

# PENDRAGON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Early Years Policy

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## 1. Aims

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) is a comprehensive statutory framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. It sets standards for development, learning and care for children. The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) states that:

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their full 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. A safe, secure 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.”

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency
- A secure foundation
- Partnership working
- Equality of opportunity

## 2. Legislation and guidance

The Statutory Framework (2023) sets the standards for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Pendragon Community Primary School.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The *Early Years Lead and Staff:*

The Early Years Lead and Staff will:

Be responsible for leading the direction of the Early Year’s policy in conjunction with the Head teacher and follow the principles stated in this policy.

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage Leader to review the policy regularly.

It is the responsibility of the Early Years leader to discuss EYFS practice with members of the Foundation Stage Team, providing any feedback and raising any issues that require discussion.

### 3.2 The **Governor/s**

The Governing body will:

Work with the Headteacher and Early Years Leader to determine the strategic development of the policy provision in the school.

Review this policy in line with the policy review schedule at the Curriculum & Standards committee meetings.

### **3.3 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher will:

Work with staff, parents and governors to determine the strategic development of the policy and provision in the school.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and SLT to monitor the effectiveness of the EYFS Team.

## **4. A Unique Child**

At Pendragon we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates as they learn through investigating, exploring, listening, observing, creating, experimenting and playing. Our whole school ethos 'Respect, Achieve, Effort, CHallenge' as well as encouragement, praise and high quality interactions encourage children to develop a positive, resilient attitude to learning, where they feel confident to have a go, challenge themselves, take risks and be the best they can be!

### **4.1 Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Pendragon are treated fairly regardless of gender, race, religion, culture or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

At Pendragon we believe that all children matter. We give children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning. Using the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special education needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's skills, knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate, enthuse, support and challenge children to help them to learn effectively and enabling them to reach their full potential
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary
- making any necessary adjustments where a child has any additional physical, emotional and/or educational needs

It is important to us that all children are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help

them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and manage risk. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children in our care.

## **5. Positive Relationships**

At Pendragon we believe that children need secure relationships, from which they become independent and confident learners. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played and will continue to play in the education of their children. We do this by:

- Assigning each child a key person before they start preschool
- Talking to parents and/or carers about their child before their child begins preschool and school either via a home visit or settling in session within the setting
- Children being the opportunity to spend time with their teacher together with their parents/carers before starting school during 'Come and Play' sessions.
- Offering parents/carers opportunities to talk about their child's progress formally during Parent Consultations in the Autumn and Spring term
- Offering a Parents/carers Induction Evening in the Summer term prior to their child starting school. Parents are provided with a 'Starter school' pack.
- Operating an 'open door' policy for parents with any queries. A member of the team is always on the gate to welcome children into the setting
- Inviting parents to share their child's learning journal throughout the year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, parents and staff, for example open lessons, book sharing and topic related events such as attending The FS Royal banquet.
- Encouraging parents to make comments in the reading record
- Encouraging parents to contribute to their child's learning journal by providing a fortnightly learning overview and a newsletter at preschool, both of which include a WOW star. This provides opportunity for parents to comment on their child's achievements at home and in relation to learning in preschool and school.
- Publishing a Foundation Stage topic overview each half term – Link Up
- Sending a report of their child's attainments and progress at the end of the academic year. In addition preschool send home next steps every term.

## **6. Enabling Environments**

At Pendragon we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend learning.

### **6.1 The Learning Environment**

The Foundation Stage class and preschool setting are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, or be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Each outdoor area is resourced to provide learning experiences across all areas of learning. Being outdoors provides opportunities for exploring things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It enables all children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

It is important that all children are safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and manage risk. We aim to teach children about boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand the reasons for these. Risk assessments (see appendix 2 a & b) for the outdoor area are completed by staff, as are ongoing risks in relation to all continuous provision throughout the day. We provide children with choices to help them develop the important life skill of identifying risks. Children are encouraged to speak to an adult about any risks they have identified. Each week the children visit our forest area – The Haven.

### **6.2 Play in the Early Years**

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. At Pendragon children are given the opportunities to explore and discover within a safe and well supported environment.

