



SARUM HALL SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Date: September 2026

Next Review Due: September 2027

Reviewed by: Head of Early Years

RATIONALE

At Sarum Hall School, we value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays, in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. The EYFS is seen as preparation for life and learning, and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. This policy reflects the values and ethos of Sarum Hall School in relation to teaching and the teaching and learning goals of the children in Pre-Reception and Reception.

Sarum Hall School has been granted an exemption from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework due to its status as an independent institution with a distinct educational philosophy and curriculum that differs from the statutory requirements. This exemption allows the School to implement a tailored approach to early childhood education that better aligns with our pedagogical values, such as a focus on child-led learning, holistic development, and that all children are fully integrated into the wider school body to ensure a smooth transition into Key Stage 1. Despite not following the EYFS framework in full, the school remains committed to maintaining high standards of care, safeguarding, and educational quality, including assessment, ensuring that all children receive a rich, supportive, and developmentally appropriate learning experience during Pre-Reception and Reception.

This policy is a framework, within which all staff work, and gives guidance on planning, teaching, and assessment.

PRINCIPLES OF EYFS

The Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year, aged 5 years old, and has three overarching principles:

Every child is a unique child;

- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- Children learn well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults;
- Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

A UNIQUE CHILD

At Sarum Hall School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. They are able to grow their sense of self, their unique potential and their understanding of their own strengths. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates, developing the ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences in respect of their own culture and that of others.

Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use positive praise and encouragement, the sharing of cultural celebrations with families, the exploration of diversity through play, assemblies and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. Children develop an understanding of the difference between right and wrong, concern for others and begin to reflect on the consequences of their actions. Children learn, and

are encouraged, to work as a community for the common good and can feel a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate. We promote British values and children in the EYFS are involved in democratic processes within the school. They also learn about important people within the school and wider community.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best and do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn.

INCLUSION

At Sarum Hall School we value, acknowledge, and celebrate children's individuality and ensure that we provide for the individual needs of all children, promoting and valuing diversity and differences. We believe it is important for children to feel good about themselves, whilst also learning to respect and value others. In the EYFS, we set challenging yet achievable expectations tailored to each child's needs. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children with a range of abilities, of those with different social and cultural backgrounds, different ethnic groups and those with special educational needs, children who are more able or exceptionally able, children with disabilities, children from different social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language. We do this 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 adaptive teaching strategies. Additionally, we embed our Core Learning Skills to encourage independence and nurture confident, self-motivated learners.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, belief, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES/ADDITIONAL NEEDS AND SUPPORT

All staff are responsible for identifying children's needs and supporting their learning. The Early Years have access to the Head of Learning Support (HLS), who promotes, co-ordinates and monitors equality of opportunity for children and families accessing the setting and helps to provide provision for children with disabilities/additional needs, supporting EAL children and identifying children who may be More Able and Exceptionally Able.

All staff are responsible for identifying children's needs and supporting their learning. Any concerns will be discussed with the Head of Learning Support in consultation with the parent/carers. The child's Form Teacher is responsible for maintaining detailed and accurate observations, record

keeping and assessments of a child's progress in all areas of learning and development. It is also their responsibility to identify any areas of additional needs and inform the Head of Learning Support.

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum. This includes children that are more able or exceptionally able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support in line with the School's SEND policy. Teachers will always discuss these targets with parents/carers and will hold regular review meetings. The Head of Learning Support is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where it is necessary.

BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

It is important that children in the school are safe. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skills and we introduce them to the Golden Values used within the school.

SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE

At Sarum Hall School, we follow the welfare requirements and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- To promote the welfare of children.
- To promote good health, including oral health practices, preventing the spread of infection by washing hands before and after using the bathroom, before eating etc and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- To manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure all adults who look after the children or who have supervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- To ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- To ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- To maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

The nature of early child care means that there will likely be times when staff are required to supervise and support the children's toileting needs and support the changing of clothes and underclothes. There may also be times when a child needs emotional support. Staff are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner. Guidance is set out in our Intimate Care Policy. All safeguarding incidents or concerns are recorded on CPOMS which notifies the DSL team. If required, incidents will also be recorded on specific logs held by the Deputy Head or Head of Early Years.



POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

We recognise that parents/carers are a child's first and most lasting educators and we value the contribution they make. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to embrace the sharing of information, knowledge and expertise.

This is promoted by:

- Children and parents have the opportunity to spend time with the EYFS staff before starting school during the induction sessions.
- Parents receive a guide for their daughter's new class during the summer before they start and at the start of the academic year, they are invited to an informal meeting with the Form Teacher for a 'question and answer' session. At this juncture, the curriculum is explained, and parents are encouraged to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- We offer a staggered start for Pre-Reception children for the first week of the academic year with them coming into school in smaller groups for shorter days, before beginning full days in school with the whole class.
- Parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, offering opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our EYFS classes. Teachers are visible at collection each day to help answer any queries.
- EYFS Form Teachers offer email communications with parents.
- Parents can make appointments for formal meetings at any time during the school year.
- Parents are actively encouraged to share skills they might have with children in the classroom such as Tapestry. Tapestry is used to create a digital portfolio to record the children's learning and development. This provides a link between school and home and allows parents to have instant access to feedback and evidence in school, as well as the opportunity to contribute from home.
- Parents are welcome to join the class and read a story to the class at the end of the selected day as part of our Mystery Reader sessions.
- Parents receive a Grade Card every half term and one written report at the end of the academic year. This explains their child's attainment and targets for future learning.
- Parents are invited to attend Parent Consultation evenings three times a year.
- Parents and children are invited into school regularly for events such as Open Desk, Open Day, performances, stay and play, gym and me, and sports days.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Each child has a Form Teacher who is also their Key Worker who oversees their profile and who ensures each child settles. However, all staff will interact with all children in the same manner and establish relationships with all children. EYFS staff are responsible for observing, planning and recording observations on EYFS children. Parents should direct all questions and enquiries regarding their child to the Form Teacher via face-to-face interaction, email or telephone.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and areas where they can be quiet. The classroom is set up with resources covering all curriculum areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Activities are planned for both inside and outside. Under supervision, children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor learning environments during the day. The children have access to many different areas including role play, book corner, Literacy and Maths activities, collage and 3D modelling, play dough, sand, water, construction, wheeled vehicles such as scooters, small world and puzzles – activities which focus on gross and fine motor skills. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take responsibility for their own lines of enquiry and investigation. Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be gradually introduced throughout the year, encouraging less dependence on adult support when completing tasks.

PLAY

At Sarum Hall School, we support children's learning through planned activities, as well as through the activities that children choose to engage in during independent times, deciding when child initiated or adult-led activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play. Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, which helps them make sense of the world. The children have opportunities to participate in PE and Music which are taught by subject specialists. They practise and build ideas, learning behavioural expectations and 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. All children have daily access to outdoor play, through free-flow activities which link to the classroom as well as discreet activities for the outdoor environment.

SCREEN TIME

Children in the EYFS have no more than 30 minutes per day of screen time. This allows parents to have 30 minutes per day at home. This is strictly controlled by the Form Teacher.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE

EYFS practitioners understand child development and learning, and how this affects their teaching. They provide opportunities for first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk. Teachers carefully plan the curriculum to support children to work towards milestones throughout EYFS, they plan provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. Children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management.

AREAS OF LEARNING

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in Early Years settings. Three 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 prime areas:

- **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 four remaining areas of learning are specific areas through which the three 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. We use RWI and the Power of Reading schemes to help frame the curriculum to support literacy skills.
- **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 measures. We use White Rose throughout the School so support the spiral curriculum from Pre-Reception to Year 6.
- **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, roleplay, and design and technology.

