

Our Early Years Philosophy

Within our Early Years setting, children are valued as unique individuals who learn and develop through a holistic approach that includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social and cultural experiences. Our pedagogy reflects the belief that children benefit from positive relationships with other children and adults, enabling them to feel happy and secure, and to value and respect one another in all aspects of their lives. An ethos of independent learning and development through a stimulating play-based environment is seen as essential for children to achieve their potential in all aspects of their education. We believe that;

'Play provides a basis for developing understanding and for fostering the skills that are necessary to move, to plan, to act and to learn from a new experience' (Macintyre, 2012).

Building on the children's previous experiences, interests and culture, we understand the importance of:

- **A unique child** – Seeing all children as an individual; Every child, every day
- **Positive relationships** – Through nurture, care and respect
- **Enabling environments** – Using open-ended resources across an exciting provision space
- **Learning and development** – Modelling, supporting and challenging through play partnering

The aim of our Early Years setting is to ensure that the *whole* child develops through supporting the children's emotional development and welfare. We focus on developing communication and language through a 'hands-on' curriculum, prioritising back and forth interactions to improve connections, relationships and understanding. Physical develop is supported through a range of engaging experiences to build the skills needed for school life.

We promote a love of learning that enables children to become confident and creative thinkers. Our ethos encourages the *process* and *enjoyment* of learning and focuses on developing positive dispositions, independence and confidence. These traits are observed and recorded as 'The Characteristics of Effective Learning', which support practitioners with future planning, enabling them to create learning situations for children's next steps and needs. The role of other children and adults within an enabling environment also features greatly in our pedagogy and is recognised and fostered through Key Groups/Persons, with a consistent *nurturing* approach to all children.

We learn about our children in order to meet them 'where they are now', building an environment and creating experiences which meet their emerging developmental needs over time. We identify children's emerging **schemas**, foster and facilitate them to enable children to develop their understanding of the world around them, making crucial connections.

Aims

- To enable all children to become creative and independent autonomous learners.
- To provide an inclusive and secure environment where all children have the right to feel safe and happy.
- To provide equal opportunities for all children to develop to their full potential and be respectful and appreciative of other cultures, values and beliefs.
- To provide a well-balanced curriculum for each child to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.
- To enable children to play, learn and co-operate with others.
- To provide a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment where learning is enjoyable, positive, fun and builds upon previous experiences and challenges future thinking.
- To offer a variety of high-quality learning experiences and resources that give the children the opportunity and time to independently explore and discover, and to question and think for themselves.
- To promote high expectations of positive behaviour through giving children choices, opportunities, ownership and responsibility for their decision making.
- To establish an effective partnership with parents and carers, supporting continuous learning and the well-being of their children.
- To ensure the smooth transfer from home and pre-school settings to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and from the EYFS to Key Stage One.
- To continue to reflect upon our continuing professional development and in doing so further enhancing the quality of early years experiences for all children in the setting.

Early Years at Coleshill Heath

We offer childcare and education to families in the following ways:

- 2 year old funding (criteria applies)
- Universal 3 year old funding (15 hours)
- 30-hour funding for working parents
- Fee-paying sessions
- Fee-paying top ups (around children's booked funded sessions)
- Fee-paying full day care

Nursery classes intake at the start of each term, in the September, January and April of each academic year. Children who access this provision via funding, are able to start the term after their second or third birthday. Children who are not eligible for the 2 year or 3 year funding (30 hours) can access a fee-paying place, which can be accessed from any point in the year as needed. Universal hours for 3 year olds are offered as either a morning or afternoon session each day.

Learning in the Early Years

Our CHS Early Years Curriculum follows a progressive sequence which builds on knowledge throughout the year and as children progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage (age 2 to Reception year). Adults in the setting observe and talk to the children as they play in order to extend, stimulate and support their learning and development. Key stories and rhymes form the basis of our learning to develop children's vocabulary and communication skills over time. The children's learning is also developed using their interests and ideas to motivate and engage. Activities across the EYFS can be adult-initiated and adult-led, and we value the importance of child-initiated experiences. Learning may be supported within whole class sessions, small group work or one to one tasks. Throughout all learning styles, we promote independence of thought and creativity, focussing on positive learning dispositions and processes.

The adults in Early Years work as teachers, facilitators, play-partners, demonstrators and scribes during both child-initiated and adult-initiated activities. Language and communication is at the heart of our curriculum, and positive conversations are vital to the development of children's vocabulary, social skills and understanding. Through talk children can explain their thoughts and feelings, and we value the voice of all children.

