

# EXCALIBUR PRIMARY SCHOOL

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy in respect of Excalibur Primary School has been discussed and adopted by the Governing Body

*Chair of Governors/Committee:* Gail Whittingham

*Head Teacher:* Juliet Jones

*To ratified at the meeting of full governing body on: 18th March 2024*

*To be reviewed 1<sup>st</sup> March 2027*

D.Rogers March 2024

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Excalibur Primary School, in line with Cheshire East policy, children join the Reception class in the September of the academic year that they turn five. Children are eligible to join our preschool class after they turn 3. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

*“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.” EYFS Framework 2024*

Four guiding principles should shape practice in 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, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

### A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at Excalibur Primary School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Coordinator is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEN.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

## **Welfare**

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We will 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. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Policy)

*"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 Excalibur Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024. We understand that we are required to:

- Safeguard children
- Ensure the adults who have contact with children are suitable
- Promote good health.
- Support and understand behaviour.
- Maintain records, policies, and procedures.

## **Positive Relationships**

At Excalibur Primary School we to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## **Parents and Carers as Partners**

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents and carers about their child before their child starts in our school;
- giving children the opportunity to spend time with adults in the setting before starting school during transfer sessions;

- inviting all parents and carers to an induction meeting (one each for FS1 and FS2) during the term before their child starts school. These are held in June before the start of the academic year. Further meetings will take place during your child's time in the EYFS.
- holding additional curriculum meetings for parents and carers for example how we reach reading and phonics.
- encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents and carers twice a year at which progress is discussed. Parents and carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year and are invited into school to discuss it further if they wish to;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents and carers.
- providing parents with an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development through the use of Seesaw, an online digital platform.
- weekly FS1 and FS2 newsletters and fortnightly whole school newsletters.

## **Enabling Environments**

- We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. Children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous and enhanced provision.
- Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences.
- Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

## **Learning and Development**

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are

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

The specific areas are

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

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and carers and information from previous settings, children's development levels are assessed.

At Excalibur Primary School:

*“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.”* (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2017)

Planning and guided children’s activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. At Excalibur Primary School we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2017)

Religious Education is also taught in the reception class.

## Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. Staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

## Health and Safety

At Excalibur Primary School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2024, at Excalibur Primary School we undertake:

- to promote the good health, including the oral health, of the children we look after;
- Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) will only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child’s parent and/or carer. We will keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child, and inform the child’s parents and/or carers on the same day the medicine has been taken, or as soon as reasonably practicable;

- We have a separate policy for administering medicines to children. It includes systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medicines, and for keeping this information up to date. Staff must have training if the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Prescription medicines must not be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor);
- fresh drinking water is available at all times;
- children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required;
- a first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept (see accident and injury policy). At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and must accompany children on outings.;
- a health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment;
- a fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy;
- cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use. Staff mobile phones are only to be the designated area (staff room) and a school mobile is to be used on trips/visits.

## Staffing

As outlined in the EYFS 2024 framework our staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. We ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to use staff to ensure children's needs are met. Children must usually be within sight and hearing of staff. Whilst eating, children must be within sight and hearing of a member of staff.

From the 2024 framework

*To count within the ratios at level 3, staff holding an Early Years Educator qualification must also have achieved a suitable level 2 qualification in English. An approved qualification is defined by the Department for Education as meeting the criteria set out in the Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards document. Approved qualifications will be published on the Early Years Qualifications List published on GOV.UK.*

*The ratio requirements below apply to the total number of staff available to work directly with children*

*For children aged three and over in registered early years provision at any time where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status, or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with children:*

- *There must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children.*
- *At least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification.*

*For children aged three and over in registered early years provision where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status, or another approved level 6 qualification is not working directly with children:*

- *There must be at least one member of staff for every eight children.*
- *At least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification.*
- *At least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification.*

*Reception classes in maintained schools and academies are subject to infant class size. Consequently, in an ordinary teaching session, a school must employ sufficient school teachers to enable it to teach its infant classes in groups of no more than 30 per school teacher.*

*Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made.*

## **English as an Additional Language**

For children whose home language is not English, we endeavour to take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning and support their language development at home.

We ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language. We ensure children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Key Stage 1. When assessing communication, language, and literacy skills, we have to assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, we must explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

## **Transition from Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

During the final term in Reception, each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. This indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.