

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Philosophy

'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 experience between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

EYFS 2021

Aims

At St Augustine's Priory the EYFS Department comprises of the Nursery and Prep I. As an Early Years Department we believe that the child is at the centre of the learning process and everything we do. Their interests, needs and experiences are valued and acknowledged as a starting point for learning. We will -

- * deliver an Early Years Curriculum that educates the whole child so that they embrace a love of life-long learning
- * promote teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness'
- * give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life
- * be ambitious for every child, building on what they know and can do, so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind
- * ensure that we provide high quality care and education, which enables every child to achieve their full potential for learning and development
- * create a happy purposeful atmosphere, based on partnership working between members of staff, children and parents/carers
- * promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring every child and family is included and supported
- * be concerned with the exploration of the world through senses, feelings and experiences, allowing young children to learn through well planned play activities
- * provide challenging, active learning experiences, giving children opportunities to explore practical activities, make decisions independently, and develop problem-solving skills
- * provide a well-organised, rich and stimulating learning environment
- * work together to ensure a shared understanding and consistent approach to developing children's learning
- * ensure that we do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Inclusion

All children are provided with equal access to the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum regardless of

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their gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, home language, family background, ability, disability, learning or developmental needs or season of birth. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND),

Effective learning and development can only take place within an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Every child is given the opportunity to grow, learn and succeed. Diversity is recognised as a rich resource to support and enhance the learning of all.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- *Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- *Encouraging children to develop a healthy respect of each other's differences and to value everyone as an individual
- *Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping. Resources are regularly reviewed and updated
- *Encouraging children to learn about their own culture and to find out more about the culture and religions of other children
- *Valuing linguistic diversity and providing opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning
- *Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- *Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on four guiding principles. These provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children.

A Unique Child recognises that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development, inclusion, safety, health and well-being

Positive Relationships describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect, strong partnership with parents, supporting learning, and the role of the key person

Enabling Environments explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. 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. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning, support for every child, the learning environment and the wider context – transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.

Learning and Development recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

There are seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-

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connected. EYFS Practitioners consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care in order to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

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

These are known as the **prime areas**:-

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

These prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. Practitioners working with the youngest children ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas, but it is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. If practitioners have cause for concern about a child's progress in any prime area, they will discuss this with the child's parents and /or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.

There are also four **specific areas**:-

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These specific areas enable the prime areas to be strengthened and applied. This is particularly important for developing their language and extending vocabulary.

Whilst we recognise that children learn and develop at different rates, there is an expectation that the majority of children will attain a '**good level of development**' at the end of the EYFS (Prep I). This is defined as achieving the Early Learning Goals for all of the Prime Areas and for the Specific Areas of Literacy and Numeracy.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

In planning challenging and enjoyable children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and we reflect these in our practice. We plan for the characteristics of effective learning using Learning Dinosaurs to motivate and inspire children:

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go' (Explorasaurus)

Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements (Tryasaurus)

Creating and thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things (Thinkasaurus)

Learning Through Play

At Saint Augustine's Priory play in EYFS is an integral part of learning. We are committed to child initiated learning and believe in learning though well considered play opportunities. Play is central to young children's learning. It is through play that children learn to make sense of the world around them.



For young children there is no distinction between work and play. It is a serious pursuit, which enables them to develop concentration, explore ideas and expand their knowledge. Intrinsic learning thrives in an environment of low threat, high feedback and lots of fun, where many chances to learn are inherent. We aim to encourage children to learn from the mistakes they make without facing the fear of failure. Effective play allows children to take charge over events and conquer fears. We also feel that it is particularly important as a tool for developing good social behaviours and prompting the use of critical and creative thinking. When planned effectively we believe that it helps to develop the whole person, motivation is intrinsic and children experience high levels of success. The types of play offered will be appropriate to the individual children's needs and include:

- ***Child initiated** – where the child has complete decision making and directional control of the play
- ***Adult led** – adult interacts with the play to extend and support children's learning
- ***Adult initiated** – where the child engages in activities set up by the adult. As the child moves towards Key Stage One it is expected that there will be more adult-directed activities.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching methods in Early Years Foundation Stage will accommodate the different ways children learn and their various developmental stages by planning for the same learning objective in a range of different ways. These include:

- *A multi-sensory practical approach as a starting point, building on the concrete rather than the abstract
- *Praise and encouragement to establish an ethos in which individual achievements are valued
- *A balance of groupings to include whole class, small collaborative groups, peer partner, individual, ability and mixed ability as appropriate
- *A balance of child- initiated or freely chosen, adult- led activities and direct teaching, which includes modelling expectations delivered through indoor and outdoor play
- *Provision of experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development towards the Early Learning Goals Teaching and learning meet the needs of all children including those working at a level that exceeds the requirements of the ELG's.