Curriculum Progression: Areas of Learning

The educational programmes of the EYFS consist of seven areas; three Prime Areas and four Specific Areas. All 'Areas of Learning and Development' are inter-connected and of equal importance, however the Prime Areas lay the foundations for children's success in all other areas of learning and life.

The Prime areas of Learning and Development are:

1. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Building Relationships, Self-Regulation, Managing Self.
2. **Communication and Language:** Speaking and Listening, Attention and Understanding.
3. **Physical Development:** Gross Motor and Fine Motor.

The Specific areas of Learning and Development are:

1. **Mathematics:** Number and Numerical Patterns
2. **Understanding of the World:** Past and Present, The Natural World, and People, Culture and Communities
3. **Literacy:** Word Reading, Comprehension, Writing
4. **Expressive Arts and Design:** Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive

Each 'Area of Learning' is split into subjects, each with an 'Early Learning Goal' which children will be assessed against at the end of the reception year (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile).

The 'Development Matters (2020)' has the following pathways of children's development in broad ages and stages which can support practitioners with their understanding of typical child development;

- Birth to Three – Main area of development for our 2 year Provision
- Three and Four year olds – Main area of development for Nursery
- Children in Reception – Main area of learning for Reception

Practitioners may also use the 'Birth to 5 Matters (2021)' document to observe the stages of typical child development broken down into smaller steps or 'ranges'. Range 4 is particularly useful when baselining 2 year olds as they enter our school.

Assessment

Assessment of children's achievement informs effective planning of the early years provision. Once the children have settled into our setting, we create baseline scores based upon child-initiated and adult-led activities within the first 4-6 weeks. The purpose of this is to establish a secure baseline understanding of where children are in their learning journey.

Children in nursery and reception are assessed against the educational programmes as stated in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2020) throughout the year. Reception children are assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGS) in the summer term, known as the EYFS Profile (EYFSP).

Assessments are based on observations of child-initiated and adult-led daily activities, and further information is gathered from parents. At the end of the Reception year for each Early Learning Goal (ELG), teachers will judge whether a child is either:

Emerging	Not yet reached the expected level of development
Expected	Securely working within the expected level of development

Nursery baselines

During the first 6 weeks of children starting in our 2 year old provision, the child's key person and the nursery teacher will collect evidence towards their '2 Year Check'. This comprises of a short report detailing how the child is achieving in the Prime Areas; 1. Communication and language, 2. Physical development, and 3. Personal, social and emotional development. Practitioners use the Birth to 5 Matters document to support their judgements. 2 Year Checks are shared with parents and they are invited to contribute towards the information gathered.

Observations gathered on our 3 year old children will inform the nursery teacher to make a judgement of 'On Track' or 'Not on Track' with our *2 Year Old Curriculum Goals* and *CHS Early Years Curriculum* on entry.

Reception baselines

Children in Reception are required to complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) with a familiar adult within the first 6 weeks of starting Reception. It involves completing activities one to one to assess the children's starting points in 'language, communication and literacy' and 'mathematics', which are recorded on a laptop by the adult. No numerical score is shared and the data will be used at the end of year 6 to form the school-level progress measure.

Observations gathered on Reception children will inform the teachers to make a judgement of 'On Track' or 'Not on Track' with our *3 Year Old Curriculum Goals* and *CHS Early Years Curriculum* on entry.

We assess the next steps in their learning in the following ways:

- We record observations of the children's learning in both Nursery and Reception through the use of **Tapestry**, a digital 'learning journey' which is shared with parents 'live' throughout the year. All practitioners in our early years setting record high-quality observations on **Tapestry** giving a broad and progressive account of every child's learning, witnessed in different areas of the environment. We use photographs to show developments in learning and record the child's voice to demonstrate their understanding and the process. These observations are linked to the Area of Learning being developed by the children, and the Characteristics of Effective Learning that are being presented.
- Once a half term we conduct a variety of play-based assessments, including a RWI phonics assessment and a maths assessment in Reception. We carry out a 'Big-Writing' assessment every term with each child and these pieces of evidence build up over the child's life at Coleshill Heath School, giving a portfolio of evidence throughout their time with us.
- Reception children have a Big Writing book, RWI book, Maths sheet, and each early years class has a whole class 'floor book' which are passed on to their next teacher as they transition into Year One. Evidence gathers in books as the children's skills develop over the year, with more evidence being added by adults in the Autumn term, and children using them more independently in the Spring and Summer terms as their abilities progress. Writing will be modelled and supported by the adult, including letter formation and pencil-grip support. Maths evidence is gathered by adults adopting a play-partner role, offering 'sustained shared-thinking' situations, to further challenge and develop children's individual mathematical concepts and understanding for maths mastery. The class 'floor book' contains photographic evidence of the topics covered each month, including RE, British Values and PSED, celebrations and special events/ visitors, supported by quotes from the children. The children look through the 'floor book' to discuss their learning throughout the year, supporting their vocabulary and helping them to remember all of the things they've discovered together.
- We assess children once a term against the CHS Early Years Curriculum using their individual observations, practitioner knowledge and the evidence in books, recording their development as either 'on track' or 'not on track'. Teachers will identify which children need support to move to 'on track' and ensure that their planning and interventions support these needs. We moderate as a team to make sure that our judgements for each Area of Learning are accurate and consistent. Practitioners also moderate with other schools with a particular focus each term, agreeing assessments and building up evidence of secure judgements.
- Every term we enter our moderated data into the Insight Tracking/SIMS system. Once all the data has been entered we can access several subsequent grids in order to analyse the information looking for trends and patterns in the children's development. Evaluation of the children's progress and development is used to identify next steps in learning and inform future planning and intervention support groups via Learning and Standard reviews.
- One aspect which we monitor closely is the Good Level of Development (GLD) intended for the end of Reception year, but throughout a child's life in Nursery and Reception. A Good Level of Development is deemed if a child has achieved the Early Learning Goals in the following areas:

Literacy: Word Reading, Comprehension, and Writing

Mathematics: Number and Numerical Patterns.

Physical: Gross Motor and Fine Motor.

Personal, Social and Emotional: Building Relationships, Self-Regulation, Managing Self.

Communication and Language: Speaking, Listening, Attention and Understanding.

If a child fails to achieve the Early Learning Goal in any one of the developmental areas above then they will not be classified as having a Good Level of Development.

- At the end of each academic year the SIMS data is submitted to the Local Education Authority, where it is compared with local and national statistics. Data is submitted 4 times a year, at the initial baseline and the end of each term.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

By the end of their journey with us, children in our 2 year old provision, nursery and reception will also be assessed against the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (CoEL). These 'characteristics' assess how a child learns, problem solves, perseveres, engages with activities and demonstrates higher-order thinking. The CoEL are:

Playing and exploring - Finding out and exploring, Playing with what they know, Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning - Being involved and concentrating, Keeping trying, Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and Thinking Critically - Having their own ideas, Making links, Choosing ways to do things

Children demonstrate these characteristics as they engage in learning, and all adults contribute to build a picture of each child as an individual learner through documenting their progression during observations/ child-initiated play. These characteristics need to be present to show that a child is making progress.

A statutory report is sent to parents/carers at the end of the Reception year discussing how their child fulfils these characteristics, and we start to evidence and report on these learning styles from nursery to enable high achievement.

Relationships with Parents/Carers

Building positive, working relationships with parents/carers is central to the effective provision within our early years setting. Practitioners share children's development, progress and achievements with their parents and/or carers informally on a regular basis. Feedback and next steps in learning are discussed formally at parent consultation meetings and during each termly report.

Parents also have the opportunity to communicate with practitioners through Class Dojo, our school rewards system via messages. They can view updates of the learning in the classrooms several times a week through Class Dojo's 'Class Story'. We encourage parents to talk about current topics and learning interests with their children at home, supporting the children's learning process.

We provide opportunities for the parents/carers to extend their child's learning at home through activities that are sent home each half-term through homework and challenges. We also send out scheme reading books (Reception) and free choice library books as well as games, phonic cards, letter formation support and number lines as and when applicable for the children, to help support learning at home.

Planning

Our planning begins with a Talk4Writing story for each half term. This story is tailored to meet the needs of the cohort/class in terms of their next steps, and activities are planned to meet the children's interests, ideas and experiences. We will plan play-based situations that encourage children to use the target vocabulary of the topic, in a way most suitable for them. Our planning consists of;

- A weekly timetable.
- Focused daily phonics planning based upon the 'Read Write Inc' scheme of work in Reception, Letters and Sounds sessions in Nursery during Spring term and 'Read Write Inc' in Summer. 2 year olds have a daily 'bucket time' which supports the development of their listening and attention skills, and develops vocabulary.
- Focused Maths and English adult-led challenges twice a week as a minimum in Nursery, progressing to four times a week in Reception.
- Focused whole-class activity planning for PSED, RE, PE and British Values.
- Continuous and enhanced provision for child-initiated activities and areas of the environment (indoor and outdoor).

Plans are evaluated at the end of the week and half-terms to inform future planning and to highlight areas in need of further development. This ensures a breadth of coverage of the appropriate developmental age bands.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Children with Special Educational Needs may be identified prior to entry to our Early Years setting or at any time after, as appropriate. Each child identified as having Special Educational Needs will be assessed, with guidance from the schools SENDCo and appropriate external agencies with support from parents. Relevant support and systems will be adopted to ensure the child can achieve to their fullest. Children in need of a Care Plan or with a Statement will be highlighted to the team, with the Care Plan/ Statement shared and reviewed termly.

