



Sacred Heart School

EYFS 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.

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the principles and practice of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Sacred Heart School, covering our Little Hearts Nursery and Reception classes.

As part of Sacred Heart School, our EYFS provision is rooted in our Catholic ethos and our mission to Love, Learn, Grow and Worship. We recognise each child as unique and precious, created and loved by God, and seek to nurture their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and intellectual development.

The Early Years are a critical stage of development for every child. During this time, children develop rapidly physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually. Our EYFS provision aims to provide a strong foundation for future learning by supporting children to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and confidence they need to become happy, healthy, independent and successful learners.

At Sacred Heart School, we recognise that every child is unique and develops at their own pace. We provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to explore, investigate, communicate, play, develop relationships and become increasingly independent.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes progress and receives high-quality care and education.
- **A secure foundation**, through learning and development opportunities that are planned around the needs, interests and developmental stages of each child.
- **Partnership**, through positive and respectful relationships between children, parents/carers, practitioners and other professionals.
- **Equality of opportunity**, ensuring that every child is included, valued and supported to achieve their potential.

Our practice is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework and informed by appropriate non-statutory guidance, including Development Matters.

At Sacred Heart School, our Early Years Foundation Stage Department consists of Little Hearts Nursery and Reception, led by qualified teachers and supported by experienced Foundation Stage practitioners. We recognise the important role that parents and carers play as their child's first and most important educators and seek to work closely with families throughout their child's time in the EYFS.

2. Admission

Children are admitted into Little Hearts Nursery following their second birthday for a minimum of two sessions per week, subject to availability. Children may join the Nursery at different points during the year, if spaces are available.

The school welcomes children into Reception from a range of early years settings and backgrounds. We recognise that children will have had different experiences and opportunities before starting school and therefore gather information about each child's previous experiences, interests, development and individual needs wherever possible.

Children joining Sacred Heart at the beginning of Reception are invited to attend taster sessions before starting school. Where appropriate, children are encouraged to attend transition sessions during the Summer Term to support a smooth and positive start to Reception.

Children joining during the Reception year are offered appropriate opportunities to visit the school and meet staff before starting, where practicable.

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, security and wellbeing provide an important foundation for children's learning and development.

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 and carers, 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 important life skills. Our Foundation Stage setting provides a bright, welcoming and well-planned environment that encourages children to develop the skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to become confident, compassionate and active members of society.

Children are guided to become independent learners, to think wisely, be confident and resilient, and to develop 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 exciting, stimulating, rewarding and fun.

At Sacred Heart School there is a firm commitment to these principles. The Early Years Foundation Stage underpins future learning by supporting, fostering and promoting investigation, exploration, creativity and experimentation.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that enables 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**, with 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.

Through this approach, children develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for their future learning. By the end of Reception, the teacher makes a holistic assessment of children's development against the Early Learning Goals.

4. Learning And Development

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to support every child's learning and development from their individual starting point. Practitioners build on children's prior knowledge, experiences, interests and developmental needs when planning learning opportunities and interactions.

Our curriculum is guided by the educational programmes within the EYFS statutory framework and informed by Development Matters and other appropriate non-statutory guidance.

The seven areas of learning and development are divided into three prime areas and four specific areas. The areas are interconnected and are all important in supporting children's development.

PRIME AREAS

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

SPECIFIC AREAS

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

Children learn through a balance of carefully planned adult-led experiences, small-group teaching, individual interactions and sustained periods of purposeful play. Practitioners use their knowledge of each child to adapt teaching, provide appropriate challenge and support children to build knowledge and skills over time.

The Early Learning Goals do not prescribe the curriculum or limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are important for children's development. Rather, the Early Learning Goals support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about children's development at the end of Reception and their readiness for the next stage of education.

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

Activities and experiences 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 and teaching approaches identified by practitioners as being most effective for the children they are teaching.

The school responds to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through friendly, positive and purposeful interactions.

5. Characteristics Of Effective Learning

Our environment and curriculum are designed to support the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

Playing and exploring

Children have opportunities to investigate and experience things and to 'have a go'. Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences that 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 opportunities to think creatively alongside other children as well as independently. 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 to enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop confidence, they learn to make decisions and take increasing responsibility for their learning. This provides them with a sense of satisfaction and encourages them to take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically

We encourage and support children to develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things. Children are given opportunities to be creative across 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 organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where children can be active, quiet, creative and imaginative.

Our learning environments are carefully planned to encourage curiosity, exploration, creativity, communication and independence. Resources are accessible to children and are selected to support learning across all seven areas of the EYFS.

