



Sacred Heart School

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

'At Sacred Heart School we all aspire to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which every child is encouraged to achieve their full potential within an inclusive community....' (School Mission Statement)

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy provides information about the Nursery and Reception classes within the School.

The Early Years are a critical stage of development for every child. During this time children develop rapidly physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally. The Early Years Foundation Stage aims to build on what children already know and develop key skills such as listening, speaking, concentration, persistence, learning to work together and to co-operate with others. It is also about developing early communication, literacy and numeracy skills and forming a secure foundation for learning, as preparation for the next stage in their education.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interest of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership** working between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

At Sacred Heart School our Early Years Foundation Stage Department consists of a Nursery and Reception class, each led by qualified and experienced Teachers and supported by qualified and experienced Foundation Stage Practitioners.

Safeguarding is a high priority for all our staff who will abide by the terms of the school's policy on the use of Mobile Phone and Photographic Devices (Appendix 1). Parents and visitors are requested to adhere to this protocol also.

2. ADMISSION

Children are admitted into the Nursery following the child's 2nd birthday for a minimum of 2 sessions per week. Parents are encouraged to build up sessions when the child starts receiving their Early Years funding. Children may join the Nursery at any time up to their Reception Year, if spaces are available.

The school welcomes children into Reception from other settings. Children joining at the start of Reception year are invited to visit for taster days and encouraged to attend a regular session(s) in the Summer Term prior to joining to ensure a smooth transition. If children apply to start during the Reception year, they also attend taster sessions.

3. AIMS FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The most important element of any school is the people, whether they are pupils, staff, parents or visitors. We offer a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment, in the firm belief that happiness, satisfaction and contentment leads to improved performance.

The importance of the role played by parents as first educators of their children is recognised and respected. Every endeavour is made to work closely with parents, informing and involving them in every aspect of their child's education, both academic and emotional.

At Sacred Heart School we believe that childhood is a time of play, and through play we discover the excitement of learning, the rewards of achievement, and acquire our life skills. The Foundation Stage setting is purpose built. With its bright, colourful, well-planned and busy environment it encourages children in the development of skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to become confident, useful and active members of a diverse, constantly-changing society. It is through this process that children will work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals at the end of their Reception year.

Children need to be guided to become independent learners, to think wisely, be confident, balanced and compassionate while developing their own particular talents and abilities to the full. Such skills are best achieved in an environment that is stable, secure and safe but at the same time, one which is exciting, stimulating, rewarding and fun. At Sacred Heart School there is firm commitment to these principles and the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering and promoting investigation, exploration and experimentation.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

The four guiding principles that shape our practice:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

- Children learn and develop well within enabling environments and teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong and positive partnership between the school and parents.

- Learning and development is important. We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

4. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Our EYFS Curriculum is based on an observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development. In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education. This is guided by Development Matters, the non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS (2021).

Statutory framework for the EYFS 2021

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape the educational programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections: prime and specific, however all the sections are interconnected and important.

The **prime** areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and Language
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking

- Physical development
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills

- Personal, social and emotional development
 - Self-regulation
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

The **specific** areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics
 - Number
 - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the World
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world
- Expressive Arts and Design
 - Creating with materials
 - Being imaginative and expressive

The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) do not prescribe the curriculum or in any way limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development. Rather, the ELGs are used to support teachers to make a holistic, best fit judgement about a child's development and their readiness for Year 1.

We enhance the learning experience by providing a variety of academic, social, artistic, musical and sporting experiences, including inviting visitors to the school and trips off site.

Activities are planned to reflect children's interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience. Each area of learning and development is implemented through activities the teacher identifies are the most effective for the children they are teaching. The school responds to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through friendly and positive interaction.

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.
- Active learning - children have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.
- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children access resources independently and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

6. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND OUTDOOR SPACE

- The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are purpose built and are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc.
- Children have access to both inside and outside areas during the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

7. TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

Children are individuals and we plan to build on their prior experiences and interests, their skills and knowledge.

We recognise that children have different learning styles:

- Teachers observe the children and identify preferred learning styles in order to create opportunities to match children's preferred styles of learning.
- Diverse methods of teaching are therefore employed.
- Children are taught through topics which incorporate their interests.
- The curriculum is delivered through a combination of child/teacher led activities.
- Activities are adapted as required to engage/extend individual children.
- We observe, record and assess children's development in all areas.
- Some children will need skills/information presented in a variety of ways before learning is secure.
- We aim for teaching which engages and involves children to interact and contribute positively.