All adults working with children that need extra support/intervention will be aware of children's targets and will provide feedback through observations and discussions about the child to their class teacher as and when needed.

All Early Years adults and the school SENDCo will support the child and parents in getting extra help from outside agencies as appropriate. We also differentiate learning for all children in our weekly and daily planning, using additional resources such as visuals and communication strategies as needed.

Intervention

Continuous provision and support is given to all children by the use of differentiation within normal teaching activities as well as small intervention groups, focusing on Communication and Language, Mathematics and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Though this may differ upon the needs of the cohort and individual children.

We have specific areas of intervention that target children who need extra support within Literacy, Mathematics, PSED, Language Link and SEND targets. These targeted children are assessed continuously in the stated areas and each half-term their progress will be reviewed. All support is monitored and recorded in an intervention file.

We also have whole class intervention, that takes place on a daily basis, which offers all children throughout each week, extra support and extension in the areas of Numbers, Shape, Space and Measures, fine and gross motor skills and name writing in the Nursery, though other areas may be focused upon as and when necessary.

Please refer to the *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy - 2023* for further information.

Equal opportunities

Early Years operates an equal opportunities policy. All children have equal opportunities regardless of gender, race, religion, culture or ability. They all have equal access to the curriculum and resources. We promote an ethos of valuing, understanding and appreciating other cultures, beliefs and values. Our behaviour policy of Ready, Respectful and Safe ensures that children and staff value each other as equals.

Induction and transition

We provide a smooth and effective transition from pre-schools and home into our Early Years environment. We contact nurseries and parents to find out key information about the children who will be joining us. Where a specific need is identified, we will visit the nursery to work with them in planning the best transition for those children. We run a parents' meeting before the academic year starts for Nursery and Reception which informs parents of the curriculum, staff, school ethos and uniform at Coleshill Heath School. Information packs are sent home to provide parents and children with knowledge of their class and teacher to support transition.

The first 2 days of our nursery year are 'stay and play' sessions where the parents/carers stay with the children to support them to explore and settle into their new environment. These 'Welcome to Nursery' sessions give all adults insight into our pedagogy and style of learning, and we offer advice and support on how they can help their child at home. The parent and child will meet with their Key Person, sharing information about the child's likes, dislikes, comforts and preferences to ensure a continuation of their care and happiness at school.

The Reception children join our early years by a system of staggered entry (usually within a two week period) enabling the adults to welcome and get to know each child and family with care and time. Children who may need extra support settling in with start school first, enabling them to explore the environment and get to know staff in a smaller group, setting them up for a positive school start.

At the end of their academic year in nursery, children have carefully planned transitional days/activities with their new class teachers and teaching assistants, these transitional experiences are constantly being reflected upon in order to give the maximum possible care for children moving from our 2 year provision into nursery, and then on into Reception. Nursery children will be supported by their current 'Key Person' when exploring their new classrooms.

It is important that parents/carers are comfortable with their child starting school. For this reason parents/carers are invited to visit their child's new classroom and setting, meet all of the adults in the early years phase and ask any questions during their 'Welcome to nursery/ reception' induction meetings. This provides an opportunity to establish the vital partnership between parents and school.

We also provide further parent/carer meetings/open sessions throughout the academic year to support their understanding of how our early years setting is organised and to extend their knowledge of learning and development in all areas of the curriculum, for example, phonics and Schemaplay. We run workshops during

special occasions throughout the year where parents join their children in craft and learning activities in their classrooms. Children showcase their achievements and explain their learning to their adults.

Community links

Children in early years have the opportunity to participate in educational trips to extend, promote and consolidate learning throughout the year based upon our topics. Visits from the emergency services and other people in our community will be arranged as appropriate to the curriculum and topics suggested by the children and their needs.

Safeguarding /Child Protection

The procedures that we follow for Safeguarding have been laid down by the Solihull Safeguarding Board. Coleshill Heath School has adopted a Safeguarding Policy in line with this, for the safety of all children. All adults and visitors are aware of the safeguarding guidelines. Please see the safeguarding policy (*CHS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2023*) and speak to the school safeguarding leader.