Children are given opportunities to make choices, follow their interests and develop their ideas through play and exploration. Practitioners observe children's play and learning and adapt the environment, resources and adult interactions to extend children's knowledge and skills.

Children have regular access to both indoor and outdoor learning environments. Outdoor learning provides opportunities for physical development, exploration, problem-solving, imaginative play and understanding the natural world.

All areas of the curriculum can be explored outdoors. Being outside offers opportunities for children to use their senses, develop physical skills and experience learning in different ways and on different scales.

Appropriate risk-taking is supported within a safe and well-supervised environment. Children are encouraged to recognise hazards, develop awareness of safety and learn how to manage risks appropriately.

7. Teaching And Learning

Children are individuals and we plan learning experiences that build on their prior knowledge, experiences, interests and developmental needs. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates. Practitioners use a range of teaching approaches, including modelling, demonstration, explanation, questioning, discussion, storytelling, direct teaching and sustained shared thinking. The curriculum is delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. Children have sustained periods of play alongside purposeful adult interaction and carefully planned teaching.

Practitioners observe children as they play and learn and use this knowledge to adapt provision, identify next steps and provide appropriate challenge and support. Activities and experiences are adapted to ensure that all children can participate and make progress, including children with SEND. We place a strong emphasis on developing children's communication and language, vocabulary, independence, curiosity, resilience and ability to think critically.

8. Use Of Screens And Digital Technology

Digital technology is used thoughtfully and purposefully within the EYFS and only where it enhances children's learning and development. We recognise the importance of young children learning through play, movement, communication, exploration and direct interaction with adults and other children. Screen use is limited, purposeful and appropriate to children's age and stage of development. It does not replace high-quality adult interaction, physical activity, outdoor learning, creative experiences or play. Staff have regard to current EYFS guidance on screen use and support children to begin to develop healthy and safe habits when using digital technology.

9. Inclusion, Equality And Send

We recognise that children have different starting points, experiences, needs and rates of development. We are committed to ensuring that all children are included and supported to participate fully in the life of the school.

We promote inclusive practice and make reasonable adjustments for children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Our curriculum is respectful and inclusive of children's ethnicity, faith, culture, language, family circumstances and individual needs. Opportunities are planned through stories, circle time, assemblies, festivals and indoor and outdoor activities. As a Catholic school, we teach and promote tolerance, respect and understanding through learning about other faiths and cultural festivals. In this way, children learn about, value and celebrate differences.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified as early as possible and supported through the school's graduated approach of **assess, plan, do and review**.

The SENDCo works with practitioners and families to identify children's needs and plan appropriate provision. Where appropriate, the school works with external professionals and other agencies to support children's development.

Practitioners work closely with parents and carers and value their knowledge and understanding of their child. Reasonable adjustments are made to the environment, curriculum, resources and teaching approaches where necessary.

We recognise and support children who may require additional challenge and provide opportunities to deepen their learning, thinking and understanding.

10. Independence

Developing children's independence, self-confidence, resilience and sense of self-worth is an important priority within our EYFS provision.

We provide children with appropriate opportunities to make choices, take responsibility for their belongings, manage their personal needs and contribute to the life of the classroom.

We encourage children to:

- Make choices about their play and learning.
- Access and return resources independently.
- Develop personal care skills, including toileting, handwashing, dressing and eating.
- Take responsibility for their belongings.
- Develop good table manners and use cutlery appropriately.
- Persevere when faced with challenges and learn from mistakes.
- Develop confidence in trying new experiences.
- Ask for help when they need it.

Adults model, encourage and support children appropriately, gradually reducing support as children develop confidence and competence.

We work in partnership with parents/carers to encourage independence at home and school and celebrate children's achievements and progress.

11. Staffing And Supervision Of Children

- 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.
- Staffing arrangements and ratios are maintained in accordance with the EYFS statutory framework and are reviewed throughout the day to ensure children's safety, welfare and learning needs are met.
- Staff deployment is carefully considered to ensure that children are appropriately supervised and that adults are available to support children's learning and development.
- Staff are deployed according to children's needs, the activities taking place and the areas of the learning environment being used. Particular consideration is given to transitions, outdoor learning, mealtimes, toileting and other times when children's needs may require additional adult support.
- Staff communicate throughout the day to ensure that important information about children's welfare, learning and development is shared appropriately.
- Children are supervised at all times. Regular headcounts are undertaken, particularly when children move between areas of the school, before and after outdoor play, at lunchtime and at collection times.
- Registers are taken in the morning and after lunch.
- Staff are supported to undertake the further training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

- Staff are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and welfare and follow the school's procedures for responding to concerns, accidents, incidents and emergencies.
- All members of staff who have contact with children and families receive appropriate supervision. Supervision provides opportunities for staff to discuss issues concerning children's development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns; identify solutions to address issues; and receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.
 - 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.

