St Francis’ Nursery Unit
The Arts Policy

We the staff of St Francis’ Nursery Unit, recognise that being creative is about making new things, experimenting, taking risks, coming up with and expressing new ideas, solving problems and coping with uncertainty. Creative play not only fosters new skills but also assists with personal, social and emotional development, promotes aesthetic awareness and is an avenue for self expression.

We recognise that The Arts entails the children exploring and expressing their feelings and thoughts through a variety of activities:

- Art and design
- Music
- Movement and dance
- Dramatic and role play activities

It is the role of the adult in our setting to:

- Give the children encouragement and stimulating support to express their ideas, extend their creativity and develop original ideas.
- Value and encourage the children’s natural curiosity and vivid imaginations.
- Help the children to take risks, to have confidence to try things, and to accept that their ideas may not necessarily work.
- Help them to observe, listen and talk about their experiences.
- Teach them to appreciate their own work and that of others.
- Help the children to discover and experience the joy of achievement and develop self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Emphasise the process, the enjoyment and learning that is taking place, rather than the “nice” end product.
- Plan topic related activities and so enhance topic based learning, such as making an Owl and specific skills such as pasting. Children are free to choose to do these activities or not. However if a child needs practise in a specific skill or area he/she will be encouraged to this activity.
- Celebrate the uniqueness of each child’s work.

Art and Design Activities

Art and design are a natural means of communication and learning for young children. It helps them to think through ideas, to develop visual, spatial and tactile awareness and to develop investigative and manipulative skills.
Consequently in our setting we provide:

- Natural and man-made materials for exploration.
- Opportunities to experiment with colour, shape, pattern and texture.
- Creative Areas indoors and out which provide accessible good quality materials, media and tools and which allow the children to work independently, choose their activities and implement their own ideas.
- Numerous display areas for work to be viewed and appreciated by children and adults.
- Materials for “temporary art”, such as chestnuts.

We also give the children opportunities to:

**Paint and Draw**

- Paint & draw at vertical and horizontal levels, that is on the easels, wall, table and floor, both indoors and out. They are provided with a wide range of materials of different colours, shapes, texture and sizes.
- Paint and draw pictures from direct observation using objects as stimulus, such as flowers.
- Paint on other surfaces such as fabric, Perspex, glass, clay.
- Experiment with various media and tools such as pains, pencils, crayons, markers, chalk, charcoal, graphite, pastels, aqua pastels, white boards and markers, markers and acetates, brushes, fingers, sponges, combs.
- Explore colours and textures, for example mixing paints, using paint with other resources added such as glitter.
- Create pictures by printing, pasting, blow painting, bubble painting, using marbling ink, using pot scours, using sticks, using sponges etc.

**Use Paper, Card, Wood, Fabrics and Scrap Materials**

- Explore a wide range of materials of different textures.
- Make pictures and models using a range of recycled and general art materials, such as glitter, feathers and wool.
- Investigate ways of joining things together using a variety of materials such as glue, glue sticks, tape, staples, paper clips, elastic bands, sting, cord, wool.
- Use tools such as scissors, tape dispensers, staplers, and punchers.

**Use Malleable Materials**

- Work with and explore the properties of clay, dough, soft stuff and plasticine - Squeezing, poking, flattening, pinching, rolling and modelling.
- Use a variety of tools and natural materials to make models and patterns.
- Use materials such as colour, glitter, scent, rice to enhance their work.

**Music Activities**

In our setting, music is an integral part of the children’s daily experience and we provide a variety of musical activities that complement and extend other areas of the pre-school curriculum. We recognise that music provides children with opportunities to explore feelings and express themselves in ways that support or go beyond verbal communication. Through music children develop their creativity, self-confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment. It helps them to distinguish between sounds and to respond to beat and rhythm. Within our setting we:

- Teach the children lots of topic based songs and rhymes encouraging them to join in.
- Play a variety of music, such as classical and Irish traditional music, encouraging the children to respond to the beat of the music, using appropriate actions such as clapping, marching, swaying, and nodding.
- Play various types music encouraging the children to respond freely by moving expressively.
- Encourage the children to listen for loud/quiet, high/low sounds in music and those made by different instruments.
- Provide sound lotto games encouraging the children to recognise sounds and to become aware of sounds when outside.
- Explore ways of making sounds using everyday objects like simple percussion and other musical instruments.
- Encourage the children to make and use their own simple musical instruments.
- Encourage the children to use their bodies to make music, such as clapping, stamping & shuffling feet.
- Do “Music Express” activities once a week.

**Drama Activities**

Through drama children can express their feelings and imagination in verbal and non-verbal ways. Through role play, dance and mime they enter different worlds as they recreate and invent situations at home, in school, in the community and in their imagination. By taking part in such activities the children develop personally, socially and emotionally. They develop confidence and self-esteem. These activities are also an excellent avenue for developing speech, language and literacy skills. It is extremely that adults involve themselves sensitively in these activities.
Within our setting we aim to give the children opportunities to:

- Engage the children in group play.
- Engage in self-initiated role play and topic based role play, such as the Nativity Stable, assuming and sustaining roles.
- Use a variety of topic based dressing up clothes and props to enhance their play.
- See the adults in roles in their dramatic play, such as a patient in the hospital.
- Explore the use of puppets, soft toys and small world resources when creating their own and topic based scenarios and stories or expressing their own ideas.

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