



# EARLY YEARS POLICY

Subject Leader  
Cheryl Jenkinson  
October 2025

## **Aims and Objectives**

We aim to support all children to become independent, confident and successful learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that gives each child the opportunity to develop morally, spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

### **At Golden Hill we will:**

- Establish an environment that is nurturing, exciting, full of interesting and challenging activities in which learning can take place.
- Understand and follow children's interests and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support learning, consolidate and deepen knowledge and ensure children meet their next steps.
- Encourage empathy and understanding of the impact of pupil's behaviour on others whilst ensuring all pupils maintain high esteem.
- Respond to children's interests and use these to inform planning.
- Give children opportunities to practise, revise and extend knowledge and skills in a consistent and stable environment.
- Enable children to develop characteristics of effective learning, which will enable them to become independent, resourceful and resilient learners
- Develop a close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

## **Legislation**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2024.

## **Structure of the EYFS**

At Golden Hill we have a mixed age class, Eagles, which provides an environment for Reception children or children who need to access Early Learning Goals. We ensure all children have the opportunity to develop and learn in a safe and nurturing environment where play and learning is combined.

## **Curriculum**

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from October 2024.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

Firstly, we feel it is important to get to know the children emotionally, to enable tailored support for their individual needs. We take time to get to know children's interests and their likes to support learning. All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum. We continually promote and develop social, personal and emotional skills to enable children to play and learn together. Language and communication skills are a key focus, as we feel that this is crucial in children's development, learning and progress. Alongside this, we recognise the importance of forming positive relationships between children, staff and parents.

Alongside the language and communication skills identified in specific programmes, we continually support all communication difficulties throughout the day. We feel it is important to ensure all staff (not just Early Years Staff) who are in contact with our children are confident in also supporting their communication needs. E.g. at lunchtimes, playtimes, option time.

All children are valued as individuals. We aim to deliver a curriculum that provides memorable experiences and firm foundations for learning to enable each child to thrive. We endeavour to give children the Cultural Capital they need for the future by giving them the best start in life to enable them to fulfil their full potential and achieve future success.

We offer a broad curriculum with a balance of both adult led and child initiated activities using books and topics which engage the children. We provide a stimulating environment and exciting opportunities both indoors and outdoors to promote curiosity, problem solving and imagination.

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. Our outdoor areas are used all year round and in most weather conditions. We ensure activities support the Characteristics of Effective Learning to ensure learning takes place. These 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.

## **Planning**

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are taken from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths and reading directed teaching.

In planning and guiding what children learn, we incorporate the seven areas of learning, as well as considering the different rates at which children develop, and provide opportunities to encourage the 3 characteristics of effective learning. The Early Years Team have a collaborative approach to planning in the Eagles class. Alongside weekly planning, staff observe pupils, reflecting daily on the achievements of the children, and use this information to adjust plans immediately and accordingly to needs. This is then reflected in the environment and a range of stimulating and engaging activities are planned for children to access independently through child-initiated play. The Early Years team feel it is important to ensure all next steps for pupils are acted upon immediately in order to develop learning for all.

Alongside this, we feel that it is important for any child to have access to individual, intervention programmes where necessary. E.g. emotional literacy, speech and language, gross motor skills.

We provide Continuous Provision throughout the day, allowing children to develop independence, innovation, creativity and problem-solving skills. It is an opportunity for the children to use and develop the skills taught to them on a daily basis.

Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning for children working towards the Early Learning Goals. Due to the nature of changing interests, this is constantly updated and subject to change.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, we liaise with the school SENCO and ensure relevant services from other agencies are accessed and any specific programmes of work are undertaken.

## **Teaching**

Throughout the day, the Early Years Team in Eagles class provide a range of teaching styles appropriate to meet the needs of the children. This means that the children will experience individual, collaborative, group and whole class teaching. We ensure there is a balance between self-initiated, experiential and focused adult sessions.

One of the main focuses through our teaching is to promote and develop social, personal and emotional skills to enable children to play and learn together. The use and

development of language and communication skills is pivotal to our children's development, learning and progress.

At Golden Hill Short Stay School, our teaching styles are also led through the importance of forming positive relationships with the children from the moment they arrive to the moment they leave us. We aim to ensure that all children become secure at our school, through promoting and developing positive relationships throughout the day.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1 or returning to their mainstream school.

We need to take into consideration the Stage 4 children, who return to their mainstream school after 12 weeks, and the teaching style/environment they are moving back to. This can mean a shift in teaching and expectations in preparation for the move, and to ensure they are as prepared as possible, and equipped to succeed back at their mainstream school.

## **Assessment**

At Golden Hill, staff in the EYFS make regular observations of the children's learning to ensure their next steps are met. We regularly assess where the children are, using 'Development Matters' and then ensure our planning, adult interaction and learning environment; including continuous provision, support children to reach their next steps. We will include interventions for groups or individuals if and when necessary.

Class teachers use observations to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Summative assessment compares children attainment to age related expectations using Development Matters. Our assessment judgements have been moderated both in school and externally with local schools.

Depending on when a child is admitted to Golden Hill, the assessments information may be collated from mainstream school. However, we follow all national guidance on assessments:

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

We ensure that mainstream schools receive the appropriate assessments for the Stage 4 children.

### **Working with parents**

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

At Golden Hill, parents are part of the Admissions Meeting, and then termly meetings to discuss their child's progress, together with a report. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

As per the statutory requirement, each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

There is daily communication with parents/carers and teaching staff through the Seesaw App. Staff also support parents/carers with putting in home targets where appropriate, which are reviewed and amended accordingly. Alongside this, staff ensure regular termly chats with parents to talk about their child, and ensure they feel supported with their child's progress. Throughout the year, we plan in opportunities for parents/carers to be invited into schools for events e.g. picnics, school play, sports day.

### **Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

At Golden Hill, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024:

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence
- Promote good health
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

## **Keeping Safe**

It is important the all children in the school are 'safe.' We aim to educate 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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognize and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

## **Good Health**

All children have access to a healthy fruit snack every day, as well as water at all times in individual water bottles. They have access to milk at lunchtimes. Through the EYFS curriculum, children learn about healthy lifestyles, oral health and taking care of their health and wellbeing. We teach children to clean themselves where possible, and how to using the toilets properly.

We follow statutory guidance for safety around supervised tooth brushing. The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding policy.

## **Supervision**

Supervision is a legal requirement for EYFS staff under the revised EYFS Statutory Framework (2017) following a Serious Case Review linked to Little Ted's Nursery in 2010. It further states that supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

All members of the EYFS team receive regular supervision. This will be half-termly for Wendy Slater and Amy Walsh, and termly for Cheryl Jenkinson.

## **Monitoring arrangements**

It is the responsibility of those working in Eagles, to follow the principles stated in this Policy.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Sarah Barrett, will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy will be reviewed in April 2025 or as necessary.

This policy was written by Mrs L. El Kout and updated by Cheryl Jenkinson

The policy will be reviewed on or before April 2026

Signed: *Cheryl Jenkinson*

## Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

<b>Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS</b>	<b>Where can it be found?</b>
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy