International School of London

Early Years Policy 2026-2027

Date reviewed
August 2026

To be reviewed
August 2027

Mission statement

Since 1972, we have established a welcoming and inclusive community. Our diverse cultures and languages drive all our learning experiences.
We nurture creativity and curiosity to stimulate deep thinking. We foster insight, compassion and resilience to enable us to play a meaningful part in a changing world.

Vision statement

We celebrate our stories, our worth and our purpose to make a difference in a shared world

At the ISL London Primary School, we believe in:

- Empowering students to maximise their learning opportunities and to fulfil their potential.
- Actively integrating cultural diversity in the curriculum.
- Creating inclusive, vibrant and innovative learning communities.
- Offering a diverse and extensive international programme that supports personal, social and professional growth.

Principles and aims

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
This policy has been updated to reflect the EYFS statutory framework changes effective from 1 September 2026, including strengthened safeguarding and welfare requirements, children's screen use guidance, safer sleep requirements, and enhanced suitability and vetting procedures for adults working with children.

Throughout the Early Years at ISL London Primary School, we actively encourage the children's enjoyment of learning, their creativity and curiosity, whilst ensuring the highest safeguarding and welfare standards. We follow the principles and guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), emphasising the development of children's unique and individual potential as inquisitive, active learners by providing a broad, stimulating and balanced curriculum.

At ISL London Primary School we firmly believe that every child should feel welcome, loved, safe and secure when entering our setting. Our aim is to provide a safe, nurturing, stimulating environment that accommodates and embraces differences. We believe every child is unique in terms of life experience, developmental readiness, and cultural heritage. Partnerships between family and school is, therefore, essential to the optimal growth and development of each child. We believe in learning through play, as children learn best by hands on experiences. We strive for a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, providing the foundation of a developmentally appropriate early childhood program. We offer a wide range of opportunities to explore the world around them, so our young students become active, involved learners. We encourage the children to become independent, resilient learners who approach problem solving with confidence and an open mind. We believe, with this foundation, children become inquisitive and adaptable learners. They will develop into strong communicators who are able to make independent choices and act responsibly.

We believe it is important to have high, realistic expectations for every child. We believe in our children and encourage them to have high expectations of themselves. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers and strive to achieve this through our open-door policy and ongoing communication channels.

Structure

At ISL London Primary School, we offer places for children who have turned three by the 31st of August of each academic year. Our Early Years provision is for three- to five-year-olds and consists of EC1 (Early Childhood 1) for the 3–4-year-olds and an EC2 (Reception class) for the 4–5-year-olds. This is a full day, (08:10-15:30) four days a week and (8:10 – 2:00pm) on a Wednesday.

Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (applies from 1 September 2021) as well as the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. Through the IB Units of Inquiry we teach all aspects of the EYFS framework.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early year's settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. In line with the September 2026 EYFS framework, practitioners will have regard to current government guidance on children's screen use and ensure that digital technologies are used appropriately, purposefully and in ways that support children's learning, development and wellbeing.

The learning and development requirements cover:

- The areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early year's settings
- The early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
- Assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships

- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.

Learning and Development Requirements

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- The seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes
- The early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year
- The assessment requirements (when and how practitioners must assess children's achievements, and when and how they should discuss children's progress with parents and/or carers)

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the prime areas:

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

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

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

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Learning Opportunities

Each area of learning and development are implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of child-initiated and adult-led activities. During Free Flow, the Early Years team respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions. Where relevant, class topics are largely generated by the children's

interests through observations of their play while staff extend the children's learning through sustained-shared thinking.

The Early Years team considers the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each individual. They set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of all children with the learning opportunities offered reflecting the individual needs of all students. The SENCO, who links with relevant agencies when appropriate, supports the Early Years team.

Our learning environments are organised in such a way as to foster independence. The children are encouraged to take ownership of their learning environment and this, in turn, promotes responsibility and respect. Our young learners have access to a, well-resourced indoor and outdoor environment. Where digital devices are used, practitioners will ensure screen-based experiences are developmentally appropriate, purposeful and balanced with rich opportunities for play, physical activity, social interaction, outdoor learning and exploration.

All children in the Early Years benefit from Physical Education and Music classes plus time with their Home language teachers.

Assessment

At ISL London Primary School ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Our child-centred approach to learning recognises that children develop at different rates and in different ways. Through interactions and observations the team are able to identify each child's interests, learning styles and levels of development with the intent to develop and provide a personalised learning experience for all.

Parents and/or carers should be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals. Assessment should inform an ongoing dialogue between practitioners and year 1 teachers about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to key stage 1.

Throughout the Early Years staff track the children's learning against the development statements and learning goals set by the EYFS. This information is shared with parents and carers in line with the ISL reporting cycle.

