



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (EYFS)

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Early Years Policy Statement:

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we lay the foundations for lifelong learning by aligning our approach with the school's core curriculum pillars: Resilience, Regulation & Memory; Oracy & Language Development and Knowledge & Cultural Capital. We believe that every child—regardless of starting point—deserves a rich, ambitious curriculum that nurtures character, communication, and cognition. Through purposeful play, high-quality interactions, and carefully sequenced learning experiences, we equip our youngest learners with the emotional resilience, language skills, and foundational knowledge they need to thrive both now and in the future.

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between EYFS adults and families
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2025 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

3. Structure of the EYFS

At Woodlands Park School our nursery and reception classes work closely together, sharing indoor and outdoor learning environments as appropriate. We have created an environment that is welcoming, stimulating and child centred. Within Early Years:

- We aim to enable every child to develop to their full potential.
- We aim to encourage every child to increase their existing skills, knowledge and understanding giving time and attention to developing foundational knowledge for all pupils.
- Children are actively encouraged to take managed risk, including in our woodland area.
- We provide opportunities for children to engage with others and their environment.
- Our curriculum is devised to acknowledge children's own interests and will involve children in the process of developing it. By giving learning a purpose and application; skills for communication, reading, writing and solving mathematical problems will become meaningful and more desirable.

To extend the learning experiences during this important phase of our youngest children's lives;

- Children have access during the day to both classrooms as appropriate, all EYFS adults and the resources each learning space offers them.
- Children have access to our outside learning space daily. Outdoor learning is as important if not more so for some individuals. Both nursery and reception children access our woodland area weekly.
- All children will access outdoor provision every day regardless of the weather. (There is no such thing as bad weather only inappropriate clothing).

'Outdoor learning improves child development, supports mental health and wellbeing, deepens nature connection and promotes more inclusive and engaging learning'. (Learning Through Landscapes)

The play that children engage in both inside and outside is part of their learning and the learning opportunities planned by adults are there to stimulate and challenge children. At Woodlands Park School we are ambitious for all our children.

'Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning'. (EYFS 2025)

- The role of the adult is to facilitate learning. This is achieved through quality interactions, observations and assessment (formative and summative).
- Adults know our children well and have sound understanding of child development. This ensures that adults enhance and extend each child's learning at the appropriate level at the appropriate time.

Learning to learn is a vital part of the EYFS curriculum and it is something that we will help children with to support them to become effective life-long learners.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The 3 prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

We prioritise communication and language development through daily story time, rich vocabulary development across all areas of learning, and high-quality adult-child interactions. Staff engage children in conversations, model language, and provide opportunities for children to articulate their thinking.

In Reception, we teach systematic synthetic phonics to ensure all children develop strong foundations in reading. We provide sufficient teaching and practice for children to become fluent in word reading, spelling, handwriting and number facts, recognising these as essential foundations for future learning.

5. Planning

The Early Years Lead (Reception Class Teacher) and Nursery Lead plan activities and experiences that enable children to develop and learn effectively through a sequential curriculum that builds on what children have already learnt. To do this, staff working with the youngest children will focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Adults consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable activities and experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies via the SENDCO, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

The structure of planning allows flexibility to follow the interests of a child or group of children when appropriate, whilst creating and embedding the mastery of key skills and foundational knowledge from nursery and through reception. Books and stories form the foundation of all provision and are carefully selected to encourage curiosity and enquiry. Planning will also account for significant meaningful moments for the current cohort of children e.g. a new baby, a birthday, an exciting trip. Alongside this staff will expose and introduce children to important events. These may include Diwali, Chinese New Year, Eid.

To embed learning behaviours that allow children to develop their focus and mastery of new skills whilst enhancing existing skills consideration is given to the balance of new and ongoing activities. Mastery and extension are achieved through high levels of interactions from all adults in the room. Adults are there to facilitate children's learning through play, engaging with children, offering thoughts (thinking out loud), scaffolding and modelling where appropriate.

Above all, we give great importance to listening to the children and giving them time and space to communicate their thinking and ideas.

4.2. Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, combining adult-led and child-initiated activities and experiences. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children move into Reception, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, in readiness for year 1.

Focusing on transitional behaviour will enable children to be ready for Key Stage One and will encourage an environment of good learning behaviours. This allows children to fully engage in the more formal aspects of their learning, understanding and recognising expectations whilst showing respect for others. Transitional behaviour means any form of movement from one structured time to another. For example, coming into school, moving into class groups, moving from free choosing to carpet time then carpet time to lunch etc.

5. Assessment

At Woodlands Park School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Adults observe pupils to identify their level of achievement and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff are also mindful of observations shared by families.

Throughout Early Years, adults review children's progress and provide parents and/or carers with access to Tapestry, an online tool where learning can be shared. EYFS leaders meet with members of the senior leadership team regularly to discuss pupil progress and plan support where it is required.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, adults complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development ('expected')
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with families. The results of the profile are shared with families during the final academic term.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other SEBMAT trust schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

6. Working with families

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and families.