8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUSION AND SEND

We promote inclusive practice.

We aim to make 'reasonable adjustments' for any child with learning difficulties and disabilities:

- Ramps and disabled toilets are available within the school to provide access for children with physical disabilities
- Our curriculum is respectful and inclusive of a child's ethnicity, faith and cultural heritage, and the special needs of each child. Opportunities are planned within circle time and assemblies, festivals, stories, indoor and outdoor activities. We are a Catholic school teaching and promoting tolerance, respect and understanding through learning about other faiths and cultural festivals. In this way, children learn about, value and celebrate differences.
- The SENDCo assesses and devises individual setting-based support plans as necessary and advises teachers/practitioners. We communicate with parents if we have any concerns and, with consent, will seek the support of outside agencies where appropriate.
- The school is proactive in identifying and helping those children with special educational needs, including gifted children.

9. INDEPENDENCE

Fostering a sense of self-worth, well-being, confidence and positive learning dispositions in all children is an important priority and one of our strengths.

We encourage self-esteem, making success possible by:

- Child friendly indoor and outdoor areas
- Consistent routines
- Labelled lockers
- Clearly labelled and well organised classrooms

- Encouraging good table manners, correct use of knife and fork to make eating a successful and sociable experience.
- We value and praise independence.
- We encourage parents to help children achieve independence at home with dressing, sharing targets/next steps and celebrating achievements (WOWs).

10. STAFFING

- We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, caring and professional Teachers and Practitioners in the EYFS, who plan and work together to provide a high quality curriculum.
- We have a robust Recruitment Policy in place, to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitably qualified and appropriate to work with children.
- Before commencing duties, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities.
- The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'.
- Staff are supported to undertake the further training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.
- All members of staff who have contact with children and families are supervised by the EYFS Lead. The supervisions provide opportunities for staff to:
 - Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
 - Identify solutions to address issues.
 - Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

11. KEY PERSON

Each child is assigned a Key Person. In the Nursery this is one of the practitioners and in Reception this is the class teacher. The role of the Key Person is to help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The Key Person engages and supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They also help families engage with specialist support if appropriate. Staff information is provided on the school website as well as in the school handbooks.

12. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY LINKS

We provide a happy and supportive environment, forging strong, positive partnerships between home and school.

- The school has an open door policy (which has been suspended during Covid restrictions) and parents/carers have contact with teachers at the start and end of the day. During the pandemic in particular, parents are encouraged to email the Foundation Stage Coordinator if they would like to talk to the teacher.
- Parent consultations are held termly.
- Parents' expertise is used to enhance curriculum work when applicable. (e.g. People who help us; Around the World topics)
- Home/school books are used to communicate with parents.
- Diary dates are issued termly to inform parents of all forthcoming events.
- Weekly newsletter captures the previous week's activities and highlights future events.
- The PTA arranges a variety of events throughout the year for parents and children alike and keeps in touch via their termly newsletter or bulletins in the weekly newsletter. The funds they raise are channelled into enhancing the school environment and experience for all children.
- Sacred Heart School supports charities, both locally and internationally, fundraising in a variety of ways involving and often led by the children.

13. TRANSITION

Starting school can be an unsettling time for young children, therefore we plan carefully for a supported and smooth transition to enable each child to settle quickly and happily.

Prospective Nursery and Reception children are invited to a taster session before their official start date. We also have a twice monthly Parent and Toddlers session which they are able to attend. Teachers are on hand to meet and greet parents with their children and answer any questions they

might have. In Nursery, parents are encouraged to come in and settle their children at the beginning of the sessions (this has been suspended during Covid restrictions).

When children join us from other settings we aim to visit them and observe them in their familiar setting and talk to their Key Person (during Covid we have done this via a telephone call).

The transition between Nursery and Reception with the Sacred Heart Foundation Stage is calm and happy, well managed and organised as the children are familiar with all the learning spaces, staff and routines.

14. SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in the setting safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues are dealt with in line with Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

- The EYFS DSL is Mrs HT and the EYFS deputy DSL is Mrs Collyer.
- The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate.
- The deputy DSL undertakes the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding in the EYFS remains with the DSL.
- The DSL and deputy DSL undertake child protection training as required.
- All staff receive regular safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

We promote good health and manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs. We ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose for which it is intended. We maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

It is important to us that all children are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and 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 recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See our Safeguarding policy)

Healthy Eating

All children in Nursery are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given a choice of a drink – milk and water. They have access to water at all times. Reception children bring in their own healthy snack. A hot lunch is provided at lunchtime for all children. The menu is published so that parents know what their child is eating during the school day.

