



**Chigwell School**

Mr D.A.P. King  
Head

dking@chigwell-school.org

D: +44 (0)20 8501 5701

T: +44 (0)20 8501 5700

High Road, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6QF

www.chigwell-school.org

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## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

The Governors and staff recognise the importance of Early Years Education as the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. The School aims to develop each child to his or her full potential. Early Years education is concerned with the physical, social and emotional, aesthetic and cognitive development of the individual, with no one area standing in isolation from the others. We adhere to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for children's learning, development, safeguarding and welfare 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 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.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

### **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

All children and their families are valued. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the aptitudes and needs of all groups and abilities, including those pupils with an EHC plan. 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 the Pre Prep's SENCO is called upon for further information and advice.

### **Positive relationships**

Developing a positive relationship and secure attachment with their class teacher, who is also their designated Key Person, enables the children to feel safe, and have their emotional needs supported. We recognise that parents are the child's first and foremost educators and we work diligently to develop strong links with them, we do this by:

- Implementing a transition programme for all parents of new Pre Prep pupils
- Reviewing reports from children's previous educational settings
- Inviting parents into school before their child starts to discuss concerns and provide information relating to the school's EYFS provision

- Inviting parents to a curriculum meeting shortly after their child has started
- Holding two parents' evenings a year
- Inviting parents on visits where they can observe their child at work/play (assemblies, lunches, chapel services, craft workshops, summer shows, nativities)
- Holding parent workshops to support their work at home
- Providing two reports on each child's progress, attainment and targets during the school year
- Providing home school diaries where parents can share news from home
- Providing parents with written guidance (Parents' Handbook) on the School's provision
- Taking parental views and contributions into consideration when completing EYFS profiles

### **Enabling Environments**

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective planning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning journals. Play-based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff who will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

### **Learning and Developing**

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways. Effective learning and teaching is supported through:

- The understanding that staff have the knowledge of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching.
- The range of approaches that provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children to achieve the ELG's at the end of the EYFS.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellect, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management.
- To support learning with appropriate accessible space, facilities and equipment both indoors and outdoors, including the effective use of ICT. The identification, through observations of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (effective September 2025) provides a structure of learning opportunities through which we develop the different aspects of early education.

These include three prime areas:

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

There are four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

Children meet learning opportunities within a happy, secure and interesting environment through practical activity, enquiry and purposeful play, with consolidation through practice talk and reflection.

It is the responsibility of the EYFS Coordinator, in conjunction with the Key Stage 1 teachers and the Head Teacher, to provide a curriculum that takes into account the ability of every child combining, where appropriate, the early learning goals and Key Stage 1 National Curriculum, so that by the end of Reception/Foundation stage the children will be fully prepared for learning at Key Stage 1.

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

### **Educational Programmes**

Educational programmes involve activities and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of Learning.

### **Communication and Language**

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSE) is essential for leading healthy, happy lives and forms the foundation for cognitive growth. Central to this development are the secure attachments and relationships that shape a child's social world. At the heart of our approach is a commitment to connection over correction; we prioritise nurturing strong, warm, and supportive relationships with our pupils. Through these connections, children learn to understand and manage their own feelings and those of others, developing the capacity for self-regulation. We recognise that regulation is not only key to emotional wellbeing but also to building resilience—enabling children to persist, adapt, and thrive as learners. Children are supported to develop a positive sense of self, set simple goals, and approach challenges with confidence and perseverance. Through adult modelling and guidance, they learn to care for their bodies, make healthy choices, and manage personal needs independently. Supported interactions with peers foster friendships, cooperation, and peaceful conflict resolution. These attributes provide a secure platform from which children can flourish both in school and in life.

## **Physical Development**

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision help with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

## **Literacy**

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

## **Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

## **Understanding the World**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increase their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

## **Expressive Arts and Design**

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

### **Assessment**

The Reception Baseline Assessment is undertaken at the start of each year. This forms part of the monitoring of pupil progress as the children progress through school.

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We utilise our observations in a variety of ways, mainly to support skilful interaction allowing us to guide and extend the learning taking place in the moment. Significant moments of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journal, which are shared with parents. These ongoing formative assessments are used to inform the EYFS Profile. The child's progress is reviewed every term/half term and is regularly discussed with parents. In the autumn and spring terms parents are invited to attend a parents evening and reports are written twice a year.