Welfare Requirements

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

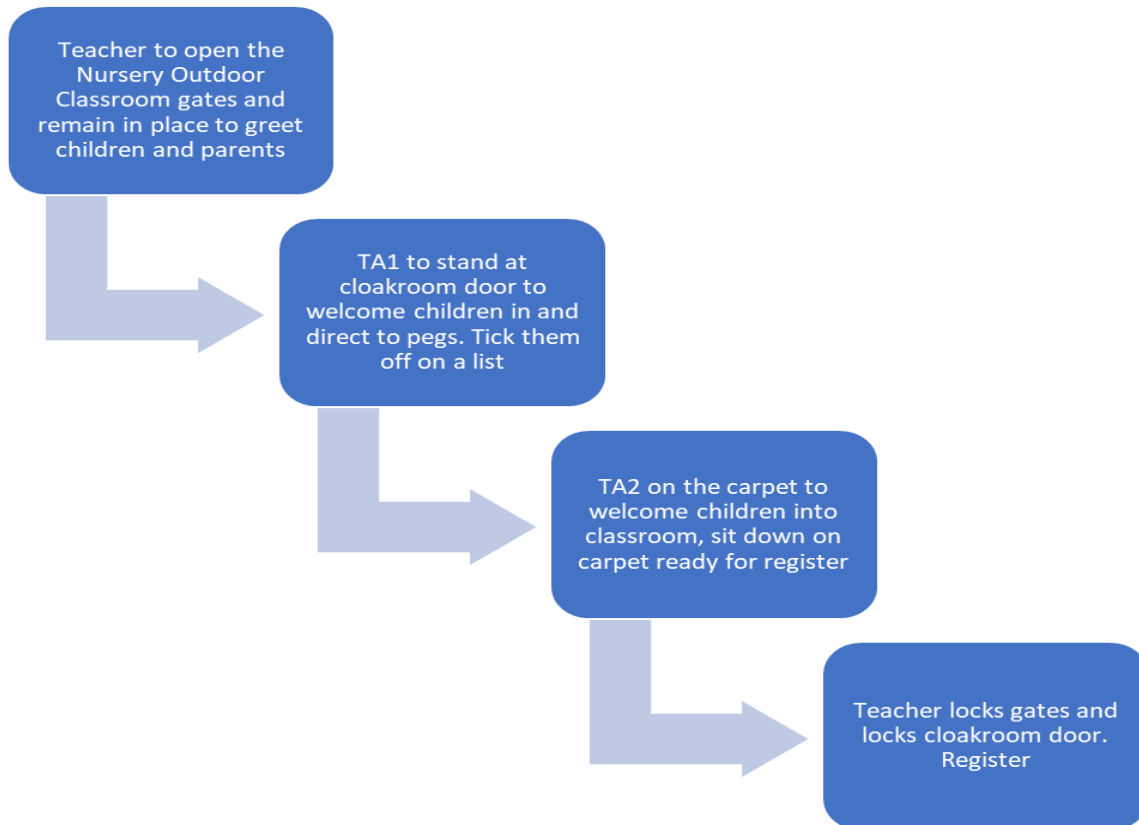
At Coleshill Heath School we understand that we are legally required to comply with the Welfare Requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (2024). We are required to:

- promote the welfare of children. Our staff are trained to be alert to any issues for concern in a child’s life at home or elsewhere. Please see separate Safeguarding Policy as quoted above
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children
- If practitioners are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, those practitioners should seek medical advice and report to the head teacher. The head teacher must 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. Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored, and out of reach of children, at all times.

