with parents and carers for the benefit of the children.

Our focus is to provide children with a platform to learn through play-based activities, and by scaffolding their learning; we help children to engage with all the areas of the curriculum with the aim to; developing their knowledge and skills through practical activities.

Our key learning intentions are to provide children with ideas that will contribute to the development of their creative, linguistic, environmental, personal and social development; as well as to promoting their mathematical and scientific growth. Our activities provide children with ideas that extend their thinking through the provision of 'hands-on' activities; thereby enabling them to practice and experiment in a holistic and safe learning environment.

### AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Our aims are:

- To provide a child-friendly environment that is safe, caring & stimulating where each child will learn, grow and develop as an individual.
- To encourage children to develop self-confidence and self-esteem
- To promote children's social, intellectual and physical development, through play and structured activities.
- To encourage the children to respect other children and adults, and to learn tolerance, consideration and self-control.
- To regularly observe the children and record their developmental progress.
- To plan for each child's future developmental and intellectual progress.
- To continually review and evaluate our provision and resources to ensure that children are receiving quality education and make changes if necessary.
- To recognise that the children themselves do not choose to come to our setting. As such we aim to provide an environment that is welcoming and friendly which will encourage the child to return.
- To make parents/carers feel welcome and provide an atmosphere where both children and adults feel happy and comfortable.
- To work as partners with parents/carers and offer flexibility that allows each child's individual needs to be met.
- To honour parent's trust that we will nurture their child and give them quality care.

- To provide parents with regular newsletters and information about our provision and early years developments.
- To be open to parents/main carers comments, criticisms and suggestions.
- To maintain an adult/child ratio of 1:8
- To create a non-sexist and non-racist atmosphere by introducing appropriate toys books and games to encourage equal development of both sexes.
- To regularly renew our resources to provide ongoing stimulation and interest.
- To keep up-to-date with early years developments new legislation and thinking
- To liaise with other agencies and carers, such as health visitors, social workers, child minders and pre-school organisations in the interest of the individual child when necessary.
- To develop links with our local schools and community.
- To work within the guidelines of the Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education.
- To follow the guidelines and requirements of the registering bodies.
- To regularly update staff training.

### **ADMISSION POLICY:**

St. Bernard's PSEC is a Voluntary Sector Pre-school funded under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme. Criteria for admission are outlined each year on the Education Authority website for Pre-school Admissions issued by the EA online in December of the year before admission in September. The criteria for the following year can be requested from the Pre School and our Prospectus is available on our website in December. All funded pre-school provision must give priority to those children from socially disadvantaged circumstances in their final pre-school year (a child whose parent is in receipt of income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance).

St. Bernard's PSEC has its own criteria to select children down to the last available place when too many children apply. This criteria is at the discretion of the Management Committee and may change from year to year.

We aim to make the preschool accessible to all children from the local community. To accomplish this, we will:

- Advertise the existence of our pre-school in all areas of the local community and on our website
- Describe the pre-school and its practices in terms which make it clear that it welcomes all families, other relations and carers, including child-minders, and people from all cultural, ethnic religious and social groups, with or without disabilities.
- Make our equal opportunities policy widely known.
- We can provide a place for up to 52 children over two sessions (am and pm) but currently operating a morning class only of 26 children
- We accept children aged 3 years to 4 years old.
- All children must be independent toilet users – refer to toileting policy
- Children will be eligible for up to 12.5 hours per week.
- Places on the waiting list will be offered on criteria preference – refer to policy

### **Staggered Intake**

Those who are admitted to St. Bernard's PSEC will benefit from a staggered intake process which limits the 'new starts' to three/four or five each day. This provides the staff with time to dedicate to each new child which helps to ease the transition from home to pre-school for every child. The start date for each new child is mostly drawn at random but may take in factors such as Special Education Needs and is at the discretion of the group manager. See Admissions Policy for more details.

### **HOURS OF OPENING:**

Morning 8:45am/9:00am (drop off window) – 11:30am

Extended School Service: 11:30am – 1:00pm

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

Telephone: 028 90 790702

e-mail address: [stbernardspec@btconnect.com/kyliescott.stbernardspreschool@hotmail.com](mailto:stbernardspec@btconnect.com/kyliescott.stbernardspreschool@hotmail.com)

**CLASSROOM ROUTINE:**

8.45am - 9:00am	Registration and welcome
9:00am – 9:10am	Group Morning routine (Patch)
9:10am – 9:25am	Whole class activity (adult led)
9:25am – 10:40am	Free Play, Open Snack, Craft focus Activity, direct Outdoor play
10.40am – 10:50am	Tidy Up Time, Weather Reporter
10.50am – 11:25am	Adult-led whole class activities - varies between The Beat Babies/problem Solving with Crispin the Crow/Tig Tog Phonological activities/Kofi the Chimpanzee – promoting communication/Colour Monster – promoting wellbeing, music sessions, story sacks, action/number rhymes etc. Or Outdoor Garden (mostly Fridays) or Daily Mile walk
11:25am – 11.30am	Coats
11.30am	Home Time

