



Wise Owl Trust

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Approved by Wise Owl Trust: September 2022

Due for review: September 2025

Mission statement

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 profound impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. (from 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage.')

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Within the Academies at the Wise Owl Trust, EYFS consists of the Nursery and Reception classes where children are between the ages of three and five years old. Our welcoming and stimulating EYFS environments ensure that all children learn and develop well and that they are kept healthy and safe, both indoors and outdoors. The settings promote school readiness and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills provided through our well planned curriculum and high quality teaching. Our Early Years Leaders' ensure that children make strong progress and that provision is built on through a reflective cycle of continuous quality improvement.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2021) 'Early years foundation stage profile: 2022 handbook'
- DfE (2021) 'Development Matters'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2015) 'The Prevent duty'
- Early Education (2021) 'Birth to 5 Matters'
- UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Education for a Connected World'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Early Intimate Care Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Acceptable use of ICT Policy
- WOT managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Equality and Accessibility Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

- Online Safety Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Healthy Food & Drink Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Emotional Wellbeing Policy
- Fire Policy
- Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- GDPR Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Acceptable use of ICT Policy.
- Ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer. These issues are addressed in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The EYFS Assistant Principal, in conjunction with the Principal, has responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.

Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- Remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

Aims

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency across the trust, so that all children make good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through well thought out planning for each individual child to learn and develop, that is assessed and reviewed regularly.
- Partnership working between school practitioners and parents and carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice that ensures all children are included and supported.

There are Four overarching principals to the EYFS:

- 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/carers.
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

A Unique Child

At the Wise Owl Trust we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop high self-esteem and a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our Academies. We value the diversity of individuals and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at the Wise Owl Trust are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We teach the children that having effective characteristics of learning helps them to learn and improve. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs policy.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and 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 through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children within our Academies are safe. Through our Character/Wow programme we teach our children about safety and resilience. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world.

Positive Relationships

At the Wise Owl Trust we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Every child in our Early years setting is assigned a key person who is responsible for ensuring that children feel safe and cared for

Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We strive to develop positive relationships by:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts our school
- visiting the child in their home environment
- provide stay and play sessions in school prior to children starting
- undertake parent meetings alongside key workers to discuss achievements, concerns and children's next steps.
- provide parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- encouraging parents to contribute to their child's learning journey through homework tasks and sharing photos and weekend news
- inviting parents to workshops such as writing/reading workshops where our approach to the curriculum is explained

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We have good links with the local feeder playgroups and regular visits are undertaken throughout the year. The EYFS teachers meet with staff from local providers to discuss any new children starting at our settings.

Enabling Environments

At the Wise Owl Trust we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning, provides opportunities for children to achieve their next steps. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways to allow children to learn independently and in a way that suits their learning style and interests.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS starts with our curriculum overviews. A weekly focus is based on the learning objectives linked to the EYFS curriculum and shared with all EYFS staff. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children.

In the EYFS assessment of attainment and progress is based on observation, discussion, questioning and evidence of independent and targeted learning. These observations are undertaken by all members of the EYFS team. They also contain information provided by parents and other settings. This assessment information is used to ensure that learning closely matches the needs of all children.

EYFS staff will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting the Reception year.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge and understanding against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

Leaders will ensure that assessment processes do not prevent teachers and teaching assistants from spending as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development. The school reports EYFS Profile results to the LA when requested and partakes in LA moderation annually.

Learning and Development

At the Wise Owl Trust we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

PRIME AREAS

- Communication and language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

SPECIFIC AREAS

- Literacy Development
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas are focused on through delivery of the curriculum and organisation of the learning environments. The areas are of equal importance.

The EYFS classes have access to their own outdoor area which is used throughout the school year. We acknowledge that being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children opportunities to be physically active, creative and explore on a larger scale.

Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, independent and individual and this freedom allows them to learn at their highest level. Playing 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. The adults model play and extend children's play by knowing when to question and when to observe. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to the children about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all be resilient and learn when things go wrong. Children practice and learn how to self-regulate and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Active learning

We recognise that '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. Adult support in this process develops their ability to think critically and ask questions. They 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. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning and in a range of ways.

Transition into Year 1

Teachers ensure that children have the opportunity to see their new classroom and meet their teacher in Year 1 through a **'meet the teacher' session**. Subject leaders ensure that their area of learning begins in the Early Years and that children are able to build on the knowledge and skills that they have gained in the Reception Class. This enables children in the Reception class to be well prepared for the next stage in their education, and that the move into Year 1 is a seamless one.

Safeguarding and welfare

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL's are responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services 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. All DSL's will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures. All staff will have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and be able to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

Mobile phones and devices

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets.

Photography policies and procedures are addressed in full in our Acceptable use of ICT Policy

Use of personal mobile phones by staff members

Staff members must not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present.

Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors and contractors

Parents, visitors and contractors are not permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission.

The school strongly advises against the publication of any photographs or videos taken at the school or school events on social media. Staff must report all concerns about parents, visitors and contractors to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Health and safety

The good health, including oral health, of all children is promoted. EYFS staff will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child is shared with Parents/Carers. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book with a copy sent home and a copy retained by the school. The Principal will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to local child protection agencies.

Any food or drink provided to children is healthy, balanced and nutritious as outlined in the Healthy

Food and Drink Policy. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.

Smoking is not permitted on the school premises. The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures. The school has a Fire Safety Policy in place.

Staffing

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS meet requirements.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

The EYFS Assistant Principal and EYFS class teachers hold qualified teacher status. All EYFS staff are paediatric first-aid (PFA) trained.

The school adheres to the staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.

The school adopts the following staffing ratios:

For children aged three and over:

- Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
- Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 8 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

For children in Reception classes:

- Class sizes will be limited to 30 children per school teacher.

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

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every 3 years by the Trust board. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders. All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025.