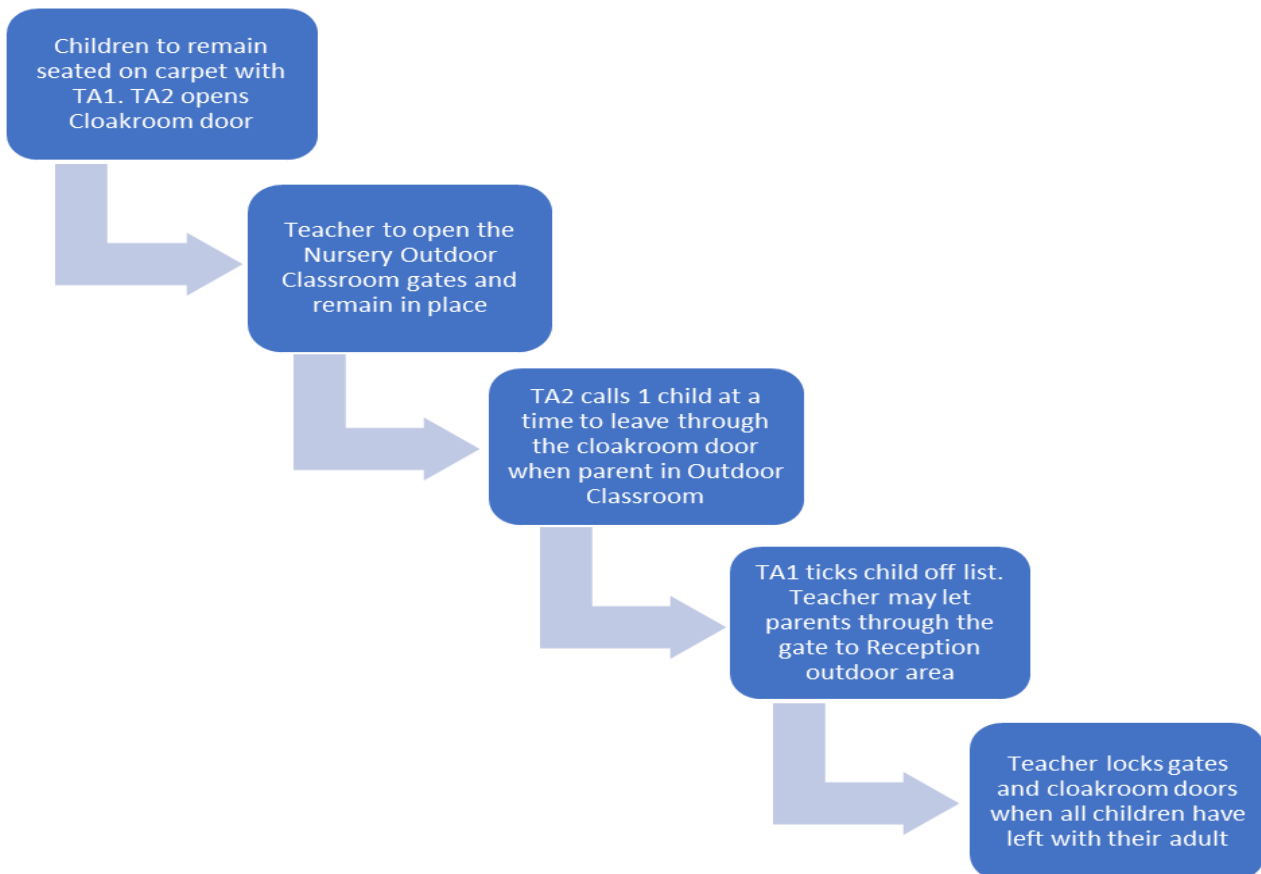
It is our statutory duty to meet these requirements.

As children begin to learn the school routines and expectations, it is vital for staff to be vigilant during handover times i.e children being dropped off and collected by parents/carers. The following system will be adhered to by staff to ensure all children enter and leave school safely, with handover to each child’s caregiver just **outside** of the classroom door.

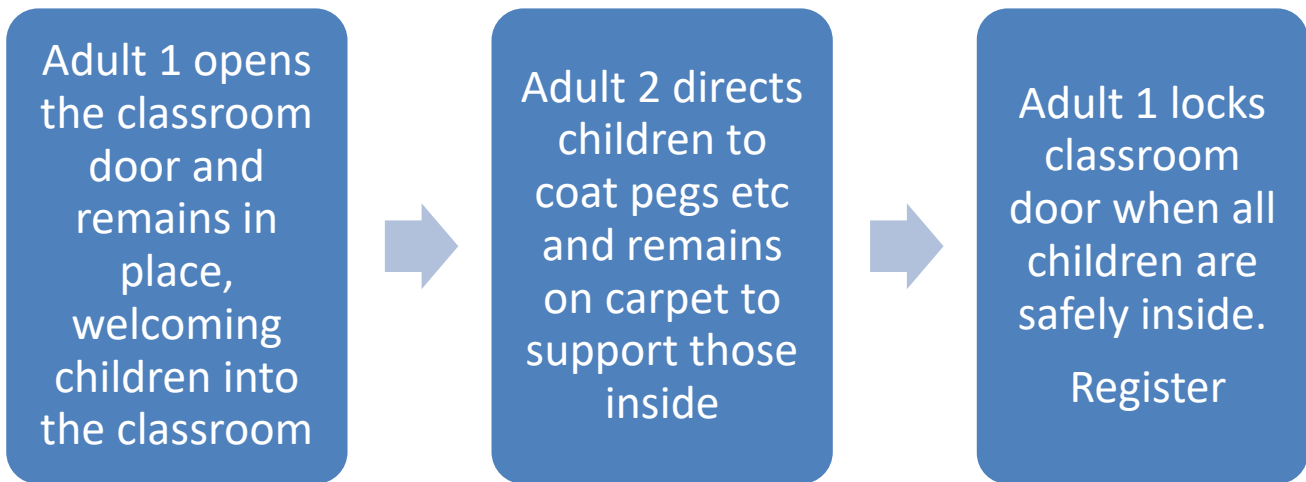
Keeping children safe on entry to 2 year old provision and Nursery Classroom



