**Curriculum, Observation and Assessment Policy**

**Curriculum**

At Being Free Being Me we understand the benefits of free unstructured play and self guided learning.

These two elements allow learners to explore freely to develop imagination and creativity.

We prepare daily activities for children in line with the EYFS but these are flexible to accommodate children’s interests individually and as a group.

Within the EYFS framework there are seven areas of learning with different goals which are then split into Prime (3) and Specific (4).

- three prime areas (Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal, Social and Emotional Development)

-four specific areas (Literacy; Mathematics,Understanding the World; Expressive Arts and Design)

**Communication and Language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak/communicate and listen in a range of situations.

The outdoors environment is incredibly rich and have shown to develop children’s communication skills exceptionally well. This can be due to feelings of freedom and joy, natural light and plenty oxygen, lots of hands on experiences and a sense of adventure.

The element of a democratic ethos within children’s everyday learning will enable them to increase their participation when communicating. Children will be keen to put their ideas across and to express their likes and dislikes more strongly as they know these will have an impact on the group and everyday running.

We are aware that for children the English language is their second language. We encourage and celebrate their first language. We are a multilingual setting.

In terms of helping them to develop English we will use the following strategies:

**Simplify language at first** : using key words and small sentences until they develop further the English language and then add to this by making and encouraging more complex language structures.

**Visual aids**: use of puppets, pictures and widget.

**Focus on children’s interests** to extend communication and language.

**Community:** accessing resources from the local council to support children with EAL.

**Physical Development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their coordination, control and movement.

As part of their unstructured play children can run, climb trees, play circuits, claim rope scrambles in trees or engage in any other physical game or routine in the forest,  [moving the whole body around](https://thedoctorweighsin.com/let-your-children-play-without-rules-to-boost-their-brain-development/).

Physical activity helps children maintain a healthy weight and combats the development of diseases.

We believe in the benefits of yoga, mindfulness and meditation as part of physical and mental development and wellbeing. We will be incorporating asanas, pranayamas, mindfulness and meditation in our everyday.

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and evolve respect for others; to expand social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behavior in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.

At Being Free Being Me, children have the opportunity to feel in control by making their own set of rules and agreements through meetings and a voting system with staff.

These agreements show individuality from each learner as well as community work by interaction, agreement and cooperation.

They feel and know that their opinions count and their feelings are respected. This way, they learn to value themselves and others and to develop empathy.

Other important tools that we use with learners to provide a more democratic environment are:

* Questioning: Allow children to question things, be inquisitive and express these questions at any time.
* Daily choices list: respect their choices within activities. Students can choose daily from a range of activities. We will also promote the choice and voting of choices a week in advance at the time.
* Interaction: Include many activities that allow turn taking, sharing and collaborating and develop understanding.
* Respect the learner’s choice to say ‘no’ to activities (unless is a health and safety issue or breaks a group agreement).
* Ensure children know their rights and responsibilities
* Emotions job: help students to understand and identify different emotions within themselves and others and the consequences of these in their actions. How to ‘look inside themselves and be content with who they are or how to deal with troubling emotions.
* Lead activities for their peers with support without imposing
* Allow children problem solving as much as it is possible.
* Allow them to work on their strengths without emphasising the weaknesses

**The four specific areas**

**Literacy** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written material) to ignite their interest.

**Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

Children should have practical opportunities to explore and apply mathematical concepts within their daily learning environment.

**Understanding the World** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

**Expressive Arts and Design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design & technology.

For the development of these 7 areas, we have designed different work stations in Biggin Woods with the appropriate resources for each. These are:

* Meeting-Communication and lunch area
* Mud and building area
* Reading & writing area
* Art area
* Maths area
* Physical area
* Meditation/Me time area

While promoting child’s engagement (lead learning or structured activities) there are few things that can really help facilitators:

Adults need to be…

• Intent on listening closely to children’s ideas, suggestions and questions

• Probing children’s thinking by asking relevant and challenging questions

• Making suggestions and encouraging children to explore ideas further

The following are examples of questions adults can engage children with:

* What was the first thing you did?
* What did you notice about...?
* I wonder how / why...?
* I wonder what will happen next?
* Can you guess what...?
* What / why do you think...?
* What if...?
* What could you try next?
* Would you do anything different?
* Is there anything / anyone who might help?

**Outdoor learning**

The importance of outdoor learning has been proven by different studies and researches.

Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of wellbeing and helps all aspects of children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.

Being Free Being runs mainly outdoors and in nature.With a strong care for Health and Safety aspects, our project provides the perfect environment for the development of open ended activities, expression of imagination and creativity and a sense of freedom to learn with open spaces, natural resources and freedom of movement within activities.

**Assessment and Record Keeping**

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children’s development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations tracking learning at initial stage and every so often to make an analysis of progress.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions between educators and families take place frequently.

We use a software called Tapestry to record observations, assessments and track learning and development. Observations will be used to set children’s individual targets and to identify concerns in children’s development and learning.

We also use a non statutory guidance called ‘Development matters’. There are four themes in Development Matter that underpin the full guidance of EYFS: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development.

-Unique child: children are constantly learning, they can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

-positive relationships: support these and you will enable strong and independent children

-Enabling environments: with parents and practitioners working together. Individual needs are meet

-Learning and development: Children need to be given achievable challenges, opportunities to develop the prime and specific areas playing and enjoying. All learning at their own pace.

A tracking grid is completed at the end of every term where the practitioner will input data regarding progress made in the 7 areas of learning and development as well as in regard to the 3 characteristics of effective learning: Active Learning, Play and Explore and Development of critical thinking.

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf>

**‘Cultural capital’ , helping children to experience the awe and wonder of the world.**

At Being Free Being Me we understand that we play a vital part in boosting the chances of children in life. We work hard to allow children to access a true reflection of our multicultural society.

*“Some children arrive at an early years setting with poorer experiences than others, in their learning and play. What a setting does, through its curriculum and interactions with practitioners, potentially makes all the difference for children."*

*“What resources have you chosen for your children and why? What are you expecting children to learn with the experiences you are giving them? It is the role of the setting to ensure that children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning.”*

Gill Jones (Ofsted’s Early Education Deputy Director)

These are some of the ways we promote the term Cultural Capital.

-Children being equally exposed to every good that there is in our community

-Having a voice and a vote

-Allowing them to express themselves through their interests, connect with their families

-Allowing them to connect with the natural environment and the issues that surround it.

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| This policy was adopted by: Maria Souto Varela and Catia Lopes | Date: January 2020 |
| To be reviewed: January 2021 | Signed: Maria Souto Varela and Catia Lopes |