

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



## Early Years Policy

**Date of Policy: September 2023**

**Review of Policy: September 2024**

Signed: *CM Ratcliffe* Chair of Governors

Signed: *C Williams* Headteacher

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## **Statement of intent**

At St Joseph's Primary School we hold the belief that good early year's education is essential as it is both a distinct stage in its own right and a firm foundation for future learning and development. Our aim is to develop the whole child socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

Our aim is to provide a safe and caring environment to enable children to learn how to work, play and co-operate with others. We aspire to help children acquire self-esteem and a sense of identity, to ensure that they feel included, secure and valued. We will support children to develop a knowledge and understanding of their environment by providing opportunities to investigate, explore and question throughout all areas of learning and development. We will foster positive attitudes to learning, self-motivation, questioning and independence and enable children to communicate effectively through talking, listening, reading and writing. We want our learners to have an awareness of the needs of others and an understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Alongside all of this, we wish to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which covers all areas of learning and enables each child to reach their full potential. We also believe it is paramount to develop a positive partnership with all those who are involved in the development of the child and work alongside each other to achieve the best possible outcomes for their child. We want to support parents/carers to be committed and involved as much as possible in their child's learning journey throughout Foundation stage and beyond.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2021) 'Early years foundation stage profile: 2022 handbook'
- DfE (2021) 'Development Matters'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2015) 'The Prevent duty'
- Early Education (2021) 'Birth to 5 Matters'
- UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Education for a Connected World'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Photography and Images Policy.
- Ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer. These issues are addressed in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds.

- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The EYFS lead, in conjunction with the headteacher, will have responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.

Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, will be responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- Remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

### 3. Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we will aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Four overarching principles shape will our practice:

- 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 the school and parents.
- **Learning and development** is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, the school will:

- Provide a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Work in partnership with parents.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.

### 4. Learning and development

In partnership with parents, the school will promote the learning and development of children to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

The EYFS provision and practice will be based on an observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning and development in school will be planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language:
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- Physical development:
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development:
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing self
  - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy:
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- Mathematics:
  - Numbers
  - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world:
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design:
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the school will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, use what they know in their play and are willing to try new things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, 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 use what they already know to learn new things, and develop strategies for doing things.

Further information regarding learning and development, including how these link to and underpin the national curriculum in KS1 and beyond, will be set out in the school's Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy.

## **5. Assessment**

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

Ongoing formative assessments will be used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Practitioners interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs, and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.

The EYFS setting will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception year.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

The school will ensure that teachers actively engage children, their parents and other adults who have significant interaction with specific children in their assessment processes to provide a well-rounded picture of their development and attainment.

The school will ensure that assessment processes do not prevent teachers and practitioners from spending as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development. Teachers will not be required to record or document evidence to prove children's level of development; however, they may decide to record particularly noteworthy achievements in order to plan teaching and where this is beneficial for building knowledge of children.

The school will report EYFS Profile results to the LA when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

The EYFS lead will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress with the child's parents, especially where this concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.

The school will take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to establish whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.

## **6. Inclusion**

All children will be valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Inclusion Policy will ensure that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy will ensure all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

The EYFS curriculum will be planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

## **7. The learning environment and outdoor spaces**

The learning environment will be organised in such a way that children can explore and learn independently in a safe and interactive environment.

Children will have access to an enclosed outdoor environment, and daily access to the outdoor environment is planned, unless circumstances, such as the weather, would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe.

There will be five toilet facilities available to the EYFS, and there will be hygienic changing facilities located in the EYFS classroom containing a supply of towels and spare clothes. Nappy changing facilities will also be available if required.

## **8. Safeguarding and welfare**

All necessary steps will be taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL will be responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

## **9. Mobile phones and devices**



For the purposes of this policy, the term “**mobile phone**” refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets.

### **Use of personal mobile phones by staff members**

Staff members will not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present. Staff may use mobile phones on school premises outside of working hours when no children are present. Staff may use mobile phones in the staffroom during breaks and non-contact time. Mobile phones will be safely stored and in silent mode whilst children are present.

Staff may take mobile phones on trips, but they will only be used in emergencies and should not be used when children are present. Mobile phones will not be used to take images or videos at any time during trips.