**Routine on Tuesdays and Thursdays differ due to use of the Parish Hall. Children receive a picnic snack at the carpet area after the morning whole group adult-led activity and then spend the rest of the morning up in the hall**

**CHARGES AND FEES:**

A contribution is encouraged from each family at a cost of £150 or £50 a term and is collected at the start of the Pre School year or at the beginning of each term (3 terms in total – September, January and April). Your contribution is gratefully appreciated as it helps greatly towards the cost of running the pre-school, in the provision of snack and on occasions may be used for occasions/parties.

The contribution fee can be payable by either cash or via online banking (preferable method) directly into the Pre Schools account. The Pre School can provide details if you wish to pay via online banking at the start of the Pre School year and information is at the back of your child's Starter Pack received at Induction.

The cost of the Parish Hall – which is used on Tuesdays and Thursdays is £75 for the year or £25 per term. Payable either in cash or online banking. The Parish Hall is a valuable asset to the Pre School in rolling out our Physical Development sessions.

**REGISTRATION AND INSURANCE INFORMATION:**

Our certificate of registration to provide a day care service is certified to Donna Mulhern (Manager). We are registered for 26 children (am) and 26 children (pm) minimum staff x 4. We currently only operate a morning session as we are now providing an Extended School Service.

Our insurance company is Allianz (trading through H.A. Leslie & Co)

**ROLE OF THE PARENTS:**

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the Pre-school in the following ways:

- Parents are invited to give help where practical and possible. This help varies from year to year depending on the availability of parents. They may be needed to help in the group during family days and are welcome to come to speak with the children about their jobs or hobbies.
- Parents are encouraged to read all emails as well as the planning cycles including any 'Family Pages' which aims to keep parents in touch with what the children are doing and intend to do the

following month. Parents can help consolidate what is being achieved in pre-school to help in the learning process of their child in the home environment.

- To inform the Pre School if their child's address has change, change of contact numbers, any change to medical requirements such as allergies.
- To keep open lines of communication with the Pre School in relation to their child's needs – such as wellbeing etc.
- Representation on the Pre-school's Management Committee. The parent's role on the committee is to receive regular reports from the manager and to become involved in any discussions or matter that arises from these reports. They would also be expected to respond to inspection reports and become involved in the running of the pre-school. Also, if and when necessary, they would assist in the appointment of new staff.

## **POLICIES ON SAFEGUARDING AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT:**

Designated Child Protection Officer – Kylie Scott St Bernard's Preschool Leader

Deputy Designated Child Protection Offer – Donna Mulhern St. Bernard's Pre School Manager

- The safety of the children attending St Bernard's Pre-School Education Centre is of paramount importance. This statement is issued in addition to the pre-school policy covering SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN. There are a number of procedures in place to safeguard children from abuse or neglect; whilst children are in our care:
- All active mobile phones and cameras coming into pre-school need to be put into office. This includes all visitors and volunteers to the setting. Permission will be sought from parents on the registration form for staff to take videos and photographs to use within the setting and to use in children's learning journals, advertising and also on the pre-school website.
- We believe that children and adults flourish best in an ordered environment in which everyone knows what is expected of them and children are free to develop their play and learning without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone else. We aim to develop an atmosphere of respect for other people and property. Children will be helped to understand that certain behaviour is not acceptable or appropriate within the pre-school setting because it is either unsafe or unfriendly.
- At all times staff members will be consistent, fair and firm in their response to the children. While it is made very clear to the children that negative and unsociable behaviours are unacceptable, much more time and emphasis is placed on praise and reinforcement of positive behaviour. Such an approach aims to raise the child's self-esteem and promote self-awareness.

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

St Bernard's Pre-School Education Centre aims to provide a high quality and courteous service to all we come in contact with. Whilst we endeavour to make our provision accessible and acceptable to all, there may be instances when we do not meet these standards. We welcome any suggestions about how we may improve the group and take any complaints and concerns seriously.