Sleep and Rest

We recognise that some younger children may require a period of sleep or rest during the school day. Parents/carers are encouraged to share information about their child's usual sleep routine and individual needs.

Safe sleep practices are followed at all times in accordance with the current EYFS statutory framework and the school's health and safety procedures. Sleeping children are always within sight and/or hearing of a member of staff, and staff follow the safer sleep requirements set out in the current EYFS statutory framework.

Children are checked regularly while sleeping or resting, with checks recorded where required. Bedding and muslins are kept clean and are washed after use. Staff ensure that children are positioned and cared for safely and that the environment is appropriate for sleep.

Any individual sleep arrangements or additional needs are discussed with parents/carers.

12. Key Person Arrangements

Each child in the EYFS is assigned a Key Person. In Nursery, children are allocated a member of the Foundation Stage practitioner team as their Key Person. In Reception, the class teacher acts as the Key Person.

The Key Person helps to ensure that each child's learning, development and care are tailored to their individual needs. They develop a positive and trusting relationship with the child and support them to feel secure, confident and settled within the setting.

The Key Person:

- Builds a strong and positive relationship with the child.
- Gets to know the child's interests, experiences, strengths and individual needs.
- Supports the child's emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging.
- Works in partnership with parents/carers.
- Contributes to observations, assessment and planning.
- Supports the child's transition into the setting and between stages of education.
- Helps parents/carers to support their child's learning and development at home.
- Works with the SENDCo and other professionals where additional support is required.

All staff work collaboratively to ensure continuity of care and learning. Children are familiar with and supported by the wider EYFS team, ensuring that their needs continue to be met when their Key Person is unavailable.

Further details are set out in the EYFS Key Person and Settling-in Policy.

13. Parental Involvement And Community Links

We recognise parents and carers as their child's first and most important educators and value the knowledge and understanding they bring to their child's learning and development.

We aim to develop strong, positive and respectful partnerships with parents/carers and encourage open communication throughout the child's time in the EYFS.

We:

- Maintain an open-door approach and encourage parents/carers to speak with staff about their child's wellbeing, learning and development.
- Hold regular parent consultations.
- Share information about children's learning and development.
- Encourage parents/carers to contribute information about their child's interests, experiences, achievements and learning at home.
- Use Tapestry in Nursery to communicate and share children's learning with parents/carers.
- Invite parents/carers to contribute their knowledge, skills and experiences to enhance children's learning where appropriate.
- Provide information about forthcoming events and opportunities through school communications.
- Encourage parents/carers to support their children's independence and learning at home.

We work with members of our local community and wider school community to enrich children's experiences and broaden their understanding of the world around them.

14. Transition

We recognise that transitions can be significant events for young children and their families. We plan carefully to ensure that transitions are positive, well supported and tailored to individual children's needs.

Starting Nursery and Reception

We recognise that starting Nursery or Reception is a significant transition for children and their families. Settling-in arrangements are planned carefully and are responsive to each child's individual needs.

Children joining Little Hearts Nursery follow the school's structured settling-in process, which ordinarily takes place over a series of graduated sessions. The process enables children to become familiar with the environment and adults, supports gradual separation from parents/carers and provides opportunities for the Key Person and family to share important information about the child.

The pace of settling-in is determined by the individual child's emotional wellbeing and needs. Where a child requires additional support or further settling-in sessions, arrangements will be agreed with parents/carers.

Children joining Reception are offered appropriate opportunities to visit the school, meet staff and become familiar with the environment before starting, where practicable.

Full details of Nursery arrangements are set out in the EYFS Key Person and Settling-in Policy.

When children join Sacred Heart from another setting, we seek information about their previous experiences, development and individual needs. Where possible, staff will visit the child's previous setting or communicate with their Key Person.

Nursery to Reception

The transition from Nursery to Reception is carefully planned. Children are already familiar with the Foundation Stage environment, staff, routines and expectations. Staff communicate information about children's learning, development, interests and individual needs to support continuity.

Reception to Year 1

Transition from Reception to Year 1 is planned in partnership with the Reception and Year 1 teachers. Relevant information about each child's learning, development, strengths, interests and any additional needs is shared appropriately to support continuity and progression.

Children are given opportunities to become familiar with the Year 1 environment, staff and routines before the end of Reception. Additional transition arrangements are put in place where individual children require further support.