EYFS staff are well informed about current EYFS policies and best practice. Staff are provided with opportunities to update and share knowledge and training. EYFS Department Meetings are held regularly.

EYFS staff have time and opportunity to liaise with external agencies such as LEA advisory staff, inspectors, educational psychologists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists in order to provide for individual children's learning needs

- *Staff have annual appraisals with targets set to contribute to their on-going professional development and to ensure that there are high expectations for meeting children's learning and development needs.

Suitable People

We ensure that our EYFS staff are appointed and complete induction procedures with regard to the requirements as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Equality Act 2010. We ask staff to complete annual disqualification disclosures.

Our EYFS team have 'appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.' Our Deputy Head Academic Juniors (EYFS Manager) has qualified teacher status and is an experienced Early Years practitioner. In her absence, the Nursery or Prep I Teacher takes on the role of Deputy Manager. Our Early Years Practitioners all have approved Level 3 qualifications as a minimum requirement. Our

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Nursery staffing ratio meets the requirements. Our Prep I staffing ratio exceeds the recommended Reception ratio of 1:30

There are contingency plans in place for staff absences. We will always seek to cover with EYFS Team Members first. For long-term absences, or if we are unable to maintain the ratios with our own EYFS staff we will use Agency Staff. We will ensure that we ask the Agency that the cover staff have suitable qualifications and experience, and that they hold current DBS checks. Those who are in school for more than a week will undergo our induction procedures, including safeguarding training.

Key Person

On starting Nursery or school we allocate every child a key person who is a member of the EYFS Team. This person gets to know the child in more depth and will take responsibility for helping them to settle into school, recording progress and development, communicating with parents and personal and social development. The key Person also ensures that every child's learning and development is tailored to meet their individual needs. The secure relationship between the child and Key Person helps the child to become familiar with the school environment and to feel confident and safe within it. We maintain a regular two-way flow of information between parents and carers.

The Learning Environment

The learning environment encompasses the indoor, outdoor and emotional environments, we try to ensure that the indoor and outdoor environments are interlinked as much as possible so that children can move freely between them.

*We provide a welcoming, comfortable environment for children and their parents

*We provide a rich, stimulating environment that fosters children's learning about themselves, each other and the world around them

*Organisation of the learning environment ensure that there are opportunities for active learning where children can move safely around quiet areas, role-play areas, messy play, creative areas, investigative play, physical play, writing and mark-making areas, reading area, modelling and construction

*The learning environment is carefully labelled and resources are accessible so that children can become confident independent learners

*Resources are well maintained and we encourage the children to take care of them

Planning

The starting point for planning is the child, their interests and experiences and what they know and understand.

*All EYFS staff are involved in planning, working together, generating ideas and sharing expertise, skills and knowledge

*Planning includes long-term planning- across a year, medium-term planning –termly/half-termly and short-term planning – weekly plans

*A thematic approach to planning enables children to make links between the areas of learning and development

*Not all children will cover all of the planned activities. This will depend on their development, interests and needs

Observation and Assessment

EYFS staff undertake sensitive formative observational assessment in order to plan to meet young children's

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individual needs. This is an integral part of the learning and development process. The EYFS Curriculum enables staff to observe children in a variety of situations and learning contexts so that we can learn about children's strengths and weaknesses, knowledge and understanding, interests and experiences, patterns of behaviour and stages of development. Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals and we keep a Learning Journey for every child in the EYFS. The EYFS Profile is completed for every child in order to provide parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels and their readiness for Prep II (Year 1). Our Prep II teacher is given a copy of the Profile report and it is also sent to parents.

We complete electronic assessments using the Early Essence programme which enables us to track each child's progress and attainment and generate analysis for individual learners and specified groups of learners.

All EYFS staff contribute to children's assessment profiles and Learning Journeys. We liaise with parents, carers and children's previous settings to build up a picture of what children already know and can do upon entry to school. We continue to liaise with parents throughout the year to build up a fuller picture of the child's learning and development and to share their children's achievements.

*Assessment takes many forms – photographs, written observations, anecdotal evidence, dated and annotated samples of children's work

*Observations are made on a regular basis and inform planning and assessment

*Observation informs staff of what the child is doing, learning and how involved they are in the learning process

*Targets for the Prime Areas (and Maths and Literacy in Prep I) are shared with EYFS parents in the Michaelmas and Lent terms so that we can work in partnership to achieve children's full learning and development potential. A detailed report across all Areas of Learning and the characteristics of Effective Learning is shared with parents in the Summer Term

*Profiles are moderated termly by EYFS staff to ensure consistency and we also participate in LEA moderations

*Termly assessment meetings are used as a tool to track children's learning and development and ensure that all children are making progress towards the Early Learning Goals

*The Head teacher, Deputy Head Academic Juniors and the EYFS Governor have overall responsibility for monitoring children's progress in learning and development to ensure that all children are reaching their full potential.