- If any parent/carer should have cause for complaint they should in the first instance raise their concerns with Kylie Scott the Pre School Leader. This may be verbal or in writing.
- In the event that the nature of the complaint involves either the above staff member mentioned, the Manager Donna Mulhern should be notified firstly informally through discussion; and if the complaint remains unresolved; then formally in writing. Should the complaint be of this named person, then the Leader would be notified

- Any complaints that are still unresolved after this stage may be referred to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; (our Key Social Worker is Nuala Lavery) who are responsible for ensuring the group is complying with the National Standards for Sessional Care and providing a good quality of service. They can be contacted in the following ways, In writing to: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Early Years Services, Everton Complex, 585-587 Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT14 7GB or by Telephone: 028 95 042811.

### **HOW TO ACCESS OTHER POLICIES WITHIN THE SETTING:**

All policies are available. A set of policies are on our website for parents/main carers to avail of, if there is a policy not listed then this can be requested by email

[stbernardspsec@btconnect.com](mailto:stbernardspsec@btconnect.com)/[kyliescott.stbernardspreschool@hotmail.com](mailto:kyliescott.stbernardspreschool@hotmail.com)

### **DAILY ACTIVITIES:**

The Northern Ireland Pre-School Curriculum, and how this looks at St. Bernard's Pre-School Education Centre. Every six-eight weeks you will receive a Planner & Family Page. This Family Page will introduce our theme e.g. 'Colour'; for you to introduce your child to different areas of learning. If you would like to follow this up at home, a number of ideas are listed for you to try.

### **THE RANGE OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN CLASS:**

- Painting & Drawing
- Craft Work
- Water Play
- Sand Play
- Malleable Materials
- Junk & Collage
- Small World Play
- Puzzles and Board Games
- Floor Play
- Home Corner
- Sensory Play
- Library – quiet area
- Gardening & Outdoor Classroom
- Indoor Play – Parish Hall
- Movement 'Learn to Move' Programme/Helping Young Children with a Steady Beat
- Music, Songs, Rhymes, Instruments
- Books and Stories
- Nature & Interest Table
- Numeracy Development, Problem Solving with Crispin the Crow, musical number rhymes with the Beat Babies and play resources
- Promoting speech through puppet focused activities (Tig Tog & Kofi)
- Promoting wellbeing through 'Colour Monster'
- Promoting introduction of Phonics
- Woodwork
- Promoting Diversity & Inclusion (Media Initiative)

### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:**

Specific Needs encompasses a wide-ranging number of conditions, and the extent or severity of the condition, disability or other special need can also vary from very mild to extreme. All sorts of conditions with varying degrees of severity can be managed\* with some training, shared information with parents, professional educational and medical advisors and advance preparation including

discussion with other member children and their families, and we will endeavour to ensure that this liaison takes place to ensure that any child with any sort of special need will be getting stimulating, safe, play and care alongside the other children in the setting.

\*Should a child require continuous 1:1 support and staffing does not allow this then we may ask the child to attend on reduced time to ensure the child's needs are met (if a 1:1 cannot be supplied to us by external services).

Parents will be encouraged to be forthcoming about any difficulties which they may be aware of regarding the child's behaviour or abilities, without the fear of the child being excluded. We ask that all parents/main carers express any concerns **before** their child starts Pre School. If a Special Need has already been identified parents are usually the most knowledgeable people about their child's particular need and they will be consulted in the first instance about ways to manage the child's needs. They can also be assured that our staff will follow the necessary confidentiality procedures. If we feel that the child's needs whilst at the setting require a more 1:1 support, following discussion between staff and parents, efforts will be made to obtain support from other services.

### **DEPLOYMENT OF STAFF**

Pre School Manager: Ms Donna Mulhern

Pre School Leader: Mrs Kylie Scott

Early Years Practitioners: Mrs Jean Ho & Mrs Linzi Elliot

Substitute Staff: May McManus

### **Absence of Manager**

In the absence of the Manager, the leader will take on all responsibilities of the Manager (vice versa). If on the event that both manager and leader are absent, the Pre School would result in an Emergency Closure as staff to child ratio would not be able to be maintained.

### **THE INSPECTION ROLE OF THE BH&SCT EARLY YEARS TEAM**

The Department has published Minimum Standards for Child-minding and Day care for Children under age 12. These standards apply to providers of pre-school sessional care. The standards are a legal requirement set out in the Children (NI) Order 1995. The BH&SCT use these standards in their inspection and in assessing the quality of care provided, and take into account in determining whether service providers (St Bernard's Pre-School Education Centre) meet the regulatory requirements for provision of such services.

Each year the pre-school is inspected on one of the standards as set out in the Minimum Standards. Copies of the standards are available for download from the Department's website at [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/sqs/sqsd-standards/sqsd-standards-care-standards.htm](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/sqs/sqsd-standards/sqsd-standards-care-standards.htm) Parents will be notified when the pre-school is under inspection by BH&SCT.

During each inspection, the lead inspector has access to all records held by St Bernard's Pre-School Education Centre.