

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our Reception class (Class name - Iona).

### AIM

At St Elizabeths we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS '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 has a major impact on their future life chances.'

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy: Admissions Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy; Behaviour Policy; Tapestry Policy

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

### PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment

- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

## **FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on a range of topics, our observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three 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 three areas are the **prime** areas:

**Communication and Language**

**Physical Development**

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

**Literacy**

**Mathematics**

**Understanding the World**

**Expressive Arts and Design**

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

In the Early Years, we write medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. We also follow the children's interests where appropriate. These plans are reviewed by the Headteacher. Please see our plans for more details. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds' and Daily mental maths lessons 'CLIC' teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. We also focus on Physical - gross and fine motor skills through daily sessions of 'squiggle' and 'dough disco'.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

## **OBSERVATION & ASSESSMENT**

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways including feedback sheets for literacy/ numeracy as well as our online learning Journey using 'Tapestry'.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which are shared with parents daily. Parents are also encouraged to add their own observations to 'Tapestry', sharing home experiences and to comment on observations that have taken place in school. In Autumn term, parents are invited to attend a parents meeting as well as a parents evening. During Spring term we offer another parents evening and provide a 'New starters' meeting for parents and children who are starting in the next academic year.

Within the final term of Reception, we provide the parent's with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation for Year 1.

## **SAFETY**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety & Child Protection.

## **INCLUSION**

We value all our children as individuals at St Elizabeth's, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policies on Equality of Opportunity and Learning Support.

## **PARENTS AS PARTNERS & THE WIDER CONTEXT**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways including parents to become active participants in their learning journeys and inviting them in to be parent helpers in class and other classes in school.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

## **TRANSITIONS**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

Children attend introductory sessions to Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Throughout the year the children in both Reception and Year 1 have the opportunity to mix up every week, to enable the Reception children to have a smooth transition into year 1, giving them plenty of time to become familiar with the Year 1 teacher and the classroom. This also allows children in Year 1 to access the Foundation Stage resources both in our indoor and outdoor classroom to continue develop any skills they had yet to secure within the Foundation Stage curriculum.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

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