



Policy title	Early Years Policy
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Churchwood we are proud to offer an Early Years Village which is a free-flow approach to education where children are fully supported through their journey. This begins when the children join us from two years old within our Nursery, through to the September before they turn 5 when they move bases to the Reception classroom. Children continue to share the free-flow space with the nursery aged children until they move on from the EYFS Village into Year one.

2. Aims of the EYFS

- 2.1. We believe The Foundation Stage is a unique phase in a child's life and is crucial to successful future learning.
- 2.2. Through this policy we aim to ensure a consistent approach where parents, carers, teachers and practitioners work together to give children the best possible start. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework which sets standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well; and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes high quality teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school; and stipulates the broad range of knowledge and skills that should be offered within the foundation for a good future progress through their academic life. All children within the Churchwood EYFS Village work within this framework. Which includes; following children's interests, key events that promote British Values and enrichment educational visits to develop understanding and learning. It details four key principles which shape our practice;



3. A Unique Child:

3.1. We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We understand that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates and join us on their own learning path. All children are included and valued equally adapting to meet individual needs.

4. Settling in and Transition

4.1 In our nursery we offer a home visit and "Settling in Sessions" where children get to know their Key Person, explore the new environment and meet other children. Parents/carers share important information around needs, interests and routines. This is achieved both through discussion and completing the 'Settling In' paperwork. In a similar way transitions between age phases are carefully planned, supported with social and photograph stories and enhanced to meet individual needs. When children join the Nursery they have a series of settling in sessions with parents in the Nursery environment to gradually settle them. When they reach Reception age there are



Settling in sessions in June and September to get to know the child and their families before gradually staggering their start to Reception with small group sessions building up to the full class settling together.

5. Inclusion in the Foundation Stage/Special Educational Needs and Disability

- 5.1 All children and their families are valued at Churchwood. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their full potential and planning is in response to the observed needs of all groups and abilities.
- 5.2 Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and further support can be accessed through the Nursery Teacher and named EYFS SENDCO, Academy SENDCO and our Speech and Language Therapy team.
- 5.3 In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that they make good progress from their starting points. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In order to accommodate the individual's particular learning style provision will be planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that the various experiences can be accessed by all in the spirit of inclusion.
- 5.4 We meet the needs of all our children through:
 - I. Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
 - II. Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
 - III. Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
 - IV. Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
 - V. Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
 - VI. Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
 - VII. Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.



6. Pupil Premium

- 6.1 We ensure that we quickly identify children who are entitled to both Pupil Premium and Early Years Pupil Premium. Through baseline assessment we ascertain in which areas children are attaining and how we can further support through resources, expertise or intervention. Progress is rigorously monitored and tracked. See also SEND Local Offer.

7. Safeguarding and Welfare

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

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- 7.1 At Churchwood all children have the right to feel and be safe. The safety of our children is paramount. We encourage the children to take risks in a safe learning environment by helping them to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children within the Early Years. We ensure that our current practice and provision complies with the welfare requirements as stated in the Ofsted Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

- 7.2 Our team works collaboratively to;

- i. Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- ii. Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- iii. Manage behavior effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
- iv. Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- v. Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- vi. Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

See University of Brighton Academies Trust [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2023-24](#).

8 Positive Relationships

- 8.1 At Churchwood we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Families are given clear guidance on the staff that they will meet and their role in the setting.

9. Key Persons

- 9.1 To enable children to make secure attachments to Practitioners and to develop positive relationships, we operate a Co-Key Person system in the Nursery, in Reception classes,



the Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants also take on this role. This allows two practitioners to work in partnership to implement an effective Key Person system which ensures strong relationships with high quality communication and support through the range of attendance patterns.

10. Parents as Partners

- 10.1.1 We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.
- 10.2 We encourage parents/carers through:
- i. Comprehensive settling in and transition programmes including drop in sessions at transition points
 - ii. Arranging a range of activities such as special occasion celebrations and 'Stay and Play' sessions throughout the year that encourage collaboration
 - iii. Inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
 - iv. Providing drop in sessions where the teacher, parents/carers and child can meet before they start school
 - v. Having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents/carers to become settled and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
 - vi. Arranging for children to have a staggered start to school, over the first two weeks so that the teacher can welcome each child individually to our Academy;
 - vii. Providing parents/carers and opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "WOW's" on to Class Dojo which inform planning and provision and Topic Starter discussions to establish previous learning;
 - viii. By providing a quiet and confidential area where parents/carers are able to discuss any concerns between children, the academy and parents/carers;
 - ix. Encouraging parents/carers to attend workshops around the curriculum and supporting at home.
 - x. Sharing Curriculum updates on Class Dojo that cover aspects that we will teach during that term, offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents/carers.
 - xi. Weekly 'parent updates' on Class Dojo, letters via Parent Pay and text message reminders to keep parents/carers regularly informed of learning and events.
 - xii. Inviting parents to Nursery Stay and Play activity afternoon as an informal opportunity to talk and look at Class Dojo child portfolio.