Within the final term of Reception the EYFS profile is completed for each pupil. The Profile provides parents and teachers with a well-rounded picture of the child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with their child's current class teacher and also with their child's future Year 1 teacher.

### **Planning and Teaching**

The teachers will plan and teach a balanced range of activities and experiences to cover the seven areas of learning outlined by the Department of Education in the Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage. These long-term and medium-term plans inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses. All plans are regularly reviewed by the Head and Senior Deputy Head of Pre Prep.

### **Curriculum**

Wherever possible and appropriate, the Foundation Stage curriculum is developed within a cross-curricular context. To utilise good practice and to help prepare the children for the statutory introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies in Year 1, whole class and small group literacy (phonics session, shared reading and writing) and numeracy teaching takes place each day. These teaching sessions are followed by small group adult-initiated pupil tasks.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, teachers and support staff interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. 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

### **Outdoor Learning**

We are committed to providing our children with a stimulating outdoor environment which is well designed, well organised and integrated with the indoor learning environment. The outdoor space complements and extends provision indoors. We recognise that children need challenge and risk within a framework of security and safety. The outdoor environment lends itself to offering challenge, helping children learn how to be safe and to be aware of others. Planning for outdoor learning is integrated into the school's medium-term planning and short-term planning and covers all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Our school grounds provide rich opportunities to engage all pupils effectively in understanding about sustainability and the environment, to enhance learning across the curriculum and to enable us to deliver a 'Forest School' curriculum. Children are provided with regular and frequent visits to the school's Woodland Classroom. Visits outside of school are built into our curriculum and enhance children's learning.

### **Managing Behaviour**

The School's Behaviour Policy applies to all pupils at Chigwell School including those in the EYFS.

All members of staff are aware of the regulations regarding the use of force by teachers, as set out in DfE Circular 10/98, relating to section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils. The School does not administer or threaten corporal punishment.

### **Supervised Eating and Mealtime Safety**

In line with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and in compliance with the updated EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements effective from September 2025, the school ensures that all children are appropriately supervised at all times while eating. Children will always be within both sight and hearing of a member of staff during meals and snack times. Supervision is active and vigilant to enable staff to respond immediately to any potential choking incident, allergic reaction, or other emergency.

At least one member of staff holding a current and valid full Paediatric First Aid certificate will be present and actively supervising during all eating occasions, in accordance with EYFS requirements. Staffing arrangements are organised to ensure that supervision is continuous and effective, and that staff are positioned to observe children clearly while they are eating.

Children are required to sit appropriately while eating and drinking. They will be seated safely at suitable tables and chairs for their age and stage of development. Children will not be permitted to walk, run, play, or lie down while eating, as this increases the risk of choking. Staff will model and promote safe eating behaviours, including taking small bites, chewing thoroughly, and not talking with food in the mouth.

Mealtimes are organised to minimise distractions and create a calm environment that supports safe eating. Staff remain attentive and avoid undertaking tasks that would compromise active supervision during this time. The layout of the room and seating arrangements are carefully considered to ensure clear lines of sight and safe movement around the eating area.

The school also ensures that all staff are aware of children's individual dietary needs, food allergies, and medical conditions. Information is clearly recorded, shared appropriately, and reviewed regularly to minimise risk. Any food brought from home is managed in accordance with the school's allergy, food safety, and safeguarding procedures.

Through these measures, the school aims to provide a safe, supportive, and nurturing mealtime environment that promotes children's health, wellbeing, and independence while meeting all current statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements under the EYFS framework.

### **Safeguarding**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, risk assessments, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety, all reviewed on a regular basis (*see Appendix 1 and the Child Protection and Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment, Supervision, Whistleblowing, Attendance and Health and Safety Policies*). The designated safeguarding lead for the Pre Prep, including the EYFS, is the Head of the Pre Prep. The Senior Deputy Head of Pre Prep is the deputy safeguarding lead for the Pre Prep.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and following set procedures when children become ill or are involved in an accident (*see First Aid and Administration of Medicine Policy*). There is always one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate on the premises when children are present. A person with a current paediatric first aid certificate (usually the teacher or support staff) always accompanies children on external visits.

