WANDSWORTH
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy applies all pupils in the EYFS

Created	July 2012
Revised	August 2026
Date for revision	August 2027
Annual review	Summer Term
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1. **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Wandsworth Preparatory School, all children join the school at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five years of age and in Pre-Prep, children may join when a child has turned 3 years of age. The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range and knowledge of skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and area assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **equal 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. The **learning and development** requirements cover:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in early years 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) and;
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)

The four overarching principles of the EYFS set the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. At Wandsworth Preparatory School, practitioners use the principles of the EYFS to guide everyday teaching and learning: *A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.* These principles run alongside Development Matters framework citing 7 key features of effective practice; '*the best for every child', 'high quality care', 'the curriculum', 'pedagogy', 'assessment', 'self-regulation and executive function' and 'partnership with parents'*.

2. **Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

The themes and commitments laid out in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage,* revisied in September 2026 *and* underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing:

- Develop strong foundations in communication, language and literacy.

- Develop positive attitudes towards learning, curiosity and a willingness to explore.
- Become confident, independent and resilient.
- Develop social skills, emotional awareness and the ability to build positive relationships.
- Develop early mathematical understanding and problem-solving skills.
- Explore, investigate and make sense of the world around them.
- Develop creativity, imagination and the ability to express themselves.
- Build the knowledge and skills needed for a successful transition into Year 1.

3. **Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

At Wandsworth Preparatory School, we acknowledge and believe that play is the most important part in the network of learning and that this should be cross curricular. The aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage are achieved through planned, purposeful play with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. We encourage children to:

- to think creatively and work collaboratively
- explore and develop their own learning experiences
- practise and develop their skills, ideas and critical thinking
- learn how to take measured risks and challenge themselves
- learn to understand the need for rules and take responsibility for one's own actions
- communicate their ideas
- investigate and problem solve
- be willing to ' have a go '

Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Wandsworth Preparatory School, we believe that a stimulating, multi-sensory and interactive learning environment is essential. Teachers aim to create a variety of enabling learning areas within their classroom in which children are encouraged to initiate and extend their own learning and learn from each other. Learning areas are established both indoors and outdoors and teaching is always adapted to suit the needs of the individual child. While children participate in focused whole class and small group sessions, they are encouraged to take this learning and apply it independently in a free-flowing, cross-curricular environment.

Emphasis is placed on open lines of communication between home and school to promote effective learning. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning and are kept informed as to current topics and learning priorities for their child.

The teaching and learning is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the **prime** areas, are:

- communication and language
- physical development

- personal, social and emotional development

There are four **specific** areas of learning and development, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The **specific** areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Through teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, we aim:

- To provide children with opportunities to initiate their own learning and to learn from each other
- To encourage children to develop positive dispositions towards their learning
- To allow children time to consolidate their learning
- To provide a safe, stimulating and comfortable learning environment
- For children to develop a positive self-image
- For children to learn through movement and use of all the senses
- For children to make links in their learning
- To promote the development and use of language
- To ensure that play is progressive and matches children's level of development and interest
- For practitioners to use their expertise to gauge when it is appropriate to teach skills and knowledge directly
- For practitioners to model a range of positive behaviour and promote rich language experiences
- To plan the indoor and outdoor learning environment in a manner appropriate to their level and which encourages purposeful play
- To work with parents in partnership and recognise their continued role in their child's development
- To undertake skilful and well-planned observations to assess children's development and progress

4. **The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The curriculum in Reception meets the requirements set out in the revised *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage,* updated in September 2026. Curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals, which includes seven prime and specific areas of learning and development:

Prime areas

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of healthy activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities

Specific areas

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology

Each area of learning shows progression through a sequence of Stepping Stones which lead to Early Learning Goals. Early Learning Goals establish expectations for children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. Children explore the Early Learning Goals through play-based activities, which can take the form of adult-focussed sessions, adult-initiated sessions or child-initiated activities. Children are exposed to a range of learning experiences and are able to access the curriculum both indoors and outdoors.

The curriculum takes into account the specific needs of individuals and the class as a whole. Lessons may be taught as a whole class or in small groups and one-to-one support is provided where necessary. Much of the curriculum is delivered through free-flow carousel activities in which children have the opportunity to independently practise and further develop and explore their knowledge and skills. Learning areas and activities are designed to encourage child initiated play and learning with adults observing and facilitating where necessary.