15. Safeguarding And Welfare

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a fundamental priority within our EYFS provision. All staff understand their responsibility to safeguard children and follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and associated procedures.

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and understand how to recognise and respond to concerns about children's welfare. Concerns are reported immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Staff understand the procedures for responding to allegations or concerns involving members of staff, volunteers or other adults working with children.

The school will make all required notifications to Ofsted and/or other relevant agencies within the required timescales, including notifications concerning allegations of harm by anyone working with or looking after children on the premises, in accordance with the current EYFS statutory framework. The DSL is Mrs Collyer and the DDSLs are Mrs Gabriel and Mrs Alcock.

Health and Safety

The EYFS environment, furniture and equipment are regularly checked and maintained to ensure they are safe and suitable for children's use.

Staff teach children about personal safety, boundaries, appropriate risk-taking and how to recognise and manage hazards.

Risk assessments are completed where required and are reviewed regularly.

Behaviour

We support children to develop self-regulation, positive relationships and an understanding of appropriate behaviour through warm relationships, consistent routines, clear boundaries and developmentally appropriate expectations.

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and that young children are still developing the language, emotional understanding and self-regulation skills needed to manage strong feelings and

communicate their needs. Adults seek to understand what behaviour may be communicating while maintaining clear and appropriate boundaries.

Staff use positive language, modelling, co-regulation, redirection and restorative approaches to help children develop the skills to manage emotions, resolve difficulties and build positive relationships.

Expectations and responses take account of each child's age, stage of development and individual needs. Reasonable adjustments and additional support are provided where required, including for children with SEND, communication differences or sensory needs.

Hurtful, aggressive or unsafe behaviour is addressed calmly and promptly. The immediate priority is to keep children and adults safe, support any child who has been hurt or distressed, and help the child displaying the behaviour to regulate before supporting them to understand and repair what has happened.

Further details are set out in the EYFS Behaviour Policy.

16. Healthy Eating

The school promotes healthy eating and encourages children to develop positive attitudes towards food and drink.

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 are aware what their child is eating during the school day.

Dietary requirements, allergies and medical needs are managed in accordance with the school's Food and Drink Policy and relevant medical procedures. Parents/carers are asked to provide the school with up-to-date information about allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements.

Children are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day and are supported to develop independence during snack and lunchtime routines.

Children are appropriately supervised while eating. Staff are aware of choking risks and ensure that food is prepared, served and eaten in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. Where possible, adults sit facing children while they eat so that they can monitor safe eating, prevent food sharing and respond promptly to choking or unexpected allergic reactions. Any choking incident requiring intervention is recorded and parents/carers are informed. Staff follow current EYFS requirements and guidance relating to safer eating.

17. Intimate Care

Intimate care is carried out sensitively, respectfully and in accordance with the school's Intimate Care Policy. Parents and carers are consulted where children require regular or additional intimate care arrangements. Staff follow appropriate safeguarding, hygiene and recording procedures. Please refer to the Intimate Care Policy for further information.

18. 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 Head of Foundation Stage 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 observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests, development and individual needs. 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, assessment, recording and reporting include:

- Information gathered when children join the Nursery or Reception class.
- Ongoing formative assessment through observation and interaction.
- Assessment of children's learning across the seven areas of the EYFS.
- Regular communications between teachers, EYFS practitioners and parents.
- Termly parent/carer consultations.
- The statutory progress check at age two.
- A transition report as children move from Nursery to Reception
- The EYFS Profile at the end of Reception.
- Transition information shared with the next stage of education.

19. Funding

Sacred Heart School offers funded early education and childcare places in accordance with the current government early education and childcare funding arrangements.

Eligibility, entitlement and the number of funded hours available to individual families are determined by the relevant government guidance and the family's circumstances.

Parents/carers are provided with information about available funding and are responsible for completing the appropriate funding documentation and providing any information required by the school.

The school administers funded places in accordance with its funding agreement and the requirements of the relevant local authority and government guidance.

Further information about current funded childcare entitlements is provided to parents/carers separately and is reviewed when government guidance changes.

20. Conclusion

At Sacred Heart School, we are committed to providing a high-quality EYFS experience in which every child is valued, supported and encouraged to develop their individual potential. We recognise the importance of reflective practice and regularly evaluate our provision, teaching and learning to identify strengths and areas for development.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's other relevant policies and procedures. Further information about the organisation and daily practice of the EYFS is provided in the EYFS booklets and New Parents' Information Pack.

21. 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 Head of Foundation Stage and the Governing Body. Any changes made to this policy are communicated to all members of staff.