

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Early Years Policy



We live, love and learn together in the light of God by...
praying together
learning together
playing together
and
respecting each other

Approved by: Linda Mockler

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Statement of Intent

At Holy Family Catholic Primary School, we recognise and value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development. We are committed to ensuring that children learn and develop well, while being kept healthy and safe.

This policy has been developed in line with statutory guidance and legislation to ensure every child has a happy and positive start to school life, building a lifelong love of learning.

Through implementation of this policy, we will provide:

- Quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- A secure foundation through planned learning opportunities tailored to each child's needs and interests, regularly assessed and reviewed.
- Partnership working between practitioners and parents/carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring every child is included and supported.

At Holy Family, our mission is rooted in Gospel values. Inspired by Pope Francis, we aim to "light a fire in the hearts" of our children, empowering them to make a positive difference in our diverse and ever-changing society.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (effective September 2025)
- DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook (2024)
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

- Prevent Duty (2015)
- Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance (DfE, 2025)

It operates alongside key school policies such as Safeguarding, SEND, Equality, Online Safety, Health and Safety, and Transition.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governing Board:** Ensures clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction; holds leaders accountable; ensures compliance with EYFS statutory requirements.
- **Headteacher:** Creates a culture of positive, enriching school life; upholds ambitious standards; ensures valid and proportionate assessment; informs parents of progress; ensures staff training.
- **EYFS Lead:** Oversees EYFS provision; ensures compliance with statutory requirements; leads curriculum planning; monitors progress; supports staff development; maintains strong parent partnerships.
- **Key Person:** Provides tailored learning support; builds relationships with children and families; acts as a consistent point of contact.
- **Teaching Staff:** Implement this policy; use formative and summative assessment; identify concerns; plan next steps; ensure inclusive practice.

Learning and Development

Planning is guided by *Development Matters (revised September 2023)* and the revised EYFS statutory framework (effective September 2025).

Learning objectives adapted from this document follow a progression via the age related bands in Nursery and towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) for Reception. The Development Matters document reminds us that,

'Depth in learning matters much more than moving from one band to the next or trying to cover everything. A child's learning is secure if they show it consistently and in a range of different contexts.'

When planning the early years curriculum, practitioners will:

- Consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.

- Stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.
- Reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carer and agree how to support the child. Staff will also consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.

For children whose home language is not English, practitioners will:

- Take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.
- Ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring they are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Key Stage 1.
- If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, staff will 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.

Provision is based on the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

All planning should be mindful of the Characteristics of Effective Learners (Development Matters 2023) and seek to provide opportunities for children to develop as capable, resilient and independent learners. Above all we encourage children to adopt a 'can do' attitude. We plan for children recording and sharing their learning and ideas; providing space for many voices and an atmosphere of collaboration.

Children's learning is structured around:

- **Prime Areas:** Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- **Specific Areas:** Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design

The prime areas each support children's development in all other areas. The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to acquire. Both prime and specific areas have ELGs to be assessed and reported by the end of June.

We use the Sound Start Phonics materials and assess children's skills in the Phases. Children have access to home readers from a range of reading schemes. Planning will be monitored by the Foundation Phase co-ordinator and subject leaders as appropriate.

At the end of the reception year, teachers will complete the EYFS profile for all children,

A completed EYFS Profile demonstrates children's attainment across the whole of the EYFS foundation stage.

- The child's attainment is assessed against each of the **17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**.
- A short narrative describes the child's learning style, expressed through the **three Characteristics of Effective Learning**.

For each ELG, practitioners make a professional judgment on whether the child is:

- **Expected** - meeting the level of development anticipated at the end of Reception
- **Emerging** - not yet reaching the expected level

Assessment includes:

- Progress check at age two - for children aged 2-3
- Reception Baseline Assessment - within first 6 weeks of starting school
- EYFS Profile (completed by 30 June in Reception year)
- Ongoing formative assessment

Parents are kept informed at all stages, and provision is adapted to meet individual needs, including SEND and EAL support.

Inclusion

All children will be valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will ensure that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The EYFS curriculum will be planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy will ensure all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

The Learning Environment

At Holy Family we recognise that the physical and emotional environment play an important role in supporting, enabling, and extending pupils' learning and development.

Early years practitioners will ensure that learning environments are well-organised and suitable for group, individual and whole class learning, with interactive displays and easily accessible resources utilised to encourage independence.

We provide children with a safe and stimulating environment that values active learning, exploration, and play, where children feel free to create, make links and develop critical thinking skills.

Children have daily access to indoor and outdoor learning spaces, with continuous provision areas such as:

- Role Play
- Construction
- Creative Area
- Reading Corner
- Maths Area
- Outdoor learning (mud kitchen, water/sand play, climbing frames, bikes, obstacle courses)

Resources are clearly labelled and accessible to encourage independence. Staff support children to navigate and extend their learning opportunities.