Play underpins the delivery of our curriculum. The children 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. The children are involved in group and individual play opportunities, some initiated by adults but mostly led by the children.

Play enables our children to learn through being active, working with a wide range of resources. Through play the children develop intellectually, creatively, socially and emotionally. It gives our children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

## **7. Learning and Development**

At Pendragon 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. We fully support these underlying principles for early years.

We aim to meet all our children's needs by;

- developing a partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure and develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement;
- having an understanding of how children develop and learn;
- providing a range of approaches that offer first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;

- providing a carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals identified in the EYFS statutory framework;
- making provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- encouraging children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- supporting learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor learning space, facilities and equipment;
- identifying progress and planning future learning needs of children through good practice in assessment for learning which includes ongoing observations, moderation and sharing assessments with the team, senior leaders and parents on a regular basis;
- developing good relationships between Pendragon and other settings that our children experience prior to joining us.

## **7.1 Learning and development requirements**

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise of seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes. The Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of Foundation Stage. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in three prime areas and four specific areas. It also considers three characteristics of teaching and learning, these underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

### The Prime Areas

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social, and emotional development

### The Specific Areas

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

### The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS

## **8. Assessment**

### **8.1 Observation, assessment and planning**

We regularly observe and reflect on children's spontaneous play. We build on this play by resourcing and planning for a challenging and stimulating environment, which supports and extends specific areas of children's learning. We aim to extend and develop children's language

and communication in their play by using different methods such as higher order questioning and exposing pupils to interesting and ambitious vocabulary.

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

We make regular assessments of children's learning and interests and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and next steps. Assessment in the EYFS is predominantly carried out through observation by all key staff. These observations are recorded in pupils learning journals and work books.

At Pendragon, we RAG rate individual progress half termly using our own tracking grid in line with the framework expectations.

Within the first six weeks of a child starting preschool, staff will provide parents/carers with a settling in review and next steps. Next steps are reviewed at least termly.

Within the first six weeks of a child starting reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of a child's year within our preschool, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting on the child's learning and development linked to the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. At the end of the reception academic year, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their child's progress against the expectations outlined in the Early Years Profile. This includes making judgements against the attainment of each child assessed in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goal (ELG) descriptors, together with a short narrative describing the child's three teaching and learning characteristics. Assessments are based primarily on observation of daily activities and events. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the class teacher.

### ***8.1 Statutory Assessment***

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile forms the assessment at the end of Foundation Stage. Children are assessed at the end of the year against the 17 Early Learning Goals and a summary for each of the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning is written. The Early Learning Goals support teachers make a holistic, best-fit judgment about a child's development and their readiness for Year 1.

## **9. Transition**

When starting preschool parents/carers and children are given the opportunity to visit the setting to spend time in the environment and meet the staff. 'Settling in' sessions begin once the child is due to start preschool.

Children due to start their reception year in September are invited to attend a weekly storytime in school with the Early years Leader from the Spring term. From the second half of the Spring term children who have been offered a place at Pendragon are invited to attend 'come and play' sessions one per half term. Opportunities to meet with their class teacher are given during the Summer term.

For transition into Year 1, the children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher before moving on to their new class and every effort is made for this to happen for parents. The Year 1 classroom is presented very much like a Foundation Stage learning environment and so provided familiarity for the children. The identified next steps from the end of the Reception Year are passed on to the new class teacher in order for the child's needs and interests to be planned for. There is planned discussion time for the class teachers to hand over information on each child including each child's Prolife results, individual trackers and the learning and development summaries which include short commentaries on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three



characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The learning opportunities in Year 1 Autumn term are provided through carefully planned continuous provision with a focus on play based learning. This ensures a smooth transition between Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The Year 1 teachers recognise that some children moving into key Stage 1 will still require adaptation in teaching and learning in order for them to meet the Early Learning Goals. This is planned for accordingly.

## **10.Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

We recognise that 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 caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff: child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.

- For children aged 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 5 children
- For children aged 3 and over – where a person with Early Years Professional status or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PDA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

## **11.Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Early Years Leader every year. It will be approved by the governing board.