5. **Teaching and Learning Style**

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning throughout the school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents and/or carers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;

- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

In planning and guiding children's activities, teachers reflect on the different ways that children learn. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS 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

6. **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The curriculum is planned in phases based upon continual assessments of the children's differing needs and experiences. A Long Term Plan guides our Medium Term and Short Term plans. The Long Term Plan ensures that all seven areas of learning and development are given equal emphasis and that all aspects of learning within the seven areas are covered regularly and frequently. Medium Term plans are devised by the class teacher using the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. These plans are used as the basis for teachers' short term planning. The short term planning is recorded using daily plans and continuous provision planners. Planning encompasses a range of child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-led tasks both indoors and outdoors. Ongoing observational assessments are used to inform planning for each child's continuing development through play-based activities.

On entry to Pre-Prep and Reception, all children are carefully assessed through observation, in order to ascertain stages of development, strengths and needs. Further assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of regular observation, undertaken by the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded on the school's tracking system *Evidence Me*, with summative judgements recorded on Insights. Photographic evidence of children's learning experiences are supplemented by feedback from parents and/or carers.

Evidence Me is used to record ongoing observations against the Early Years Framework and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of

development in the seven prime and specific areas of learning and development is recorded against assessment criteria known as Early Learning Goals.

Within the final term of the Foundation Stage, we provide a written summary to parents and/or carers, reporting children's progress against the Early Learning Goals. At the end of the Foundation Stage, the individual Early Years Foundation Stage profiles inform planning in Year 1, in order to support and extend pupils' learning at the start of Key Stage 1. In some cases, there is the need to track forward in the Foundation Stage to the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 in order to extend pupils who have progressed beyond the requirements of the Early Learning Goals.

7. Safeguarding

We take all necessary steps to ensure that our children are safe and well as we recognise that children who are healthy, safe and secure in the broadest sense have the best chance at fulfilling their potential in all areas, both at home and at school. In line with statutory regulations, and following best practice, we adhere to our school's Safeguarding Policy.

Child Protection

Carla Ritchie, Assistant Head, has lead responsibility for safeguarding alongside Jo Pache, Headteacher, who is the Deputy Safeguarding Officer and responsible for overseeing Early Years safeguarding concerns. Staff members receive regular training to maintain their required level of child protection certification and are aware that they are required to be constantly vigilant in identifying and reporting any concerns they may have regarding a child's safety. We are aware of our duty to report any allegations against staff members or persons working on the premises to Ofsted within 14 days of the allegations being made. Please see our school's Child Protection policy and Cameras and Mobile phones policy procedure for additional information.

Suitable People

We are committed to employing well-qualified and committed staff who are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. We obtain enhanced criminal record checks and barred list checks for all people who work directly with children in an unsupervised capacity and all staff members who work on our premises whilst the children are on site. We maintain records of staff qualification and identity checks as well as the vetting process they have completed. We maintain robust recruitment procedures for all EYFS staff members and do not allow unsupervised contact by staff members whose suitability has not yet been verified. Staff are aware that they must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings which affect their suitability to work with children. Please see our Safer Recruitment and Child Protection policies for additional information.

Disqualification

Should we, as providers, or any of our employees become disqualified from their service in the EYFS for any reason, we are aware that we/they may no longer operate in our EYFS setting. Where we become aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of an employee, we take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children and notify Ofsted within 14 days. Please see our policy on Child Protection for further information.

Staff medication

We are aware that practitioners must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If practitioners are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, they must seek medical advice and we ensure that those practitioners only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly. All staff medication is securely stored and out of the children's reach at all times.

Staff qualification, training, support and skills

New members of staff have a thorough Induction Procedure with an experienced member of staff and the Headteacher. Please see our Induction Checklist for further information on the information covered. We are committed to providing appropriate training and professional development to all members of staff. In line with statutory regulations, line managers hold regular meetings with EYFS staff who have contact with children and families. Supervision meetings are focused on discussing ideas, identifying solutions to address issues as they arise and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

We have members of staff who have completed approved paediatric first aid training courses. One first aider is always on site and one accompanies children on each outing.

All staff members have sufficient understanding and use of the English language and are able to ensure the well-being of the children in their care.