At Woodlands Park School we work to develop and maintain solid partnerships with our families from the outset. This begins prior to children starting in nursery or reception through a

comprehensive transition process. We believe that effective communication underpins all home/school partnerships, with families being updated regularly in respect of their child's progress and development. This is achieved via both informal and formal means with the progress check and EYFS profile helping to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Additionally, ideas to support learning and development at home are regularly shared with families.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

7.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

We have assigned a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in our EYFS setting. The DSL is currently Mrs J Sergeant, DSL and Headteacher. In their absence, Mrs R Horton will act as deputy DSL. From Term 4 (Spring 2) Mrs P Hayward, EYFS Lead, will take the EYFS DSL role with the Headteacher (DSL) supporting where necessary.

The DSL ensures that all staff understand and implement our safeguarding policies and procedures, and that concerns about children are responded to appropriately and without delay.

7.2 Safeguarding Training

All EYFS staff receive effective safeguarding training at induction and this training is renewed annually. Training will include:

- Recognising signs of abuse and neglect
- Understanding safeguarding procedures and how to report concerns
- Awareness of specific safeguarding issues including online safety, child sexual exploitation, and radicalisation
- Understanding the role of the DSL
- Safer recruitment procedures

All staff receive regular safeguarding updates (at least annually) through staff meetings, emails, and briefings to ensure their knowledge remains current.

7.3 Safer Recruitment

We follow rigorous safer recruitment procedures for all staff and volunteers. This includes obtaining references for new members of staff before they are recruited and ensuring all required pre-employment checks are completed. Our safer recruitment procedures are detailed in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All EYFS staff hold enhanced DBS checks and are included on the single central record. We ensure that all required pre-appointment and vetting checks are carried out and recorded appropriately.

7.4 Paediatric First Aid

All EYFS practitioners hold a full and relevant Paediatric First Aid (PFA) Certificate. Staff with a valid PFA qualification must be present when children are eating, and only staff with valid PFA qualifications are included in staff ratios.

We maintain a register of staff PFA qualifications and ensure certificates are renewed before expiry to maintain appropriate staffing ratios at all times.

7.5 Child Absence and Attendance

We have an attendance policy that is shared with parents and carers. We:

- Follow up on absences promptly, contacting families on the first day of absence if we have not been notified
- Hold emergency contacts for each child, ensuring we have at least two up-to-date contact numbers
- Monitor attendance patterns and work with families to address any concerns
- Report concerns about persistent absence or patterns of absence to the DSL
- Work with external agencies where appropriate to support regular attendance

Parents and carers are expected to inform the school by 8:40am on each day of absence, providing a reason for their child's absence.

7.6 Safer Eating

We ensure that staff with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate are present when children are eating. The Key Leaders We:

- Obtain information from parents about dietary requirements, including preferences, allergies, intolerances and special health requirements
- Display allergy information clearly in the classroom and ensure all staff are aware of children's dietary needs
- Supervise mealtimes and snack times appropriately
- Teach children about healthy eating and making healthy food choices
- Follow food safety and hygiene procedures

We have regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance 2025 in planning meals.

7.7 Toileting and Privacy

We balance children's privacy with safeguarding requirements during nappy changes and toileting. We:

- Ensure toileting and nappy changing areas allow for appropriate supervision while respecting children's dignity
- Follow our intimate care procedures, which are shared with parents
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained in personal care procedures
- Keep records of nappy changes and any concerns

- Work in partnership with parents regarding toilet training

Where children require support with intimate care, we develop individual care plans in partnership with parents.

7.8 Whistleblowing

We have established clear procedures for all staff to raise safeguarding concerns about adults, poor safeguarding practices, and whistleblowing. All staff:

- Understand how to raise concerns about the behaviour or actions of staff members.
- Understand the importance of reporting low level concerns
- Know they can report concerns to the headteacher, DSL, or directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if necessary
- Are protected from detrimental treatment when raising genuine concerns
- Have access to the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline: 0800 028 0285

Our whistleblowing procedures are detailed in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

7.9 Promoting Children's Health and Wellbeing

We promote every child's good health, both physical and mental, by:

- Talking with children about healthy choices including food choices, being active, sleep routines, and personal hygiene (including brushing teeth)
- Promoting the development of positive relationships with peers and adults
- Teaching children about keeping themselves safe, including online safety (age-appropriate)
- Supporting children's emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Providing opportunities for physical activity both indoors and outdoors daily
- Creating a calm, nurturing environment where children feel safe and secure

This is underpinned by our PSHE programme of learning (Jigsaw) and our whole-school approach to wellbeing.

7.10 Working with External Agencies

We work in partnership with external agencies to safeguard and promote children's welfare. This includes:

- Referring concerns to children's social care when appropriate
- Working with external professionals e.g. health visitors, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists
- Engaging with safeguarding partners and contributing to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Following local safeguarding partnership procedures and guidance

7.11 Online Safety

We recognise that children may access technology in our EYFS setting. We:

- Ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place
- Teach children age-appropriate online safety messages
- Supervise children's use of technology
- Share online safety guidance with parents
- Include online safety in our safeguarding training for staff

7.12 Related Policies

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are supported by and should be read alongside the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

All policies are reviewed regularly and are available on request from the school office or on our website.

7.13 Concerns About Children

All staff are trained to recognise signs that a child may be experiencing harm or be at risk of harm. Staff understand that they must report any concerns immediately to the DSL (or deputy DSL in their absence).

We follow the procedures outlined in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and in the local safeguarding partnership guidance. We understand that early identification and intervention can prevent concerns from escalating.

If staff have concerns about the DSL or headteacher, they should contact the Chair of Governors or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) directly.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the senior leadership team every year. At every review, the policy will be shared with the local governing board.