



St James CE Primary School

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Including Coronavirus Disapplications

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**Review period:** 12 Months  
**Owner:** Headteacher  
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**Approver:** Board of Directors  
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*Based on VAT template Oct 2020*

**See appendix 1 for Coronavirus Disapplications.**

**Our school is a member of the [Vale Academy Trust](#), which is referred to in this document as the 'Trust'.**

**In this document, 'parent' means a parent, carer or authority registered with us as holding parental responsibility for a child at our school.**

## **Introduction**

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. ([Early Years Statutory Framework 2017](#))

## **Aims**

These aims relate to the four Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) themes and principles defined in the Early Years Statutory Framework 2017.

- **Unique Child** – To value and respect each child as a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** - To promote and develop positive relationships through which children learn to be strong and independent
- **Enabling Environments** – To provide a safe, stimulating, challenging indoor and outdoor environment, which responds to the needs of all children, allowing them to explore and take risks.
- **Learning and Development** – To recognise the need for children to learn and develop in different ways across the curriculum and promote a love of learning.

## **Unique Child**

In our school we aim to achieve these aims through:

- A high-quality transition programme that helps staff to get to know the child and their family
- Staff considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child when planning the curriculum
- Valuing and respecting every child and family
- Staff engaging in high quality adult interactions, which are sensitive and adaptive to the needs of individual children
- Staff supporting children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture

- Staff identifying any need for additional support
- Staff keeping children safe
- Staff promoting children's good health and well-being

### **Positive Relationships**

- Positive relationships are built on key person relationships in early years settings
- Practitioners establish warm, caring relationships that foster a sense of belonging
- Positive relationships are supportive of the child's own efforts and independence
- All families are welcomed and valued
- Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. Staff seek to engage parents to support their child's learning and development at home, through face to face meetings, workshops, regular communications, learning journals, websites etc.
- Positive relationships across the EYFS are consistent in setting clear boundaries
- Parents have the opportunity to review their child's progress regularly and to contribute to assessments

### **Enabling Environments**

- Learning environments both inside and out, enable successful learning by all children
- The learning environment offers stimulating resources that are relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
- The learning environment offers rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- Learning environments are well organised and promote children's independent learning
- The environment supports children to take risks and explore
- The environment provides challenge and evolves to address children's next steps
- Children are involved in planning and maintaining the environment
- Children have opportunities to access outdoor learning throughout the day

### **Learning and Development**

- Staff listen to the child, parents and other relevant adults then plan, design and implement a curriculum that meets the needs of the children, providing challenging and enjoyable experiences across all areas of learning

- Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned and purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity
- The content of the EYFS curriculum is taught systematically so that children are ready for the next stage of their education
- Children demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours through the key characteristics of effective learning; playing and exploring, active learning and creative thinking, and thinking critically
- Children demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning through high levels of engagement

**The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development**, all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

**The Prime Areas** are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are the main focus for the youngest children.

The three *prime areas* are:

- **Communication and language** - development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations
- **Physical development** - involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food
- **Personal, social and emotional development** - involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities

**The Specific Areas** provide a context for building on learning and development beyond the prime areas. It is through the *specific areas* that the *prime areas* are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest as well as books that match the children's phonic knowledge
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measure

- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology

## **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 will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.

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.

Rich imaginative play provides a basis for good language development and sows the seeds for child development and communication in all areas of the curriculum. In the EYFS, we understand that play is a vital part of the informal and formal curriculum, and that play provision needs to reflect differing needs, interests and cultural backgrounds of individuals.

Active play is promoted so that it supports physical development and healthy lifestyles.

**Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

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.

When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

It is a statutory requirement that each child's level of development must be assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in the final term of the EYFS. The EYFS Profile provides families and practitioners with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, skills, characteristics of effective learning, understanding and abilities, as well as recording their progress against expected levels for the end of EYFS. Furthermore, it enables Year 1 teachers to plan an appropriate curriculum for the autumn term of Year 1.

In our school, we work to enable children to achieve a 'Good Level of Development' by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by:

- ensuring practitioners access EYFS training and support
- ensuring that EYFS practice reflects EYFS principles (see above)
- regularly monitoring quality of teaching and learning
- regularly monitoring the quality of the learning environment
- regularly monitoring children's profiles / Learning Journals
- tracking each child's attainment and progress
- developing and implementing plans which support improvement in the EYFS
- taking part in internal and Trust moderation activities to ensure accuracy of judgements

Practitioners use observational assessment to understand children's learning. Practitioners watch, listen, and interact as children engage in everyday activities, events and experiences, and demonstrate their specific knowledge, skills and understanding. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'profiles' or 'Learning Journals.' The Profile also contains information from families and other settings. Families are encouraged to contribute to the **learning journals** through the sharing of home learning and their child's achievements.

Families can access their child's learning journals throughout the year, with a final report of children's achievements in the summer term. At St James we use an electronic learning journal - Tapestry. This allows parents to see what their child is learning at school and to consolidate this at home.

Online tracking grids are updated 3 times per year following the initial baseline assessment in Sept (Dec, March and June). This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the Trust (3 times a year - October, February and June) and whole-school's assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be entering, developing, secure within the Development Matters age-bands (a non-statutory document). Data is analysed at both school and Trust level and any gaps are identified and addressed.