Special Educational Needs

We observe and monitor individual children's progress throughout the year and where a child has a disability or appears not to be making progress either generally or in a specific aspect of learning we present them with different opportunities or use alternative ways of learning. In particular, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas of learning and development gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with parents/carers and agree how best to support the child.

If we identify that a child appears to be behind expected levels, we follow the SEND Code – gathering information and seeking 'Early Help' to create a graduated response to the child's needs. This includes setting clear targets for progress, agreeing with parents what particular support will be provided and tracking how it is working. Parents will be informed if their child is receiving SEN Support.

*We discuss observations and any proposed plans with the parents in a way that encourages them to contribute their knowledge and understanding of their child and allows them to raise any concerns they may have about their

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child's needs and the provision that is being made for them. Wherever possible we involve the children in the process also.

*With parents' permission, we may ask for advice and support from external specialists or to request an EHAP or EHCP assessment.

*The Deputy Head Academic Juniors has undergone training to become SENCO for EYFS. As a team, we continue to develop knowledge of special educational needs by attending training that is relevant to the children in our care.

Partnership with Parents

We recognise parents as the child's first educators. Education is a shared responsibility between home and school. We ensure that we work in partnership with children and parents, building an honest and open relationship. We communicate with parents about their child's progress in learning and development through – daily conversations, emails and letters sent home, informal discussion, parent profiles on entry to Nursery or school, Curriculum Evening in the Michaelmas term, Stay and Play afternoons, termly Parents' Meetings, termly targets for learning and development, written progress reports in the Summer terms, Open Afternoons in the Michaelmas, Lent and Summer terms. Parents are encouraged to send in regular WOW cards to inform us of their children's learning and development at home.

Parents are also invited to Nativity (Nursery and Prep I), Spring and Summer concerts (Prep I), to accompany children on outings and to come into school to contribute to various topics and themes throughout the school year- we invite parents in to talk about their cultural backgrounds and to celebrate Religious Festivals with us.

We have an 'open door' policy where parents or grandparents can come in and look around the classrooms at the end of the day.

We provide parents with information about

*How the EYFS is delivered in Nursery/Prep I and how they can access more information – Welcome Booklet, Curriculum Evening, VLE pages

*The type and range of activities and experiences provided for children, daily routines, and how parents/carers can share learning at home – Curriculum Evening, Parent Workshops, Stay and Play, Open Door Afternoons

*How we support children with special educational needs and disabilities – SEND Policy available on website

*Food and drinks provided for children – Menus available on website

*Details of our procedures in the event of a parent/carer failing to collect a child on time – Uncollected Child Policy available on website

*Details of our procedures in the event of a child going missing at, or away from school – Missing Child Policy available on website

Health and Safety

It is of the utmost importance to us that all children in the school are safe. 'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure.' We educate our children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

All staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage Team take care when setting up, moving and managing resources. The Early Years Foundation Stage Team ensures that the school safety guidelines are consulted concerning any activity. Appropriate EYFS Risk Assessments are in place for daily activities and additional Risk Assessments are carried out for visits, outings and any activities where it is deemed necessary.

At St Augustine's Priory we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in

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the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- *Take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. To safeguard children, ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children (See Safeguarding Policy)
- *Promote good health (including oral health), preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill (see First Aid Policy and Administration of Medicines Policy)
- *Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs (See Behaviour Policy)
- *Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are welcoming, safe and stimulating
- *Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their individual needs and help them grow in confidence
- *Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children
- *The Deputy Head Academic Juniors is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for children in the EYFS
- *The Deputy Head Academic Juniors represents the EYFS at termly meetings on the school Safeguarding Committee, Academic Committee, E-Safety Committee, Health and Safety Committee.

First Aid in the Early Years Foundation Stage

We have a high proportion of staff who are Paediatric First Aiders. All children requiring first aid treatment in the EYFS are cared for by our Paediatric First Aiders or our School Nurse, depending on their need. Our School Nurse liaises with EYFS staff and parents where long-term care is needed, or to put Care Plans in place. These First Aiders have received training which complies with EYFS guidelines. We ensure that staff renew their qualifications and keep up to date with current recommended practice.

Documents Referred to:

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - September 2021 DfE

SEND Code -April 2020 DfE

Keeping Children Safe In Education - September 2021 DfE

St Augustine's Priory Safeguarding Policy - September 2021

St Augustine's Priory Behaviour Policy – September 2021

St Augustine's Priory First Aid Policy - September 2021

St Augustine's Priory EYFS Administration of Medicines Policy - September 2021

St Augustine's Priory EYFS Uncollected Child Policy - September 2021

St Augustine's Priory Missing Child Policy - September 2021