What?	Who?	Guidelines/Expectations	When?
• Parent Survey • General information about the child	All grade levels	• To be sent home to parents of all children at class presentation evening	Beginning of year

• **On entry assessment**	All EC students at point of entry	• The on-entry assessments are taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts in Early Childhood. • The data collected will be input into Arc Pathway	First six weeks of when a child starts in EC2.
• **EYFS Profile**		At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals. Practitioners should use their professional knowledge, and the statutory EYFS framework, to judge whether a child's learning: • **Expected** • **Emerging** The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements.	
• **Student Portfolios** • **All disciplines**	All grade levels	• Refer to Student Portfolio Guidelines in assessment policy	Throughout the year
• **Checkpoints for student learning and development.**	EC 1 and 2	Check Point 1 (Three-way conferences) Check Point 2 (Term 1 Reports) Check Point 3 (Student Led Conferences / EYFSP) Checkpoint 1 and 2 - Communication and language - PSED (Personal Social Emotional Development) - Physical Development - Number Check point 3 will review each child's progress within each of the Early Learning Goals.	CP1 – October CP2 – February CP3 - May / June

• Goal Setting • UOI and ELGs	All grade levels	• Students, teachers and parents will develop goals during the first Three Way Conference (goals will relate to aspects of the prime areas). • Goals should be recorded on appropriate goal setting templates • Teachers will review and update goals with students each term • Goals should be sent home by the end of the Week 2 of each term to be shared with parents (end of Week 4 for first term) • During the Student Led Conference the goals will be reviewed	October 2026 Termly Termly May

Assessment at the end of the EYFS – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. Arc Pathway will be used to create the EYFSP.

Practitioners may include the following to support their judgements:

- Knowledge of the child
- Materials, which illustrate the child's learning journey, such as photographs
- Observations of day-to-day interactions
- Video, tape, audio or electronic recordings
- The child's view of their own learning
- Information from parents or other relevant adults

An EYFS profile completed by a practitioner alone only offers a partial picture of a child's attainment. Practitioners must actively engage children, their parents and other adults who have significant interaction with the child in the assessment process.

Practitioners should use their professional knowledge, and the statutory EYFS framework, to judge whether a child's learning:
Is at an **Emerging** level or an **Expected** level

Practitioners should also use the information in this handbook to help describe each child's characteristics of effective learning. Their judgements will be subject to moderation in order to ensure national consistency and accuracy.

Kindergarten teachers will be given access to each child's EYSFP on Arc Pathway. EC2 teachers will provide a report on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These should help inform a dialogue between grade level teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs.

Schools must share the results of the Profile with parents and/or carers and explain to them when and how they can discuss the Profile with the teacher who completed it.

If a child moves to a new school during the academic year, the original school must send their assessment of the child's level of development against the early learning goals to the relevant school within 15 days of receiving a request. If a child moves during the summer term, relevant providers must agree which of them will complete the Profile.

The Profile must be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with SEND must be made as appropriate. Providers should consider whether they may need to seek specialist assistance to help with this.

Transition/Settling In

At ISL London, we aim to provide a smooth transition where each child feels safe and secure and confident therefore each child's needs are continually observed and monitored. At ISL London Primary School we have a rolling admissions programme and children may start at different times during the year.

To ensure a smooth and successful transition into school life at ISL, in the first week of school Early Years students are invited to come in for a trial session to meet their teachers and fellow students. This gradual start supports students in familiarising themselves with the classroom layout and transitions before a full school day.

Depending on a child's well being when starting, families can choose to have a 'staggered start'. This provides families and teachers the opportunity to find a schedule that suits the needs of each child.

We also provide a welcome meeting in the first few weeks. This will be an information session which families can join to find out about the day to day in our early years setting and ask any questions they may have.

It is expected that students joining Early Childhood One (3 years old) are fully toilet trained and able to feed and dress themselves with a reasonable level of independence.

Being Healthy

ISL London Primary School believes in promoting healthy living habits from an early age. Early Years children enjoy fruit for snack in the morning which is provided by the school and fruit is always available during the day if needed.

Fresh water is available at all times and students self-help themselves to this throughout the day. Children are asked to bring a reusable water bottle from home that is easy for them to use independently.

During meal times, discussions, gardening activities and cooking opportunities, children are made aware of the importance of making informed food choices. Children are also encouraged to be risk takers and try new foods.

During transitions between indoor/outdoor experiences, children are encouraged to become independent in their self-care. Children are encouraged to be active throughout the day and the importance of physical activity and its effect on the body is regularly discussed and reflected on.

We believe that outdoor learning is essential in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle and ensure that students access the outdoors on a regular basis throughout the day.

Children's wellbeing is further supported through careful consideration of screen use, ensuring that technology does not replace active play, social interaction, communication, outdoor experiences or physical development opportunities.