Staff will support children to navigate and access the learning environment, intervening and interacting where necessary to ensure that all learning opportunities and teaching moments are captured and capitalised upon.

Appropriate and stimulating educational visits and visitors, from both within and outside of the local community, will be arranged to further expand children's learning experiences.

Play

Play is central to our EYFS curriculum. Through play, children develop independence, resilience, social skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. Outdoor learning provides unique opportunities for exploration, risk-taking, and connection with nature.

We believe that children learn best through a play-based curriculum. Play is the foundation of learning for young children—it motivates, engages, and inspires them. When children enjoy what they are doing and are self-motivated, they learn to their fullest potential. Through play, we nurture growth across emotional, social, physical, and creative domains. The EYFS guidance reminds us:

...play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others.

At Holy Family, we ensure that all children have equal access to high-quality play opportunities both indoors and outdoors. To be effective, our provision includes:

- Planned opportunities tailored to children's different starting points.
- Child-initiated play with resources clearly labelled and easily accessible.
- Adult-led challenges matched to individual needs and abilities.
- Opportunities to gain new skills and experience new things.
- Encouragement to record and share ideas.

How does play support learning?

Through play, children:

- Develop independence and confidence.
- Experience success and failure without fear, building resilience and self-esteem.
- Explore, investigate, and problem-solve.
- Develop social skills and emotional well-being.
- Practise, consolidate, and revisit skills.
- Imitate and replay real-life experiences.
- Act out difficult or worrying situations in a safe environment.
- Learn about people, places, and their community.
- Acquire organizational and risk-assessment skills.

- Develop language, imagination, and creativity.
- Stay healthy and active.

Safeguarding and Welfare

We are committed to safeguarding children in line with statutory requirements.

We uphold the highest standards for safeguarding and well-being. In line with the EYFS and KCSIE 2025, we ensure:

- all staff are DBS-checked and trained in child protection
 - we follow safer recruitment, whistleblowing and health and safety procedures robustly
 - we regularly train and ensure adequate numbers of staff with Paediatric First Aid
 - children are supervised at all times
 - toileting, nappy changing and mealtime routines prioritise dignity and safety
- **DSL:** Mrs P King
 - **Deputy DSLs:** Mrs C McHugh, Mrs F Patrick, Mrs C Yearsley, Mrs F Melton, Mr J McDonald, Mrs K Yoxall

The DSL will be responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services and Local Safeguarding Partners as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required

Staff will be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training and are alert to concerns which are reported to a DSL in a timely manner

Where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare the school will:

- Immediately notify the LA's children's social care team and, in emergencies, the police.
- Have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', the 'Prevent duty for England and Wales' and 'KCSIE'.

- Inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse of children by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises and the action they have taken in response to the allegations. Notification will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Child absences

The school is required to follow up any absences in a timely manner.

If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time or if their parents and/or carers haven't informed the school of the absence, then the school will attempt to contact the parent and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. The school will give consideration to the child's vulnerability, parent's and /or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or police welfare check requested.

Further information on child absences can be found in our Attendance Policy

Staffing

We ensure all staff are suitable, qualified, and appropriately vetted. Recruitment follows safer recruitment practices, including references and DBS checks. Staff are expected to disclose any convictions or cautions that may affect their suitability.

Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or substances that impair their ability to care for children.

Staff: child ratios

The school will adopt the following staffing ratios as defined by the EYFS Framework, 1st September 2025

For children aged three and over in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools

There must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children. At least one member of staff must be a school teacher as defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002. At least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification, or have received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status.

Reception classes in maintained schools and academies are subject to infant class size legislation, which is limited to 30 pupils per school teacher (holding qualified teacher status) while an ordinary teaching session is conducted.

Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios.

Key person

Each child will be assigned a key person (usually the class teacher) whose role will be to:

- Meet their individual needs.
- Help the child become familiar with the setting.
- Offer a settled relationship for the child.
- Build a relationship with their parents and/or carers.
- Help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

The EYFS lead will inform parents of whom their child's key person is and will explain the role of the key person when their child begins attending the school.

Parental Involvement

Research shows that a child has a greater chance of success where school and home work closely together, *Gutman and Frienstein 2007* remind us:

Parental involvement has a greater impact on children's well-being and achievement than any other factor.

Therefore, we work with you from the beginning to find out how we can best support your child.

Children new to Holy Family will receive a home visit prior to starting school. Nursery pupils have a phased introduction to the setting, and parents may stay with their child for the first one or two days. Families of new pupils are also invited to attend Open Mornings.