In June, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child and data is submitted to the Local Authority. A summary of attainment and a narrative on the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning is shared with parents in an end of year report. The child's next teacher uses this information to plan for the year ahead.

Planning follows Long Term, Medium Term and Weekly plans which are based around broad topics or themes. These plans are used by EYFS practitioners as a guide for weekly planning. However, practitioners may alter these in response to the needs, interests and observations of the children.

### **Welfare requirements**

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 that care for them. The Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2017) sets out the safeguarding and welfare requirements for all EYFS settings.

All EYFS Co-ordinators within the Trust complete the Oxfordshire County Council's 'MUSTS' Audit annually to ensure that these requirements are being met effectively.

In our school, we:

- promote the welfare of children
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively (see our Behaviour Management Policy)
- ensure that all adults who work with children in a supervised/unsupervised context are suitable to do so
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- maintain appropriate records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the Early Years and to meet the needs of the children

The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children are of paramount importance to all of the adults in our schools. The governors and staff of our school fully recognise the contribution they make to safeguarding children.

### **Healthy Snacks**

All children in the EYFS are provided with a healthy snack each day. Children are given the choice of milk or water with their snack. All children have access to water

during the day. (Fruit, vegetables and free school meals are provided for all EYFS children by Government schemes. Milk is provided until a child's fifth birthday. If you would like your child to continue to be offered milk in school, please contact the office for the appropriate forms)

## **Transitions**

Effective transitions provide children with the security and support which enables them to be successful and motivated learners. Smooth transitions are achieved through strong partnership working between families, practitioners and leadership teams. Key to smooth transitions is ensuring that children remain the focus of the process. We work closely with feeder early years settings and colleagues in Year One to overcome the challenges of the transition process.

**Starting in Reception** - Parents of all children starting in the Reception class will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the summer term to meet their child's new teacher and other key members of the school where possible. They will also be given information about life in Inkpen class and the Reception curriculum.

**New class sessions** - The children are given opportunities in the Summer term to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. Where there are additional needs for a child, arrangements are also made for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery setting.

**Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1)** - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the rest of the school. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend sessions in their new class during the summer term.

Special arrangements are made for children with additional needs to ensure that they are supported to make a smooth transition into their new class.

## **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working in the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Trust's School Improvement Team, Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring of EYFS as part of the whole-school monitoring schedule.

## Appendix 1

### Early Years Foundation Stage: Coronavirus Disapplications

Please refer to [Government guidance](#) (updated October 7<sup>th</sup>) for full details

The original EYFS disapplications came into force on 24 April 2020 and ended on 25 September 2020. Provisions were made in the regulations to allow for a transitional period of up to 2 months (up to 25 November 2020) for disapplications around staffing levels to continue in recognition that some providers may need some time to get back to full staffing levels once the disapplications are lifted.

If there are further restrictions or requirements related to coronavirus (COVID-19) due to a local or national lockdown, these may affect a school's ability to comply with the EYFS. The Government have therefore made new regulations that came into force on 26 September 2020 and will only apply where a school is prevented from complying with the prescribed requirements of the EYFS due to coronavirus (COVID-19) related restrictions or requirements which have been imposed on a geographical area by regulations or a direction.... A school would not be able to utilise the disapplications simply due to an incidence of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their setting.

#### The key changes are:

- disapplications around paediatric first aid (PFA) certificates have now been included within the transitional period (until 25 November 2020) that originally only applied to disapplications relating to staffing levels – this is in recognition of the difficulties some providers are facing in accessing PFA training or re-training at the current time (full details of these PFA disapplications are set out in 6.2)
- provisions have been made in regulations to allow for the current disapplications to apply if certain conditions are met – these conditions are where it is not reasonably practicable for that provider to comply with the prescribed requirements of the EYFS as a result of either:
  - restrictions or requirements imposed by regulations made under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
  - prohibitions, requirements or restrictions imposed by a direction made under any regulations under the 1984 Act, or directions made under the Coronavirus Act 2020

'Prescribed requirements' refer to the specific parts of the EYFS that can be disapplied, including the learning and development requirements, the progress check at age 2 and requirements around PFA qualifications and staff qualifications and ratios.

The provider does not need to be located in the geographical area where the restrictions are applied but the restrictions do need to prevent them from complying with the EYFS, for example, because their staff live in the area where the restrictions apply and are not able to get into work.

These changes apply from 26 September to 25 November 2020:

- this is the transitional period for the safeguarding and welfare requirements that were disapplied (including PFA) – providers will need to work to re-instate the safeguarding and welfare requirements in full by 26 November 2020
- all of the learning and development and assessment disapplications ceased to apply as of 25 September – providers are now required to reinstate the EYFS for these areas in full from 26 September

During a period of intervention related to coronavirus (COVID-19) between 26 September and 31 August 2021, if the government confirms that an area will be subject to coronavirus (COVID-19) related requirements or restrictions and those restrictions prevent Early Years provision in school provider from meeting the prescribed requirements of the EYFS, disapplication, will be automatically applied. These will begin immediately and will last throughout the period of the restrictions (as governed by the regulations or direction). We allow a 2 week transition period once the restrictions are lifted.