Staff who do not adhere to this policy will face disciplinary action. Staff will report any concerns about another staff member’s use of mobile phones to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Staff may use their professional judgement in emergency situations.

### **Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors and contractors**

Parents, visitors and contractors will not be permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission. Parents may take photographs and videos only containing their own child during school events. Parents may take group photographs at school events but only with the informed consent of the parents of the children involved.

The school strongly advises against the publication of any photographs or videos taken at the school or school events on social media. Staff will report all concerns about parents, visitors and contractors to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Use of the school’s mobile phones and cameras**

Staff will be provided with a school device to ensure that only school devices are used to take photographs and videos. School devices will have passcode protection.

School devices will only be used for work related matters, e.g. recording and documenting a child’s learning. School devices will only be used to take photographs in the presence of another staff member and only with the consent of the child’s parent.

Staff will not take photographs of bruising or injuries for child protection reasons. Instead, recording concerns on the electronic body maps on the safeguarding system (CPOMS) will be used to record observations relating to child protection concerns.

Where staff members have concerns over material on a school device, they will report all concerns to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **10. ICT lessons**

In accordance with the DfE's '[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)', all educational programmes offered by the setting, including ICT, will work towards the early learning goals (ELGs). This will include:

- **Communication and language:** ICT helps children to develop their self-expression confidence and skills, and allows them to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development:** using interactive programmes, computer mice, keyboards and touch screens helps children develop their coordination, control and movement.
- **Personal, social and emotional development:** technology gives children access to new ways to express their emotions and interact with others.
- **Literacy:** the internet gives children to access a vast range of media and materials.
- **Mathematics:** ICT enhances children's experiences of learning mathematics and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and describing shapes, spaces and measure.
- **Understanding the world:** children will be taught that the internet is used to enhance their knowledge of people, places, technology and their physical environment i.e. google earth, videos, photographs of different cultures and significant people that come up in the moment.
- **Expressive arts and design:** interactive games, activities and materials will be used to encourage children to share their creativity and ideas.

ICT lessons will be conducted in accordance with the Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy. Teachers will not use formative assessments for ICT, but will use summative assessments to help track children's progress. Resources will be shared fairly between children and, where needed, tasks and equipment will be adjusted to suit children's needs and abilities.

The EYFS lead will be responsible for ensuring all staff and parents are aware of the setting's policy on using technology and teaching ICT. The EYFS lead will hold the ICT technician, teachers and support staff to account for their delivery and support of the ICT curriculum and offer support where needed.

The ICT technician will be responsible for:

- Staying aware of new ICT developments and communicating these to staff, including through bespoke training where necessary.
- Attending appropriate in-service training, including safeguarding training.
- Maintaining the upkeep and use of ICT resources.
- Working with the EYFS lead to establish an annual budget to secure the procurement of the required ICT software and hardware.
- Keeping appropriate records of ICT expenditure to review costs and make suggestions for the future.
- Securing and maintaining ICT resources.
- Ensuring ICT resources are up-to-date, fit for purpose and safe for children to use.
- Advising staff on the correct and safe use of digital technologies.

Staff delivering the ICT curriculum will be responsible for:

- Encouraging children to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT in other areas of learning.

- Tailoring lesson delivery according to children's age and respective abilities.
- Working with the ICT technician to put reasonable adjustments in place to ensure all children can make use of the school's ICT equipment.
- Undertaking summative assessments to ensure the aims set out in this policy are being met.
- Keeping the EYFS lead informed about how the aims of the setting's ICT curriculum are being achieved.
- Supporting children through play and teaching to recognise how technology is used across their lives, such as in their home and school.

The Online Safety Policy will be always adhered to. This includes installing internet filters and antivirus software on all devices and ensuring children are supervised appropriately when using the internet. In the event of children accessing inappropriate content online, safeguarding procedures will be followed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **11. Health and safety**

The school will promote the good health of children in the EYFS, including the promotion of good oral health.

The EYFS lead will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book, located in EYFS storeroom. The headteacher will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.

A first-aid box will be in a labelled cupboard near the sinks in the studio area.

Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered. The school's Administering Medication Policy outlines the procedures for administering medicines.

Any food or drink provided to children will be healthy, balanced and nutritious as outlined in the Whole-School Food Policy. The headteacher will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded. Fresh drinking water will be always available.

Smoking will not be permitted on the school premises.

The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

The school has a Fire Safety Policy in place.

