



# playscheme information 2018

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 PlayMidlothian

 @MidlothianPlay

Hello!

You have this pack because you've come into contact with Play Midlothian's holiday playschemes. We're really glad to have your child at playscheme, and we hope they enjoy themselves, get to try new things and gain confidence.

The information in this pack is about Play Midlothian as an organisation, and about our playschemes themselves. We hope this information will be useful to you and answer all your questions, but if not, you can contact us using the details on the front page.

### **Play Midlothian's aims**

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Play Midlothian works to improve and increase children's opportunity to play, because we know how important play is for their health, wellbeing and development. It is important for children's lives in the here and now, as well as for their future life chances.

To achieve this goal we work with a wide range of people and organisations. All children need and benefit from play, with their friends, with their parents/carers (especially in the early years) and with skilled playworkers when children need support – and alone when preferred. Play can be particularly beneficial for children who require extra support, helping to mitigate difficulties they may be experiencing.

Playing is something children have a right to do. This right is protected in article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international agreement that the UK has signed up to:

'State Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.'

### **Strategic goals**

Play Midlothian's mission is to strongly influence, support and promote play and the child's right to play in Midlothian – and when relevant, beyond.

We have two overarching strategic aims to help the team achieve its goals for children in Midlothian:

- To improve and increase opportunities for play in Midlothian, and where relevant, beyond.
- To increase awareness and understanding of play and the child's right to play in Midlothian and, where relevant, beyond.

Some of our projects are for all, and some are targeted where we feel we can make the most difference. We provide both services for children (including holiday playschemes) and

for other groups working with children (including training, an annual conference and practical support).

## **Governance – how Play Midlothian is run**

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Play Midlothian is governed by a Board of Trustees, all of whom are volunteers. The Board provides strategic direction and high level decision making to ensure that Play Midlothian does its best to achieve its aims.

Play Midlothian has several members of staff, including administration, development and playwork staff who deliver and develop a variety of projects. This team does the front-line delivery work to realise our strategic goals.

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee of Play Midlothian, and helping us to secure the future of play in Midlothian, please get in touch. Even if you're not quite sure, we're happy to answer questions and give you an idea of what would be involved.

## **Playscheme**

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We run holiday playschemes in Gorebridge, Mayfield and Woodburn, in the Easter and Summer holidays. Sessions last two hours, and are open to children aged 5 – 12 years old. The staff are called playworkers, and are experienced in providing stimulating and fun play opportunities.

Our playschemes offer 'free play' opportunities. This means we provide a wide variety of resources and allow children to choose how they want to play with them. We **don't** offer structured activities or whole group activities – unless the children ask for it! However, we might set things up in an interesting way, in response to a particular way of playing we've observed, or in a way that introduces something new. Playworkers won't get involved in play unless they're invited by children, and generally try to interfere as little as possible.

Staff closely monitor play to make sure it stays safe, and will intervene to prevent anyone getting hurt. However, we strongly believe that children need to experience risk in their play. It is our experience that children do not take more risks than they are comfortable with, and that being able to experience risk in a relatively safe environment is a really good way of learning how to deal with risks and challenges.

## **How playscheme works**

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### **Registration**

At a child's first playscheme session, whoever brings them will complete a registration form which collects relevant information about the child, and emergency contact information. We also ask for permission for a few different things, including to take photos, supply suncream, and whether the child is allowed to walk home alone.

## **Play**

Once they're registered, parents etc are sent away, and children are free to play as they like for two hours. Lots of the things we offer have a high chance of creating mess. This isn't a problem for us – and most children really enjoy it! But it does mean that children should wear clothes it's okay to get messy in. Children don't enjoy their play as much if they're worried about keeping clean.

## **Snack**

We provide snack half way through the session which includes juice, crackers, cheese, fruit and vegetables. Some playschemes bring everyone together to have snack at the same time, and some provide a buffet style snack, where children can come when they want to. Juice and water is available throughout the session for anyone who needs or wants it.

## **Going home**

Towards the end of the session, children will be encouraged to help tidy up resources. At the very end, children who have the relevant permission are allowed to walk home alone. Children who are to be collected will be allowed to go home with their parent or guardian. If your child is to be collected by someone else, please let us know. Anyone who collects a child must sign the sign-out sheet. This is a double check that children have left the playscheme safely.

## Other useful information

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### Additional Support Needs

Our playschemes are open to everyone. If your child needs some extra help to get the most out of our playschemes, please talk to us as soon as you can. This means we have time to organise anything necessary. We're also happy to discuss parents, carers or befrienders attending the sessions to provide extra support, where this is appropriate.

### Comments

We really like to hear what you think about Play Midlothian, and the services we provide, whether it's good or critical. We will ask you to fill in a questionnaire at the end of the playscheme about what you thought of it in general, but you can give us feedback any time, either by talking to our staff or contacting us using the methods detailed.

We do our best to get everything right, but if we don't, and talking to our staff can't sort it out, you can follow our formal complaints procedure:

- Make your complaint in writing (which could be by email or post) to the Development Manager.
- If your complaint is in relation to the Development Manager, please submit your complaint to the Chairperson of the Management Committee c/o the Play Midlothian office and mark it 'private and confidential'.
- You must provide information about the nature of the complaint, and how you would ideally like the complaint to be resolved. Play Midlothian is not obliged to resolve the complaint in this way.
- Play Midlothian will acknowledge your complaint in writing (which could be by email or post) within five working days of receiving your complaint.
- Your complaint will be investigated by the Development Manager, or if about the Development Manager by the Chairperson, or if about the Chairperson by the Vice-Chairperson.
- The relevant person will write to you to inform you of the result of the investigation within 21 working days of receiving your complaint.
- If you are dissatisfied with the results, you have the right to put your case directly to the Management Committee in writing – this can be sent c/o of the Play Midlothian office marked 'private and confidential'.

### When dealing with complaints, Play Midlothian will adhere to the following principles:

- Play Midlothian will take all complaints seriously.
- Play Midlothian will treat all people making complaints equally.
- If making a complaint, you are entitled to seek external assistance to advocate on your behalf.
- Play Midlothian will not investigate anonymous complaints. However, you can request confidentiality and names will therefore not be disclosed in investigating complaints.
- Abusive or offensive comments are not regarded as complaints and will not be accepted as complaints.
- Complaints will be viewed with an open mind and will be investigated without prejudice.
- We will endeavour to respond to complaints quickly and thoroughly.
- Where appropriate, we will make changes to our practice.