

Innsworth Preschool Appropriate Clothing Policy

Last Updated: 1st January 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

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

1.2 Objective: Its purpose is to ensure that every child arrives dressed safely, appropriately, comfortably, and practically for a full and active day of learning, play, outdoor access, and care. Adherence to this policy is an important part of our parent partnership and is necessary to support health, safety, hygiene, dignity, safeguarding, and school readiness.

1.3 Scope: This policy applies to all children attending the setting and should be read alongside the Arrival and Departure Policy, Toileting Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Health and Safety Policy, and any relevant Individual Healthcare Plan or risk assessment.

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 relating to children's safety, supervision, suitable premises and equipment, and promoting children's welfare.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: our duty to identify and reduce foreseeable risks to children, staff, and visitors.
- The Children Act 2004: our duty to promote and safeguard children's welfare.
- The Equality Act 2010: our duty to consider reasonable adjustments where a child has a disability or relevant medical need.

3. Liability for Damage

3.1 Approach: We are an active, outdoor-focused setting that values messy play, outdoor learning, physical play, seasonal activities, and farm-based experiences as an important part of early years learning.

3.2 Ordinary Wear and Tear: Children will regularly access paint, glue, mud, water, sensory play, gardening, and outdoor environments. We are not responsible for staining, scuffs, tears, or normal wear and tear arising from ordinary preschool activities.

3.3 Parental Choice: Parents are strongly advised to dress children in practical, older, inexpensive clothing suitable for active early years provision. If a child arrives in expensive, delicate, or special occasion clothing, they do so 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 or damage is caused by our negligence.

4. Essential Clothing Requirements

4.1 Standard of Dress on Arrival:

- Children must arrive fully dressed and ready for the day.
- Children must arrive in complete daywear appropriate to the weather, season, and planned activities.
- Children must arrive wearing underwear or an appropriate nappy or pull-up, unless a medical or SEND-related arrangement has been agreed in writing.
- Children must not arrive in pyjamas, nightwear, dressing gowns, onesies, or other sleepwear.
- Children must not arrive in fancy dress, role-play costumes, or character outfits unless the setting has specifically authorised this for a named event. If costumes are authorised for an event, children must still be appropriately dressed underneath for warmth, dignity, toileting, and safe participation.
- Children must arrive wearing clothes that fit properly and are put on correctly.
- Clothing that is back to front, inside out, excessively loose, excessively tight, falling, or otherwise unsuitable may be treated as non-compliant where it affects safety, dignity, hygiene, comfort, or access to the day.

4.2 Weather-Appropriate Clothing:

- Children must arrive dressed appropriately for the actual weather and season, not only the time of year.
- Cold or wet weather: children must have suitable warm clothing, including a coat. Where conditions require it, this also includes full-length clothing and may include hats and gloves.
- Summer rain: if it is raining, children must still arrive with a suitable coat or waterproof outer layer.
- Cold but dry days: children must still arrive in warm, season-appropriate clothing. Clear weather does not remove the need for a coat or suitable coverage in colder months.
- Autumn and winter: clothing such as very light summer wear, short sleeves without suitable layering, very short outfits, or dresses without appropriate warm layers may be treated as unsuitable where they do not protect the child properly from the season or planned outdoor access.
- Sunny or hot weather: parents must provide a sun hat and clothing that covers the shoulders, for example a T-shirt rather than strappy tops, to reduce sun exposure.
- Sun cream: parents must apply sun cream before arrival. For children attending longer 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 or medical need, it must be provided sealed and agreed in writing in advance, with an IHCP where relevant. If suitable sun protection is not in place, the child may be restricted from high-exposure outdoor activities for safety.

4.3 Practicality, Independence, and School Readiness:

- Clothing must support children to participate safely and independently in preschool life.
- Children should arrive dressed for learning, play, outdoor access, toileting, and movement.
- Children who are toilet learning should wear practical clothing that supports independence, such as elasticated waists and easy-fastening items.

- We are not able to routinely dress children on arrival because a child was brought in incomplete clothing, unsuitable clothing, or clothing that has been put on incorrectly.
- A child's reluctance to get dressed, a parent being short of time, or a child attempting to dress themselves does not remove the parent's responsibility to ensure the child arrives appropriately dressed, properly fastened, and suitable for the weather, hygiene needs, toileting, and the activities of the day.
- This expectation forms part of preparing children for school and for the routines of the day.