Safer Sleep

ISL London Primary School follows the EYFS safer sleep requirements effective from September 2026. Where sleep provision is offered, staff will follow current safer sleep guidance and ensure children are appropriately supervised at all times while sleeping. Sleep arrangements will be discussed and agreed with parents and carers, taking account of each child's age, stage of development and individual needs. Information provided by parents regarding their child's sleep routines, health needs and preferences will be considered when planning sleep provision. Practitioners responsible for children who sleep during the school day will receive appropriate guidance and training and will ensure that sleep environments are safe, regularly monitored and maintained in accordance with statutory requirements, school policies and risk assessments. The school will have regard to current government safer sleep guidance and will take all reasonable steps to minimise risks and promote children's health, safety and wellbeing while resting or sleeping.

Intimate Care

We are committed to providing personal care that has been recognised as an assessed need in ways that:

• maintain the dignity of the individual child.

• are sensitive to their needs and preferences.

• maximise safety and comfort.

• protect against intrusion and abuse.

• respect the child’s right to give or withdraw their consent.

• encourage the child to care for themselves as much as they are able and protect the rights of everyone involved

The diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected. No child or family is discriminated against.

Definition

Intimate care can be defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure to intimate personal areas which most people usually carry out themselves but some pupils are unable to do because of their young age, physical difficulties or other special needs.

Examples include care associated with continence as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing, toileting or dressing.

It also includes supervision of pupils involved in intimate self-care.

Toilet Training

Schools are not expected to toilet train pupils. Therefore, unless a child has a disability, as defined through legislation, it is expected that parents/carers will have trained their child to be clean and dry before they start in EC1. Parents should be encouraged to train their child at home as part of their daily routine, and schools should reinforce these routines whilst avoiding any unnecessary physical contact. However, admitting children who are not yet toilet trained or who have continence problems into schools and settings should be at the decision of the head teacher.

For a variety of reasons children in the EYFS may:

• be fully toilet trained across all settings

• have been fully toilet trained but regress for a little while in response to the stress and excitement of starting school.

• be fully toilet trained at home but prone to accidents in new settings

• be on the point of being toilet trained but require reminders and encouragement

• not be toilet trained at all but likely to respond quickly to a well-structured toilet training programme

• be fully toilet trained but have a serious disability or learning difficulties

• have delayed onset of full toilet training in line with other development delays but will probably master these skills during the EYFS

• have SEND and might require help (during the EYFS and beyond) with all or some aspects of personal care such as washing, dressing or toileting

If at all possible, staff should work with children of the same sex and be mindful of and respect the personal dignity of the pupils when supervising, teaching or reinforcing toileting skills.

Safeguarding

In accordance with the September 2026 EYFS requirements, the school maintains robust safeguarding and suitability procedures. Enhanced criminal record checks are completed for volunteers as required, and new employees will not commence unsupervised work with children until all appropriate vetting checks have been received and verified.

• The school will report allegations of harm made against any person living, working or looking after children on the premises in accordance with statutory requirements.

• Staff must disclose any information that may affect their suitability to work with children, in line with current EYFS requirements

• Registered childcare provision will not operate from premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present.

DBS checks are rigorous and are carried out to ensure the safety of children with staff employed in schools and settings. ISL has a duty to ensure staff are not employed without a DBS check. This must be checked before allowing staff to change children.

Staff should:

• always inform other colleagues about the contact(s) beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by

• make other staff aware of the task being undertaken

It is essential that the adult who is going to change the child informs the teacher and/or another member of staff that they are going to do this. There is no written legal requirement that two adults must be present. However, in order to completely secure against any risk of allegation, a second member of staff may be present where resources allow.

Health and Safety

The provider must promote the good health of children attending the setting and take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action if children are ill or infectious.

• staff to wear fresh disposable aprons and gloves while changing a child

• Changing area/ toilet to be left clean.

• caretaking/ cleaning staff to be informed

• hot water and soap available to wash hands as soon as changing is done

• paper towels to be available to dry hands.

Role of Parents/Carers

At ISL London Primary School we recognise and value parents/carers as the child's primary educator.

We believe that all parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child; we recognise the role that parents have played and will play in educating the children. We seek to develop an effective partnership with parents/carers through our open-door policy and ongoing communication channels (informal chats/ Seesaw / newsletters / email / parent-teacher meetings / reports / information sessions).

We aim to provide a professional, friendly atmosphere where parents/carers feel comfortable to share concerns, questions or suggestions and feel welcomed and valued. Collaboration with families is highly valued and appreciated. Parents and carers are welcome to take part in different activities throughout the year or offer an activity of their choosing.

The following procedures are outlined in our whole school policies:

- *Safeguarding and Welfare procedures*
- *Health and Safety procedures*
- *Complaints and grievances procedures*
- *Behaviour policy*

At ISL London, Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.