

Early years foundation stage policy

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1 Policy Statement

1.1 Vision, mission and values

We are committed to giving our youngest children the best possible start to their education. By providing outstanding opportunities, facilitated by a professional workforce, we ensure that our children begin their statutory education equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve further success.

1.2 Purpose and intent

1.2.1 This policy has been developed in alignment with the [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#). Our policies and procedures in relation to the EYFS are also reflected elsewhere within our general policy framework, including (but not limited to) within the following policies:

- safeguarding, child protection and low level concerns;
- behaviour;
- admissions;
- supporting pupils with medical conditions;
- special educational needs and disabilities;
- health and safety policy; and
- data protection (GDPR) policy.

This policy's purpose is to detail how we will fulfil our statutory obligations concerning early years children while addressing the practical needs of our academies and key stakeholders, including parents/carers, local authorities, related agencies, staff and children. We use the term EYFS to refer to the time from when a child enters nursery to the age of five.

1.2.2 Our aim is to provide the highest quality care and education for all of our children, thereby giving them the strongest foundation for their future learning. In our academies, we create happy and safe environments with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident, resilient and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

1.2.3 A number of key principles underpin our approach to early years education:

- child-centred;
- developing confidence and resilience;
- encouraging aspiration and achievement;
- high expectations for all;
- adaptation of the curriculum;

- supporting children to overcome barriers to learning through the use of individual support strategies; and
- focused on improving outcomes for children.

1.2.4 As outlined in the statutory framework, every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years, and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.

1.2.5 We adhere to the statutory framework and the four guiding principles that shape practice within 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

1.3 Roles and responsibilities

1.3.1 To ensure the effective implementation of this policy and the successful delivery of the EYFS statutory framework, clear roles and responsibilities have been established across our Trust and in each of our primary and special academies.

1.3.2 Executive principals

Our executive leaders hold overarching responsibility for aligning this policy with statutory requirements and the strategic priorities of the academies. They oversee its periodic review to ensure that it remains current and relevant, while also providing the necessary guidance and resources for its effective implementation. This includes professional development opportunities for staff, building the capacity needed to deliver an excellent standard of early years education.

1.3.3 Academy principals

At the academy level, principals are responsible for the local implementation of the policy. They ensure that staff, resources and practices align with the needs of children and adhere to the EYFS framework. Principals monitor the quality of teaching and learning, using data to evaluate progress and outcomes, and ensure compliance with safeguarding, health and safety, and other statutory requirements.

1.3.4 Early years leaders

Early years leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the curriculum to meet the developmental needs of children. They lead on designing, implementing and evaluating programmes that incorporate the prime and specific areas of learning. Additionally, early years leaders are tasked with providing ongoing guidance and training to practitioners, ensuring that teaching strategies and interventions are both effective and evidence-based. They also maintain strong relationships with parents and carers, fostering collaboration to support children's learning and development.

1.3.5 Early years practitioners

Practitioners within the early years setting are at the forefront of delivering high-quality education and care. They plan and facilitate engaging, play-based learning experiences that are tailored to the developmental needs of each child. Practitioners regularly observe and assess children's progress, using this information to inform planning and provide individualised support where necessary. They are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment that promotes children's confidence, independence and overall wellbeing.

1.3.6 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are recognised as vital partners in the early years journey. By engaging actively with practitioners and supporting their child's development through activities at home, parents play a critical role in reinforcing learning. Their input into children's learning profiles and collaborative efforts to address developmental needs are integral to achieving the best outcomes for every child.

1.4 Benefits

This policy ensures that all children will thrive in our inclusive, child-centred early years foundation stage departments, be safe from harm and have their needs met to ensure the best possible start to their education is achieved.

2 Policy

2.1 The foundation stage curriculum

2.1.1 We plan and offer an exciting and challenging curriculum based on observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the '**seven areas of learning**' (see 2.1.2 and 2.1.3) to enable children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

2.1.2 Three areas of learning are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity for future learning, relationships and allowing them to thrive. These three areas are the **prime** areas.

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

2.1.3 Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas of the curriculum, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

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

2.1.4 Practitioners should support children's learning and development by teaching across both the prime and specific areas, while actively nurturing the **characteristics of effective learning**.

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

2.1.5 Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. Our aim is to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

2.2 Observation and assessment

2.2.1 As part of their daily practice, our academies will observe and assess children's development and learning to inform future planning, measure progress and, when appropriate, implement individualised support programmes. Practitioners record their observations in a variety of ways. As children's entry and exit data is collected, it is compared against both the local authority and national data.

2.2.3 Practitioners **remark on the remarkable** and keep records accordingly. Shared information from parents and carers and other professionals are then combined, and this information is used to base judgements and help shape future experiences for each child. Our academies make use of

records and documentation to accurately chart, and plan for, children's learning and development on their journey to meeting the early learning goals.

2.3 Safeguarding and welfare

2.3.1 Children's safety and welfare are paramount. Our academies create safe and secure environments and provide curricula that teach children how to be safe, make good choices and assess risk. Each academy adheres to stringent policies, procedures and documents to ensure children's safety, including our [safeguarding, child protection and low level concerns](#) and [behaviour](#) policies. This framework includes policies relating to safeguarding children, suitability of adults who have contact with children, promoting good health, managing behaviour and maintaining records.

2.3.2 In line with the EYFS framework, it is prohibited for staff to use personal devices to capture still or moving images of children. The use of photographic imagery will be in line with our [data protection \(GDPR\) policy](#), which sets out how we seek to keep children safe in this regard.

2.3.4 Practitioners will promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and following set procedures when there is a concern about a child, they become ill or have an accident.

2.3.5 We will ensure that relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable, and ensure that each EYFS child is assigned a key person.

2.4 Equity, diversity and inclusion

2.4.1 We value all of our children as individuals. The curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most children achieve or exceed the early learning goals.

2.4.2 We strongly believe that early identification of children with special or additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the children the support that they need and, in doing so, work with the parents and a variety of external agencies.

2.4.3 Our [equity, diversity and inclusion](#) and [special educational needs and disabilities](#) policies outline our approach to supporting every child's needs. These policies underscore our commitment to fostering an environment of fairness, respect and equal opportunity for all.

2.5 'Parents as partners' and the wider context

2.5.1 We strive to create and maintain a partnership with parents and carers, as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. Practitioners welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

2.5.2 Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times, we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. Our [privacy notice for parents and carers](#) details how we process personal data.

2.5.3 Our academies draw in their links with their communities to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting appropriately vetted members of the community into our settings.

2.6 Transitions

2.6.1 Transitions are carefully planned for, with review points carried out along the way to contribute to a full understanding of each child's needs. Time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child – this includes other settings such as day nurseries and childminders, alongside parents and carers.