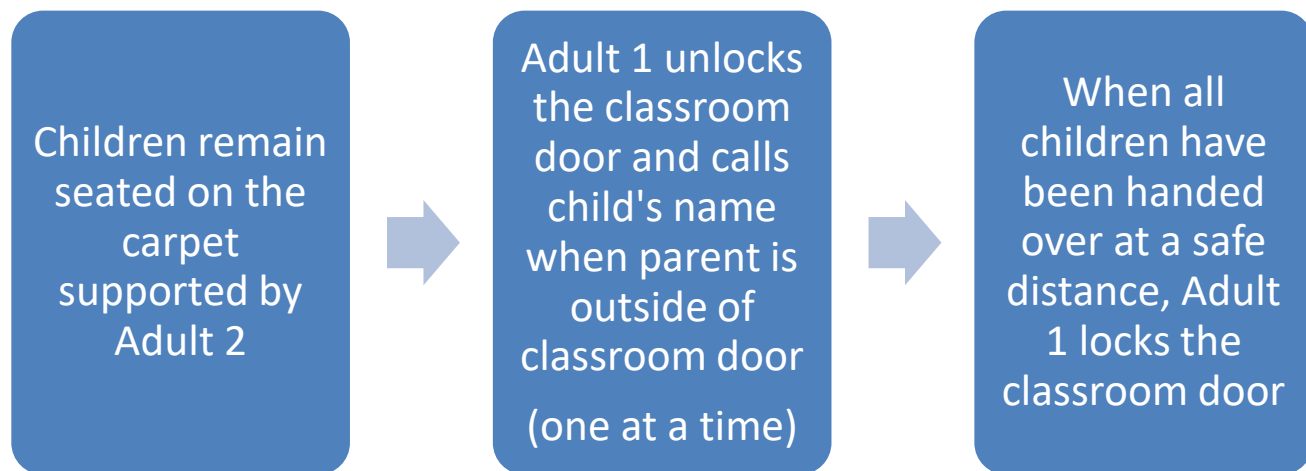
Keeping children safe on exiting our 2year provision and Nursery Classroom



Keeping children safe on entry to Reception Classrooms



Keeping children safe on exiting Reception Classrooms



All children will only be released to parents/carers, or other named trusted adults specified in our records. Adults are required to inform staff on the day if a person other than themselves will be collecting their child.

Attendance

At Coleshill Heath we promote children's attendance alongside their learning. Although non-statutory in our 2 year and nursery provision, we are promoting 100% weekly attendance, to ensure children access the full curriculum and develop positive routines from the beginning of their school journey. We aim to promote attendance positively within the nursery, as a step towards statutory attendance once a child enters the reception classes.

Missing child from our 2 year provision/ Nursery/ Reception

In the unlikely event of a child going missing within school, the following procedures will be implemented:

- The head teacher will be informed immediately and all available staff will be deployed to start an immediate and thorough search of the Nursery/Reception areas, ensuring all other children remain supervised, calm and supported throughout
- If the child has still not been accounted for after a thorough search has taken place, the head teacher or requested member of staff will contact the police
- The head teacher or requested member of staff will also contact the parents/carers of the missing child
- During this period staff will be continuously searching the Reception/Nursery areas and the wider school grounds for the missing child. Other members of staff will continue to support the rest of the children
- The head teacher will meet with the parents/carers and the police
- The head teacher will await instructions from the police
- Any incidents will be recorded in writing as soon as practically possible
- Ofsted will then be contacted and informed of any incidents - 0300 123 1231
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support following a traumatic experience, the school's management will source/provide this support
- Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to ensure the lowest possible risk of reoccurrence

Missing child from an outing 2 year provision/ Nursery/ Reception

During school outings regular head counts will be carried out. In the unlikely event of a child going missing the following procedures will be implemented immediately:

- All external outings from Nursery/Reception will have an individual risk assessment carried out at the place of the outing before the trip has taken place. All adults going on the trip are to read and sign the risk-assessment
- The designated leader of the trip (all trips will have a designated leader) will be informed immediately and all available staff will be informed and deployed to start an immediate search of the area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised, calm, and safe
- Onsite management at the place of the trip will be informed and a description of the missing child given
- In the event of the child not being found, the designated leader will, in consultation with the management of the centre, contact the police