11 Enabling Environments

- 11.1 We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up to provide development within all area.

12 Free flow

12.1 We operate a free flow approach which includes indoor and outdoor spaces and when possible across the age phases. In this way children can access a range of self-initiated challenges alongside structured adult led learning experiences. Learning spaces are clearly defined and resources are easily accessible so that children can develop as independent learners by following their own schemas and fascinations. We recognise the importance of open-ended experiences to promote purposeful and challenging play. Practitioners observe and extend this play as appropriate, using inspiring language to promote Sustained Shared Thinking. They further use these observations to enhance provision and extend individual learning.

13 Forest Schools

13.1 The EYFS Forest School Teacher plans and leads a programme currently for children aged two and upwards in woodland attached to the Academy. All children get the opportunity to experience a program of Forest School sessions during their time in the EYFS and this continues throughout the academy. Children have many outdoor learning with experiences of visiting the woods and exploring the different environments we have such as the sensory garden and shared space.

14 Learning and Development

14.1 We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. At Churchwood we understand that young children achieve well when learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning. Learning is often play based with increasing challenge and expectations as a child develops.

15 Curriculum and Educational Programmes

15.1 There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are “prime areas,” and four “specific areas.”

15.2 The prime areas are

- i. Communication and language
- ii. Physical development
- iii. Personal, social and emotional development.

15.3 The specific areas are

- i. Literacy
- ii. Mathematics
- iii. Understanding of the world
- iv. Expressive arts and design



15.4 The Prime Areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in Specific Areas of Learning.

15.5 Weekly and Termly Curriculum planning is in place to promote a wide-ranging curriculum where children are challenged with new experiences. It is made up of a range of broad themes and based on our core books and rhymes. These are also often linked to seasonal changes whilst being flexible to respond to observed needs and current interests.

15.6 Our planning identifies intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards National Curriculum levels. Across all of these we promote Characteristics of Effective Learning where children develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role in their learning and think creatively. We observe and monitor progress with these skills and report these to parents.

16 Assessment

“Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children’s progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support”

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16.1 The Development Matters Bands and Early Learning Goals provide the basis for assessment throughout the Foundation Stage. Children are quickly assessed at their entry point to the Foundation Stage to establish a baseline. Progress is monitored and tracked consistently through Class Dojo portfolio and an electronic tracking system. Practitioners, teachers and teaching assistants make regular assessments of children’s learning and these high-quality observations are key to the assessment and planning cycle. Next Steps are planned in response to these, shared with parents so all practitioners have an awareness of ways forward.

- 16.1 There are several summative assessment points throughout the Foundation Stage.
- i. Two Year Old integrated Progress Review in conjunction with Health Visitor and parents completed by 3 years old at the very latest.
 - ii. Children entering Reception undertake Baseline Assessment during the first term.
 - iii. A Good Level of Development measure is made at the end of the Reception Year

See Academy Assessment Policy and Guidelines

17 Early Reading

- 17.1 Listening and attention skills are developed right from the beginning of the Foundation Stage. We develop our skills over the year using ‘Little Wandle Letters and Sounds’. This is a daily programme of interactive experiences that promote phonological awareness and key skills for reading and spelling. Further phases continue throughout the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1.

See Academy English Policy

18 Home Learning

- 18.1 At Churchwood, we understand the impact of high quality liaison between home and school and strive to ensure that our pupils are keen to learn at every opportunity. For this reason, we believe that the extension of learning out of the classroom, including the provision of home learning, is a vital addition to a child’s learning. For our younger children the nursery Teacher may suggest ways to support at home in particular areas of learning. Ideas for learning experiences at home are offered by weekly updates on Class Dojo, alongside an outline of what the children have been learning that week at the Academy or Nursery. In addition to this, in the Reception Classes, when the children are settled, Letters and Sounds activities or math’s challenges are sent home alongside the updates on Class Dojo each Friday. Regular reading is encouraged at home and this should be recorded in a Reading Journal.

19 British Values

- 19.1 The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behavior, challenging stereotypes and ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum. When appropriate we demonstrate democracy in action, and support the decisions that children make and ensure they are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued. We provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities. We allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions.

This policy is an appendage to Churchwood Primary Academy and University of Brighton Academies Trust policies.