## **12. Staff taking medication or other substances**

The school will implement a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and alcohol misuse.

The use of alcohol or any other substance that may affect the ability to care for children by a member of staff will not be tolerated. If there is a reason to believe a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance, they will not be allowed to work directly with children and further action will be taken.

Any member of staff taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children will seek medical advice. Staff will only be allowed to work directly with the children if it is confirmed that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.

Any medication used by staff will be securely stored in lockers in the staffroom.

### **13. Staffing**

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy will be in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff will receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues.
- Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

The EYFS lead will hold at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification alongside at least two years' experience working in an early years setting. At least half of the other EYFS staff will hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.

Mrs J Chadfield will provide cover for the EYFS lead in their absence and is deemed fully qualified to do so by the EYFS lead and headteacher.

There will be at least one member of staff who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate on the school premises at all times, and will accompany children on any school outings.

Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will hold a PFA certificate. All newly qualified staff with a level 2 or 3 qualification will be PFA trained. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in personnel files in the School Business Manager's office.

The school will provide a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.

The school will adopt the following staffing ratios:

- For children in Reception classes:
  - Class sizes will be limited to 30 children per school teacher.

Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.

Each child will be assigned a key person whose role it is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The EYFS lead will inform parents of whom their child's key person is and will explain the role of the key person when their child begins attending the school. The child's key person will be their class teacher.

## **14. Information and records**

Information will be stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

The following information will be recorded for each child:

- The child's name and date of birth
- The name and address of every parent or carer who is known to the school, including information about all persons who have parental responsibility for the child and which parent or carer the child normally lives with
- The emergency contact details of the child's parent or carer

The following information about the school will be recorded:

- The school's name, address and telephone number
- The school's certificate of registration
- The name, address and telephone number of anyone who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children
- A daily record of the names of the children being cared for in the school, their hours of attendance, and the names of each child's key person

The following information will be made available to parents:

- The school's privacy notice for parents and children
- How the school delivers the EYFS and how parents can access more information
- The daily routine and the activities offered in the school's EYFS and how parents can assist their child's learning at home
- How the school's EYFS supports children with SEND
- Details of the food and drink provided to the children
- Details of the policies and procedures in place in the school's EYFS
- Staffing details, including the name of their child's key person and their role and a telephone number for parents to contact in an emergency

Ofsted will be notified if there are any changes to the following:

- The address of the school

- The school's contact details
- The hours during which care is provided
- Any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the school or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with, children to look after children

## **15. Parental involvement**

We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents.

Parents will be invited to parents' evenings; however, the school has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day. Parents and Carers can also message their child's class teacher directly through Class Dojo. They will receive a response within 24 hours of the working school day i.e. If a parent sends a message on a Saturday morning they will receive a response by Monday 4.30pm.

Parents will be asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. We work with parents in a range of different ways:

- Transition Session or multiple sessions if this is advised or requested by parents or the previous settings
- Home visits
- Reading records shared between home and school for parents to record achievements or concerns. These are checked weekly by staff.
- Termly attainment updates at Parents evening meetings
- Regular dojos and website updated with photos to share teaching and learning moments
- Parent workshops (for example on phonics or early number skills)
- Contributing to Learning Journeys through saving any learning taken place at home and sharing pictures sent through dojo or saved in the portfolio section of dojo
- Achievements shared on dojo to celebrate learning or anything achieved at home
- We welcome parents to special assemblies, performances, any fund raising events etc.

## **16. Transition periods**

The first visits will be within the children's pre-school settings. A member of the EYFS will visit their setting and spend time chatting to them in their play. Staff will also meet with their key person to gain information regarding family background and dynamics, any professional involvement either current or previously and the children will attend a visit with their parents in the summer term to explore their new surroundings allowing the children to feel secure in the new environment. In the Summer term, the children will receive a home visit and welcome pack with information and activities to support starting school and so that parents/carers can share any sensitive information and their child's achievements or needs.

Pre-school settings share learning and development transition documents and a copy of their FS1 end of year report to parents.

The following process will be in place to ensure children's successful transition to Year 1:

- Parents will be invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes, and to voice any concerns they may wish to express.
- The children will be invited to their Year 1 class for a week during the Summer term.
- In the Summer term, Reception and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development and information in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

## **17. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS will be required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.