The seven areas are used as a guide for our Early Years practitioners to plan the learning environment, activities and experiences for the EYFS curriculum. This does not mean that all young children's learning is divided into these areas; one experience could provide a child with opportunities to develop several competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. A broad and balanced curriculum with skills progression identified ensures that we offer enrichment for all children which goes beyond specific subjects being learnt. We are also mindful of the school's position as a preparatory school, preparing children for the transition to Year 1 and ultimately for the 11+ school entrance procedure. It is our aim that this preparation and development across all areas of learning are delivered through planned, purposeful play-based activities, with a balance of adult and child-led activities.

PLANNING

Planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning; however, teachers may alter and adapt these plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

Daily plans will be shared to staff to help them stay organised, outlining key activities, transitions, and routines, ensuring smooth delivery and consistency for children.

ASSESSMENT

At Sarum Hall School, we continuously undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. We use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Each child is observed and assessed against the Early Learning Goals using a bespoke assessment platform. We also use Tapestry which allows the use of photos or videos, as well as written observations to evidence a child's learning and development.

In the Summer Term in Reception, the children are assessed on their progress in English and Maths using PTE and PTM assessments. Phonics assessments are completed every 6-8 weeks where children are regrouped based on their ability. Children are assessed against an age-appropriate set of criteria four times through the academic year in each of the seven learning areas. This information is shared with parents and builds up a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness to transition to either Reception or Year 1. At the end of the academic year, there is a Parents' Evening where the overall profile of the child is shared with parents, allowing for time for them to meet with the Reception or Year 1 teacher, to discuss results should they want to. The assessment tracker is held centrally for all teachers to be able to access.

STAFFING AND ORGANISATION

At Sarum Hall School, Pre-Reception and Reception forms both have two Form Teachers and at least one Teaching and Learning Assistant. Each Form Teacher holds primary pastoral responsibility for half of the children in each form. The Form Teacher is also their Key Person. The EYFS phase is overseen by the Head of EYFS to ensure consistency between the two forms, as well as ensuring a smooth transition between year groups.

The Form Teachers (supported by the Head of English, Head of Maths and Head of Pastoral Care) teach Literacy, Maths, Phonics, PSHE (PSED in EYFS) and Explorers Time. Specialist teachers are used to teach Music and PE. The Librarian also supports Literacy during dedicated Library sessions.

The Pre-Reception and Reception classroom classes are positioned next to each other with adjoining doors. Each classroom benefits from a conservatory area at the back through which the children can directly access the outdoor learning area and playground. The classrooms are close to the toilets and are equipped with appropriately sized sanitary ware.

Teachers and assistants attend training courses throughout the year, with providers such as the Institute of Education and Camden Local Education Authority. Early Years staff meet formally every day as a cluster group as well as attending the fortnightly Staff Meetings. These meetings are used to discuss next steps, to moderate assessment, to organise resources and to provide in-house training. All staff in the Early Years have Full Paediatric First Aid training. Supervision meetings take place once a term.

TRANSITIONS

The Pre-Reception, Reception and Year 1 teachers work closely together to make the transition through the EYFS to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. Staff organise their time so that children get to know all staff well; staff are on duty so children build relationships both in and outside of the classroom with adults. Transition is organised so that when the children move to the next year group, they are familiar with both the staff and the new classrooms, aiding for a smoother transition.

During the Reception year, children are prepared for the transition to Year 1 primarily through developing their independence in routines and learning. Children are encouraged to be independent when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings. Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be gradually introduced throughout the school year, encouraging less dependence on adult support when completing tasks. Reception children should already be familiar with the Year 1 teacher and teaching and learning assistant as they support children at lunchtimes and playtimes, attend assemblies and other whole school activities. During the Summer Term, children visit their Year 1 classroom and teacher.

The Pre-Reception teachers meet with the Reception teachers, and the Reception teachers meet with the Year 1 team to discuss each child and their individual characteristics of learning and needs.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of all EYFS teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head of EYFS, Deputy Head (Academic & Innovation) and wider Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring of the EYFS.