

Innsworth Preschool Appropriate Clothing Policy

Last Updated: 1st January 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Overview: This policy outlines the essential clothing and footwear requirements for all children attending Innsworth Preschool.

1.2 Objective: Its purpose is to ensure that every child is dressed safely, comfortably, and practically for a full and active day of learning and play. Adherence to this policy is a key part of our parent partnership and is necessary to meet our statutory duties for health, safety, and welfare.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

2.1 Compliance: This policy is guided by our duties under the following key legislation and guidance:

- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): Safeguarding and Welfare requirements regarding health, safety, and supervision for play.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: Our duty to identify and mitigate risks to children and staff.
- The Children Act 2004: Our duty to promote the welfare of all children.

3. Liability for Damage (The "Messy Play" Clause)

3.1 Approach: We are an active, outdoor-focused setting that champions "messy play" as a fundamental part of early years learning. Children will access paint, glue, mud, water, and the Farm School environment daily.

3.2 No Liability: We are not responsible for staining, scuffs, tears or normal wear and tear arising from ordinary preschool activities, including messy play and outdoor learning.

3.3 Parental Choice: Parents are strongly advised to dress children in older, inexpensive clothing. If a child arrives in expensive or "designer" clothing, they do so entirely at the parent's risk.

3.4 Complaints: We will not accept claims for compensation for staining or normal wear and tear arising from ordinary preschool activities. This does not affect any legal rights a parent may have where loss/damage is caused by our negligence.

4. Essential Clothing Requirements

4.1 Weather-Appropriate Clothing & Sun Safety: To meet our duties under the EYFS, the following requirements are non-negotiable:

- **Cold/Wet:** Parents must provide a warm, waterproof coat, hat, and gloves.
- **Sunny/Hot:** Parents must provide a sun hat and clothing that covers the shoulders (e.g. t-shirts, not strappy tops) to prevent sunburn.
- **Sun Cream:** Parents must apply sun cream before arrival. For children attending long sessions, we will reapply using the setting-approved hypoallergenic sun cream where written consent is in place. If a parent requires an alternative due to allergy/medical need, it must be provided sealed and agreed in writing in advance (IHCP where relevant). If consent/product is not in place, the child may be restricted from high-exposure outdoor activities for safety.

4.2 Toilet Independence (Practicality): Clothing must support the child's independence.

- **Requirement:** To support independence and reduce accidents, children who are toilet learning should wear easy clothing (elasticated waist).
- **Intervention:** If clothing prevents a child from toileting independently and this is causing repeated accidents/distress, we may require an immediate change into suitable spare clothing.
- **Adjustments:** Where a child has SEND/disability affecting dressing/toileting, we will consider reasonable adjustments and agree a practical plan.
- **Sleepwear:** Pyjamas or other sleepwear are not permitted. This is necessary for hygiene, safeguarding, and readiness for active play.

4.3 Safeguarding Hazards: To mitigate foreseeable risks:

- **Cords:** Clothing with long cords (especially around the hood or neck) is **not permitted** due to strangulation risk.
- **Small Parts:** Items with small, loosely attached decorative parts (e.g. beads, sequins) that could become a choking hazard are **not permitted**.

4.4 Spare Clothes Requirement:

- **Storage:** Each child must have a small, named 'Spare Clothes Pouch' (maximum A4 size) kept at the setting in a designated storage box/tray. Large backpacks/bags are not permitted.
- **Content:** The pouch must contain at least one full change of clothes, including socks and underwear (and nappies/pull-ups/wipes if applicable).
- **Space Constraints:** We cannot store lunch bags or large personal bags on-site due to space, hygiene and fire safety controls.
- **Escalation:** Repeated failure to provide adequate spares (causing hygiene issues or reliance on setting stock) will be addressed via verbal reminder, written notice, or formal review. If we must use setting spare clothing due to insufficient spares, we may charge a cost-recovery laundry/replacement fee in line with our published Fees Schedule.

4.5 Jewellery: Necklaces, bracelets, rings and dangling earrings are not permitted. If ears are pierced, small stud earrings are permitted but must be removed by the parent for Farm School days or where risk assessment requires.

5. Footwear Standards

5.1 General Footwear (Year-Round): For safety during active play, footwear must be comfortable, well-fitting, and secure.

- **Mandatory:** Fully enclosed shoes (such as trainers or school shoes with covered toes) must be worn year-round.
- **Prohibited:** Open-toed sandals, flip-flops, Crocs (including variants with heel straps), heeled shoes, or backless shoes are **not permitted**. This is due to slips, trips, toe injuries and hygiene risks during outdoor/farm activity. This applies even in hot weather.
- **Medical Exception:** Specific medical footwear prescribed by a healthcare professional is permitted (evidence may be requested).

5.2 Farm School Footwear (Welly Boots): To access our Farm School and outdoor enhancements safely:

- **Requirement:** Every child must have a pair of named Wellington boots ("wellies") kept permanently at the setting.
- **Storage:** Wellies are stored in a named welly rack/box area. They must be clean enough for storage (excess mud removed at home).
- **Missing Boots:** If a child does not have wellies available on a Farm School day, they will be **unable to access the Farm School area** and restricted to indoor/hard-standing play for their own safety. Alternative activities will be provided.
- **Escalation:** Repeated failure to provide wellies may lead to a formal safety review and/or the parent being required to supply a second pair to keep on site.

6. Essential Medical and Developmental Aids

6.1 Access: To ensure full access to the curriculum, children who require specific aids (prescription glasses, hearing aids, mobility equipment) must bring them to every session.

6.2 Refusal: If a required aid/equipment is missing, we will assess whether we can keep the child safe and support access to the curriculum without it. Where risk cannot be safely managed (or meaningful access is not possible), we may require the parent to bring the item promptly and/or agree a temporary restriction to certain activities. Persistent failure to provide essential aids may trigger a formal review of the placement.

7. Labelling of All Items

7.1 Requirement: To prevent loss and distress, it is a requirement that **every single item** of clothing and belonging is clearly and permanently labelled with the child's full name.

- **Liability:** The preschool cannot be held responsible for any lost, unnamed items.
- **Lost Property:** Unnamed items will be placed in Lost Property for 14 days and then donated/disposed of. We do not conduct extended searches for unnamed items.

8. Consequences of Non-Compliance

8.1 Procedure:

- **Immediate Change:** If a child arrives in unsafe clothing (e.g. flip-flops, cords), staff will request an immediate change using the child's spare clothes.
- **Contact:** If no suitable alternative is available, parents will be contacted and required to bring an appropriate item.
- **Refusal of Entry:** We reserve the right to refuse entry if a child's clothing poses a direct health or safety risk. Decisions are recorded immediately with the rationale.
- **Formal Review:** Persistent failure to comply may result in a formal review of the child's place. This review is safety-based, not punitive.

9. Parental Responsibility & Cultural Items

9.1 Responsibility: It is the parent's sole responsibility to ensure their child is dressed appropriately each day.

9.2 Cultural/Religious Items: We will consider reasonable adjustments for cultural or personal items on a case-by-case basis. Where possible, alternative safe adjustments will be explored.

- **Safety:** However, where items present a health or safety risk, adjustments may be limited or refused to ensure welfare. Any head coverings must be secured without pins and must not create a strangulation or snag hazard. We may require safer alternatives (e.g. pull-on styles) following risk assessment.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 Review: This policy is reviewed annually or in response to seasonal needs or incident trends.