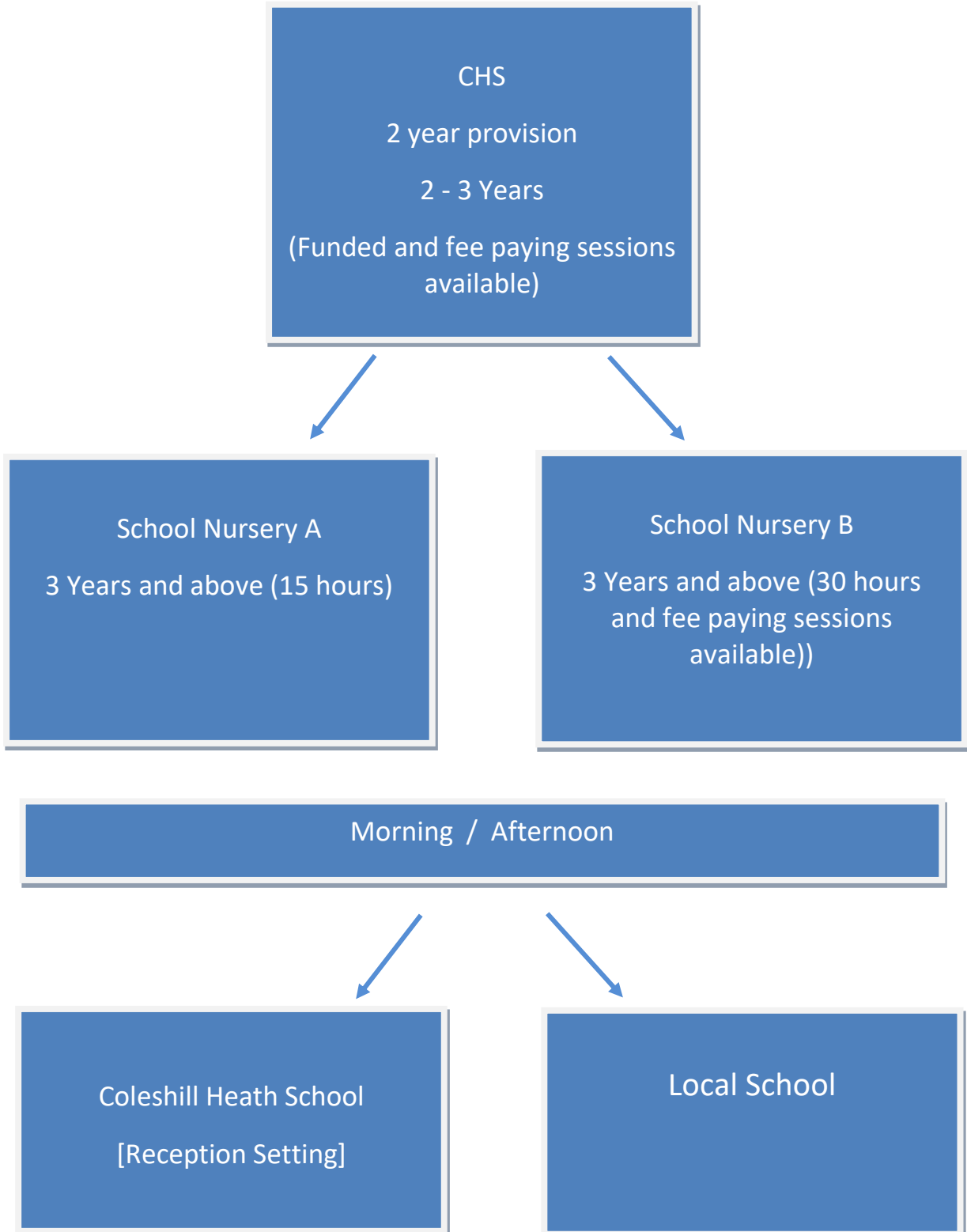
- The designated leader of the trip will then contact the school, who will in turn contact the child's parents/carers giving details of what has happened
- Staff from the school will be sent to assist in the safe return of all other children where appropriate
- During this period all available staff will be continuously searching for the missing child
- At least one member of staff will remain at the scene whilst other staff members return to school with all remaining children accounted for
- The remaining member of staff will meet with the police and parents/carers at a designated meeting point on the trip
- Any incidents will be recorded in writing as soon as practically possible
- Ofsted will be contacted- 0300 123 1231
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support following a traumatic experience, the school's management will source/provide this support
- Post incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to ensure the lowest possible risk of reoccurrence.

References:

Riley, J. (2005) Learning in the Early Years, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd. London.

Macintyre, C. (2012) Enhancing Learning Through Play (Second Edition), David Fulton Publishers Ltd. London

Early Years Pathway at Coleshill Heath School



Policy Name:	Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
Staff Responsible:	Miss T Strong
Governor Responsible:	Mrs J Izzard
Date for Review:	February 2026
Signed Headteacher:	Miss N Fowles
Signed Chair of Governors:	Mrs M Fitter
Date Approved:	Full Governing Board - 12 th March 2024