All children in our Reception class have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for developmental records. Photographs using a school camera or tablet may be taken during indoor and outdoor play and displayed in albums or a child's development records for children and parent/carers to look through.

Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own cameras or mobile phones to take or record any images of children for their own records. They are also not permitted to wear smartwatches with the capability of taking photographs. We accept that on occasion staff and parents/carers may record school events such as sports day, outings, concerts and fundraising events etc. by video or taking photographs but always in full view of all attending. Parents/carers are advised in writing that images and videos are for personal use only and that they should not be uploaded onto any social networking sites or other web-based forums.

On occasions we use photographs of the children taking part in an activity to advertise/promote our Pre Prep via our website etc.; however, in this instance specific parental permission for these events would be sought.

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies (*see Learning Support Policy*).

We recognise that for some children English will not be their home language. This linguistic diversity is valued and as practitioners we provide planned learning and play opportunities to help children develop

their English. We ensure that all children have opportunities to recognise and show respect for each child's home language.

### **Parents as Partners and the Wider Context**

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

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 possible support.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting.

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned and time given to ensure continuity of learning. EYFS pupils are provided with opportunities to practise changes in the final term, e.g. the Year 1 morning routine. In the final term in Reception, the Reception teacher and Year 1 teacher liaise to discuss individual children and their needs. EYFS Profile data is used to support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1 by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers. Ongoing liaison between staff continues into the first term of Year 1.

### **Staff Training and Professional Development**

Through annual Professional Development Reviews and ongoing school evaluation, all staff are provided with training to ensure that they can continually improve the quality learning and development experiences we offer our children. Frequent and regular 'supervision' meetings take place with EYFS team members as a way for staff to discuss issues and identify solutions as well as receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

**For and on behalf of the Governors  
D.A.P. King**

## Appendix 1

### Actions to be Followed by Staff When a Pupil is Not Collected on Time

If a pupil is not collected by 3.00pm (5.30pm if in After School Club) parents/carers to be contacted.

- The pupil is to remain with a member of staff at all times and reassured that they are safe
- The pupil is not to be released into the care of another adult without the consent of the parent/carer
- At 3.10pm the pupil is to be placed into the care of the After School Club until the parent/carer arrives
- If parents/carers confirm that they will be late, they should be reassured that their child will remain in the care of staff operating the After School Club and that there will be a teacher on duty until they arrive
- If parents cannot be contacted, emergency contacts to be called
- If no one has arrived to collect the pupil by the time the School is due to close, the Head and DSL should be informed
- Social Services to be contacted for assistance if contact cannot be made with persons listed as emergency contacts or if the school is due to close

### Missing Child Procedure

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from school:

#### Stage One

- The member of staff to seek the help of an additional adult/s immediately
- A register to be taken to ensure all the other pupils are present
- The member of staff is to check whether the pupil has been signed out for an external appointment or has an internal appointment with a visiting professional (Speech Therapist/music lesson etc.)
- The Head of Pre Prep, the school secretary and site security are to be informed
- The member of staff ensures that all other pupils are kept safe and closely supervised throughout the incident
- At the same time all staff arrange for an immediate search of the Pre Prep, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces where a small child might be hiding
- The school secretary ensures that the main school gate is closed
- Site security ensures that all exit points from the main school are closed/manned and check CCTV for any evidence of the child

#### Stage Two

If after five minutes the pupil is still missing:

- The Head of Pre Prep ensures that the Head is briefed
- The Head of Pre Prep arranges a search of the remaining school premises and grounds
- The Head of Pre Prep contacts the pupil's parents and asks them to come into school as soon as possible and explains what has happened and what steps have been followed
- The Head contacts the Police

#### Stage Three

- The Head of Pre Prep liaises with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The Head decides at what point to inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board and Chair of Governors
- The Head deals with any media enquiries
- A written record of the incident and any action taken is to be made as soon after the incident as practicable and placed in the pupil's confidential record
- An internal investigation is undertaken to establish how the situation occurred, how effective was the response and whether action could be taken to ensure it does not happen again