Parents are regularly informed about their child's behaviour and academic progress. Reception parents are offered parents' evenings to discuss their child's development, while Nursery parents can attend "Stay and Play" sessions. Both classes receive a termly report and a detailed end-of-year report. Once Reception children have settled,

we hold phonics and maths meetings to explain our teaching approach and philosophy for reading development.

Once settled, Nursery children take home storybooks and maths games to share with parents and carers. Reception children bring home a fun reader to enjoy with a parent or carer, and when the teacher judges a child ready, they will also receive a reading book and reading record.

Home Visits

Home visits are an integral part of the settling-in process for children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This practice helps create a smooth transition and fosters a sense of security that supports the child throughout their school life.

The primary aim of a home visit is to provide an opportunity for the child to meet their new teacher in the comfort of their own familiar environment. This early interaction ensures that when the child arrives at school, they are greeted by a familiar face. During the visit, staff will bring activities from the school setting for the child to explore at home. These activities will also be available when the child starts school, creating a tangible link between home and school.

Why We Carry Out Home Visits

- To help children settle quickly and confidently into their new setting.
- To allow the child to begin forming a relationship with staff in a safe, familiar environment, ensuring a welcoming start at school.
- To build strong, positive relationships with both parents and the child.
- To provide an opportunity for individual, personal, and private communication between staff, parents, and the child.
- To help parents and pupils feel confident in approaching staff and engaging with the school community.
- To reduce any potential anxieties or concerns that parents and children may have.
- To gather any additional information parents wish to share about their child.

Health, Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Accidents and Injuries

- First Aid: A fully stocked first aid box is available in Nursery and Reception classrooms.
- Recording: All accidents, injuries, and first aid treatments are documented in the accident book (school office).
- Parental Notification: Parents are informed of any accident or injury on the same day or as soon as practicable.
- Regulatory Notification: Ofsted is notified of any serious incident, illness, injury, or death within 14 days.
- Child Protection: Serious accidents or deaths are reported to local child protection agencies, and advice is followed.

Premises Safety

- Premises are age-appropriate, fit for purpose, and compliant with health, safety, fire, and hygiene regulations.
- Emergency evacuation procedures are maintained; fire safety equipment is functional and exits unobstructed.

Equipment and Facilities

- Premises and equipment meet EYFS space requirements and children's needs.
- Outdoor play is provided daily.
- Equality Act 2010 obligations are met, including reasonable adjustments.
- Adequate toilets and hand basins for children and separate adult facilities are provided.
- Hygienic nappy-changing facilities are available.
- Children are released only to authorised individuals; measures prevent unauthorised entry.

Risk Assessment

- Risks to staff and children are identified and managed.
- Written risk assessments completed for outings and significant hazards; reviewed regularly.
- Checks cover all aspects of the environment, specifying frequency, responsibility, and mitigation measures.

Outings

The school will:

- Keep children safe on outings.
- Assess the risks or hazards which may arise and identify the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage them. The school should make a judgement about whether the risk assessment needs to be in writing or not.
- Ensure that adult to child ratios are considered in any risk assessment.
- Ensure that vehicles in which children are being transported, and the driver of those vehicles, are adequately insured.
- Parental consent will be obtained for all outings.

Mobile Phones and Devices

"Mobile phone" includes any device capable of taking images or recording videos (e.g., tablets).

Staff Use

- No personal mobile phone or camera use when children are present.
- Phones may be used:
 - Outside working hours when no children are present.
 - In staffroom during breaks/non-contact time.
- Phones must be stored securely and on silent during working hours.
- On trips: phones for emergencies only, never for photos/videos.
- Concerns reported to DSL per safeguarding procedures.
- Emergency use allowed with professional judgment.

Parents, Visitors, Contractors

- School is a mobile-free zone
- No photos/videos without prior permission.
- Parents may:
 - Photograph own child at events.
 - Take group photos only with consent from all parents.
- School discourages social media posting of event photos.
- Concerns should be reported to a DSL.

School Devices

- Staff use school-provided devices only for photos/videos.
- Devices:
 - Must have passcode protection.
 - Used for work purposes only.

- Devices not taken off-site without written headteacher approval.
- Report any concerns about device content to DSL.

Information and Records

Information will be stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy. Accident records retained for 21 years and 3 months as per EYFS guidance.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance.

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff and all relevant staff involved with EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy and any linked policy. There is also a linked governor responsible for the EYFS; details can be found on our governor page on the Holy Family School website.

The senior leadership team will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole-school monitoring schedule. We will evaluate its effectiveness by taking into account feedback from all relevant parties involved with the EYFS setting and anything which has come to light during observations in the setting. We also carry out curriculum reviews and take account of any national reviews and reports in this area