4.4 Safeguarding and Hygiene Hazards: To reduce foreseeable risks:

- Clothing with long cords, drawstrings, or similar hazards, especially around the hood, neck, or waist, is not permitted due to strangulation and snagging risk.
- Items with small, loose, detachable, or breakable decorative parts, for example beads, sequins, gems, or novelty accessories, are not permitted where they create a choking or injury risk.
- Sleepwear, onesies, and costume-type outfits are not permitted for ordinary attendance because they are not suitable for active play, toileting, hygiene, or school-readiness routines.

4.5 Spare Clothes Requirement:

- Each child must have a small, named spare clothes pouch, maximum A4 size, kept at the setting in the designated storage area. Large bags and backpacks are not permitted.
- The pouch must contain at least one full change of clothes, including socks and underwear, and nappies, pull-ups, and wipes where applicable.
- We cannot store lunch bags or large personal bags on site due to space, hygiene, and fire safety controls.
- Repeated failure to provide suitable spare clothes may be addressed through reminder, written notice, or formal review. If we must use setting spare clothing because adequate spares were not provided, we may apply a reasonable laundry or replacement charge in line with the published Fees Schedule.

4.6 Jewellery:

- Necklaces, bracelets, rings, and dangling earrings are not permitted.
- If ears are pierced, only small plain studs are permitted, and they may need to be removed by the parent for Farm School days or where a risk assessment requires it.

5. Footwear Standards

5.1 Main Footwear for Daily Wear:

- For safety during active play, daily footwear must be practical, secure, and properly fitted.
- Children must arrive wearing fully enclosed, properly fitting shoes, such as trainers or school shoes with covered toes and heels.
- Shoes must be the child's main day footwear and must be suitable for indoor and outdoor movement.
- Shoes must not have wheels, raised heels, open toes, open backs, or loose fastenings.
- Open-toed sandals, flip-flops, backless shoes, novelty shoes, and high heeled shoes are not permitted.
- Socks should be worn unless a specific medical reason has been agreed.

- Wellington boots are not acceptable as a child's main daily footwear. They are for specific outdoor use only unless otherwise agreed for exceptional weather or a specific operational instruction from the setting.
- Specific medical footwear prescribed by a healthcare professional is permitted and may require evidence or an agreed risk assessment.

6. Essential Medical and Developmental Aids

6.1 Access: To ensure safe access to the curriculum and daily routines, children who require specific aids, for example prescription glasses, hearing aids, or mobility equipment, must bring them to every session.

6.2 Missing Items: If a required aid or item of equipment is missing, we will assess whether we can keep the child safe and support meaningful participation without it. Where risk cannot be managed safely, 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: All clothing, footwear, and personal belongings must be clearly and permanently labelled with the child's full name.

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

8. Consequences of Non-Compliance

8.1 Immediate Response:

- If a child arrives in unsafe, unsuitable, incomplete, or non-compliant clothing or footwear, staff may require an immediate remedy before the child can safely access the session.
- Where a child arrives dressed in a way that is incomplete, inappropriate for the weather, impractical for toileting, or otherwise unsuitable for safe participation, the setting may require the issue to be corrected before accepting handover or before the child joins normal activities.
- This may include changing the child into suitable spare clothes, requiring the parent to bring suitable clothing or footwear, or restricting access to certain activities until the issue is resolved.
- If no suitable alternative is available, parents may be contacted and required to return promptly with appropriate items.

8.2 Refusal of Entry or Restricted Attendance:

- We reserve the right to refuse entry, delay handover, or restrict participation where a child's clothing or footwear presents a direct health, hygiene, dignity, safeguarding, or safety risk.
- Any such decision will be recorded with the rationale and will be based on welfare, not punishment.

8.3 Persistent Non-Compliance:

Repeated failure to send a child appropriately dressed may result in a formal review of the child's place or the parent partnership, particularly where it affects safety, dignity, hygiene, toileting, or access to the curriculum.

9. Parental Responsibility and Reasonable Adjustments

9.1 Parental Responsibility: It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child arrives each day fully dressed, appropriately dressed, and ready for preschool.

9.2 Reasonable Adjustments: We will consider reasonable adjustments where a child has a disability, SEND, sensory need, continence issue, or medical condition affecting clothing, dressing, footwear, or tolerance of garments. Any agreed adjustment will be recorded in a practical plan, risk assessment, or relevant healthcare documentation.

9.3 Cultural or Religious Items: We will consider cultural or religious clothing and personal items on a case-by-case basis and will explore safer alternatives where needed.

- Where an item presents a health or safety risk, adjustments may be limited or adapted to ensure welfare.
- Head coverings must be secured safely and must not create a strangulation, snagging, or other avoidable risk. Safer alternatives may be required following risk assessment.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 Review: This policy is reviewed annually, in response to seasonal needs, incident trends, or operational issues, and whenever changes are needed to reflect current practice or legal requirements.

