

**St Ignatius Primary School**

**Early Years Policy**

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St. Ignatius Catholic Primary School Policy for Early Years

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*‘All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.’*

(Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, 2024)

# 1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

* That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
* Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
* Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
* Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

# 2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf)

# 3. Structure of the EYFS

EYFS at St. Ignatius Primary consists of one Reception class. It is led by a fully qualified and experienced teacher, and is supported by a Nursery Nurse or Level 3 Early Years Practitioner. Additional, qualified staff support as needed, and may work with pupil with SEND needs.

Reception classes commence with a soft start between 8:40am and 8:50am, then finish at 3:15pm. Children are welcome to arrive at 8:40am and go straight to their classroom.

All reception pupils can receive a free hot school meal at lunchtime. Those who wish to may bring a packed lunch.

We remind all EYFS parents that it is important to be punctual and to maintain a high level of attendance, in line with the rest of the school.

# 4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2024 statutory framework of the EYFS. This states four guiding principles which shape practice in the early years.

These are:

• 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 in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;

• importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities;

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development across all areas. Adults and the considered use of the environment support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Learning and Development

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through the characteristics of effective learning:

• playing and exploring

• active learning

• creating and thinking critically

Our EYFS Curriculum:

• strives to encourage and develop a love of learning

• lets learning happen within a child-centered approach

• introduces challenging, engaging and real-life problems

• ensures that children learn to live together peacefully, with each of them playing a valuable role in the multi-cultural world in which they live

• ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning at every stage of development and in every area of the EYFS curriculum

• ensures all areas of learning are regarded with the same level of importance and are interlinked in learning

• PEARL values of • Prayer • Equality • Achievement • Respect • Love are at the centre of all our behaviours in school.

• includes fundamental British values to teach children a sense of self and belonging; enabling them to learn and stay true to the values that make people good human beings

• is reviewed in the light of national developments, new thinking and research and development, and to suit the needs and interests of our pupils.

**4.1 Planning**

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Written planning focuses on short whole-class carpet sessions, taking into account children’s stages of development, interests and guided by quality texts. Texts are carefully chosen to represent the diverse nature of our school, while addressing the needs and interest of our pupils. We have a flexible approach and are guided by the children’s interests, therefore if children lead the topic in a new direction, or introduce a new interest during the term, we will incorporate their interests into our sessions.

A tapestry online learning journal is used to record children’s experiences, track their progress and is shared with parents.

**4.2 Teaching**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

In Reception children will experience daily phonics and maths sessions, led by an adult, in small groups or as a whole class. Phonics sessions follow the Little Wandle Phonics scheme. Maths sessions are guided by White Rose methods and resources in line with the rest of the school. Reading is specifically taught three times a week, in line with children’s phonic knowledge and following Little Wandle Phonics scheme. Children will experience reading every day as a central part of their learning experiences. An engaging reading area and daily story-telling ensure that reading is core to each child’s experience and foster a love of reading. In addition, RE, music, topic and PE are also taught. Every class has a daily story time at the end of the day.

For Reception pupils the majority of the school day is free-flow and child-led. A variety of resources and activities related to the children’s interests, learning needs and stages of development are available for them to access throughout the day, encouraging children to develop their own activities and to problem solve. Adults use their knowledge of each child’s next step to support them during this time by questioning, challenging and extending, where appropriate.

Learning outside the classroom supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, while developing a sense of well-being. It gives them contact with the natural world and offers them experiences which are unique to the outdoors, such as direct contact with weather and the seasons. Outdoor play also supports children’s problem solving skills and nurtures their creativity.

At St. Ignatius children have access to the outside space during all free-flow activity time and for the majority of the day. We ask parents to supply wellington boots and rain coats so that children can be outside in all weathers.

# 5. Assessment

At St. Ignatius, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe and interact with pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

On entry to EYFS children are observed in their play, and a baseline assessment is recorded. In addition, we complete the Statutory Baseline Assessment within six weeks of children entering the school. 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 then shared with parents and/or carers.

At points throughout the year, Sonar tracker is used to record children’s assessments and to monitor their progress. This is in-line with the rest of the school and it is used as a data analysis tool.

Tapestry is used to celebrate children’s experiences through photos, videos and observations. It is shared with parents through an online app, which allows them to view and comment on their child’s achievement. Parents are also encouraged to add their own observations from home. When appropriate, an observation will be extended by a suggested next step. This informs parents and practitioners and supports them to extend children’s learning further.

At. St. Ignatius we ensure our assessments are reliable through:-

• our knowledge of the child gained through observation and interaction

• our environment which enables the child to flourish to their full capacity

• our assessments which include a range of contributors e.g. parents and other relevant adults

• moderation across EYFS team

• moderation with Year 1teachers, other local schools and with Local Authority EYFS Advisors.

# 6. Working with parents

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

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child’s progress and development through the use of Tapestry, as well as the twice yearly Family Learning Conferences and an end of year report.

The EYFS profile, learning journal and annual report helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities.

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.

Strong links are formed with parents, beginning with their child’s transition into EYFS. Parents are invited to a welcome meeting at the beginning of the year, in addition to a variety of parent workshops to help them to support their child’s learning at home. Parents are welcome to discuss their child’s progress and needs with key workers or teachers, at any point, by arranging a meeting or speaking to them at the end of the day when their child is being collected. Parents have access to Class Dojo, which allows messages to sent to the teachers in the parents first language. Teachers will also communicate with parents in this way to encourage engagement from parents who are not confident English speakers.

**7. Transitions**

Transition into Reception

At St. Ignatius Primary School planning for a smooth and thorough transition starts as soon as possible and well in advance of the September or beginning of term start date.

To ensure the best possible transition we:-

• value the parent as the first educator of their child

• make contact with feeder nurseries where appropriate.

• share important information about our school during new-parents meeting (June)

• hold a series of ‘welcome/taster’ sessions for parents and children in June and July

• share information in a transition meeting with key adults for children with additional needs

• meet with every parent and child during Home Visits in September.

• stagger entry of whole cohort in September to enable calm, quiet and more individualised start to school.

Transition to KS1

At St. Ignatius the Reception and Year 1 classrooms are close to each other. This enables children to be familiar with the Year 1 environment and the Year 1 staff. In the summer term, Year 1 staff visit the reception children in the reception environment and begin to form positive relationships with them. They take part in activities and work with the teachers to moderate the EYFS profile. At the end of the summer term, the children visit their new teachers in their classrooms for a session. School reports, assessment and general information is passed to the new teacher through a transition meeting.

In the Autumn term, Year 1 teachers plan a transition period to bridge between the Early Year Curriculum and the Year 1 curriculum. They are aware of children who are working at an EYFS level and plan appropriate activities for them. Reception staff visit the Year 1 classes and support with the transition.

**8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

The effects of eating too many sweet things

The importance of brushing your teeth

Their meals at lunch times and how to make healthy choices.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

# 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Suzanne Allan, EYFS Lead, every year.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework.

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| Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS | Where can it be found? |
| Safeguarding policy and procedures | See child protection and safeguarding policy |
| Procedure for responding to illness | See Medical Needs and First Aid Policy |
| Administering medicines policy | See Medical Needs and First Aid 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 |