Intimate Care

Please see Intimate Care Policy Appendix 2

15. ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities and assess the need for support.

Parents are kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS Lead addresses any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

Formative assessments are used to assess the learning and development of children in the EYFS. Staff members observe children to understand their level of achievement, interest and learning styles. The information is then used to shape learning experiences for each child.

The role of observation is to inform planning and so facilitate learning.

At Sacred Heart School, in the Foundation Stage we assess, record and report in the following ways:

- Baseline on entry in both Nursery and Reception
- Daily communication between teachers, EYFS practitioners and parents

- Termly parent consultations
- A two year check completed jointly between the school and the Health Visitor
- A transition report as children move from Nursery to Reception
- Reporting to parents takes place twice yearly in Reception. The EYFS profile is completed at the end of Reception by the class teacher.

16. FUNDING

The universal offer of 15 hours of free childcare is available to all parents of children in the term following their 3rd birthday through to the term following their 5th birthday.

For eligible parents the opportunity to access a further 15 hours is available. To check whether you are eligible for the additional childcare funding please visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

17. CONCLUSION

We are a reflective staff and evaluate our practice.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the main School policies.

Further details on the organisation and daily practice of the setting can be found in the EYFS booklets and new parents' Information Pack.

18. MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of those working in the Early Years Foundation Stage to follow the principles stated in this policy.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head, the EYFS Lead and the Governing Body. Any changes made to this policy are communicated to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2022**.

Updated September 2021 AHT



Sacred Heart School

MOBILE PHONE AND PHOTOGRAPHIC DEVICES POLICY

'At Sacred Heart School we all aspire to provide a happy, safe and secure environment....'

The following rules apply for the use of personal mobile phones:

- Children are **not** permitted to bring mobile phones to school.
- The school accepts that employees will bring their mobile phones to work. However,
 - Employees are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during work time (excluding break times).
 - Staff mobile phones must be switched off during teaching times, including during staff meetings. Devices must be kept in a locker or bag and not be left on display. In the Foundation Stage building personal mobile phones are only used in the staff room.
 - In the event that an employee has a particular reason, for a specified period of time, they may request via the Head that they leave their phone on during working hours. In such instances the phone should be left in the school office to receive calls, alternatively the caller should be asked to use the office number.
 - Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take photographs or videos of children; or to use personal cameras or recording equipment; or to store images of children on their personal computers.
 - Staff mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. Classroom, playground) and may only be used during rest periods.
- Visitors to the school are advised that mobile phones and other photographic devices must be switched off whilst on the school premises. Visitors to the school are not authorised to take photographs of our children. Visitors who wish to photograph their own children (eg at sporting fixtures) must similarly have agreed at their own schools that the publication of such material on social media sites is not authorised.
- Parents who take photos of their child at school events (assemblies, sporting events) must agree that such materials will not be displayed on social media, such as Facebook. This undertaking is included in the Photo Permission Form which parents are requested to sign when they join the school.

Reviewed September 2021JC/AHT



Sacred Heart School

INTIMATE CARE POLICY

AIMS

To provide guidelines for nappy changing, assisting a toilet trained child who asks for help, to ensure the needs of the child are met whilst maintaining their dignity and right to privacy and ensuring high standards of hygiene.

IMPLEMENTATION

Intimate care routines are essential throughout the day to meet children's basic needs.

Children will be assisted by a member of staff in the children's toilet area. Disposable gloves are provided and must be worn. Aprons are provided but are optional. In order to maintain the child's privacy, we will carry out the majority of these actions on a one-to-one basis, wherever possible. A second member of staff will always be present in the foundation stage building.

A changing stand with a mat is available in the disabled toilet and is cleaned with antibacterial cleanser after each use. There is a book in the Nursery to sign when nappies have been changed, when children's clothes may need to be changed or if children have been assisted to use the toilet (noting the time when this was done).

Wipes will be used to clean a child and these will be disposed of in a nappy bin outside the Nursery classroom. If a child wears nappies or trainer pants, these will also be placed in the separate nappy bin.

After changing a child the soiled clothes, if any, will be sent home in a plastic bag for laundering.

The attending member of staff and child will wash their hands thoroughly before returning to the classroom.

AHT/JC

Reviewed September 2021