

# **PENDRAGON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **Early Years Policy**

**Lead person: EYFS Leader & Preschool Manager**

**Agreed by staff: Spring 2022**

**Agreed by governors: March 2022**

**Review: January 2025**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

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. Children begin Pendragon preschool after their third birthday. At school all children join us part time at the beginning of the year in which they are five and become full time by the end of the second week.

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

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A safe, secure and happy childhood is important in its own right, and provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships – children learn to be strong, independent and confident learners.
- Enabling environments – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning
- Learning and development – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

At Pendragon we recognise that 3, 4 and 5 year olds learn through investigating, exploring, listening, observing, creating, experimenting and playing.

### **A Unique Child**

At Pendragon we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We use praise and encouragement daily as well as Foundation Stage attending a ‘celebration’ assembly with the whole school once a week. We give stickers as rewards and positive feedback to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Pendragon we recognise 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:

- talking to parents about their child before their child begins preschool and school
- inviting parents to share their child’s learning journal throughout the year

- encouraging parents to talk to the child's key person or teacher, at any time, if they have any concerns. This is in addition to the preschool home visit and the formal parent teacher consultation meetings which take place in the Autumn and Spring term in school. Parents also receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, parents and staff, for example open lessons, class assemblies, special lunches and celebratory events.
- encouraging parents to make comments in the reading record
- encouraging parents to contribute to their child's learning journal by providing a regular learning overview of the week in school and a weekly newsletter at preschool, both of which include a WOW star (appendix 1a & b). This provides opportunity for parents to comment on their child's achievements at home and in relation to learning in preschool and school.

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. At preschool children are allocated a key person prior to their start date. In Foundation Stage the EYFS teachers act as the 'Key Person' to all children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistant. We have excellent links with other early years settings within the village whereby all managers meet once a term.

### **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.

#### *Observation, Assessment and Planning*

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.

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

### *The Learning Environment*

Learning environments 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 avoid hazards. 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 hazards 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.

### **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 inter-connected. 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 well-being 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.

## **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.

## **Early years Foundation Stage areas of learning**

The EYFS 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 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.

## **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 ability. 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 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 all children, regardless of their gender, family situation, disability or race.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- 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 teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- 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

### **Transition to preschool**

We are the first setting for many of the children who join us in preschool; therefore, we aim to make the transition as comforting as possible for all.

- Once a child has been allocated sessions within preschool a home visit is organised, the visit is undertaken by the manager and EYFS leader. Visiting the child in their home environment provides an opportunity for the child to talk about and show their interests whilst feeling safe and comfortable. It offers a time for staff to gain information on the child's needs and development.
- The families are invited along to any upcoming 'stay and play' sessions with their child. This offers them an opportunity to explore the setting with the comfort of their familiar adult, and to meet their key person and other children.
- The children will be offered a staggered start to their sessions, giving them the opportunity to experience preschool at a slower, quieter pace that suits their needs. The sessions are organised in key groups to give the key persons opportunities to build positive relationships with them and their carers and for the children to gain an understanding of preschool routine.

## **Transition to school**

Starting school is a big step in a child's life and can also be daunting for parents and carers. We seek to make the transition process as smooth as we can for all concerned by following these procedures once we have been informed of the cohort list by the Local Authority Admissions team;

- During the application process in the autumn term prior to their child starting school, parents are invited to school for a tour by the Head Teacher and Foundation Stage leader.
- Children are invited to attend a 'Come and Play' session with their parent during the months of November, May, June and July. This enables both the children and parent to explore and become familiar with the learning environments as well as meet the people who will work with them when they start school in September.
- Children are invited to join us for a school lunch following one of their transition visits in the Summer term.
- Foundation stage teachers and teaching assistants visit the village preschools during the summer term before the children start school. They attend Pendragon Preschool's end of year visit.
- Parents and carers are invited to a New Parents meeting in the Summer term before their child starts school. The meeting provides key information about starting school and provides a 'Starting School Pack' for parents and carers which gives practical information and advice.
- From the start of the spring term, children visit the Foundation Stage classrooms on a weekly basis with their preschool staff to attend story time sessions. This is extended during the summer term to include playtime on the playground with the rest of Foundation Stage and KS1.
- During the latter part of the summer term children and their parents are invited to a coffee morning which all Foundation Stage staff attends along with members of the governing body, head teacher, deputy and school SENDCo.
- Parents are encouraged to work with their child to create an 'All About Me' box, which they can fill over the summer holidays and bring in with them to be shared with their teacher when they start school in September.

## **Starting School**

All children start school in the autumn term of the academic year that they are 5 years old. At Pendragon the children begin school on a part time basis with all attending full time by the end of the second week. This enables the children to begin school in small groups, allowing the staff to get to know them and their parents really well.

Although the majority of our reception children have experienced preschool settings, school is a very different environment with many more people, new routines and new children to meet and work with. By phasing the start of school we are able to focus on the well-being of the children and their ability to cope with the demands of school in the following way:

- Children start school in two groups during the first two weeks; this is according to their age. Children born during the months of September to February attend in the afternoon and those born during the months March to August attend in the morning. These sessions last for 2 hours.

- Prior to their first full day at the end of the second week, the children will stay for lunch before going home in the afternoon.
- By the beginning of the third week all children will attend school full time.
- We liaise carefully with parents during this transition period and will suggest that children continue for half days if we feel that it is in the best interests of the child. Likewise, if parents feel that their child is very tired or not coping with the demands of a full day we will liaise with them about half days.
- In the first few weeks of term the Foundation Stage team and other staff in school help the children to feel secure and confident by familiarising them with the classroom and school routines. They learn how to cope with various procedures from going to the toilet, changing for P.E, having lunch, playing in the playground, sitting on the carpet to beginning work.
- Foundation Stage classes go into the hall at 11.45pm enabling them to make lunch choices and settle before the rest of the school come in for their lunch from 12.10. Foundation Stage staff remain in the hall in order to ensure all children are happy and eating their lunch.

### **Transition from Foundation Stage to Year 1**

We recognise that children moving into KS1 is yet another huge step in a child's education, therefore we work hard to ensure the transition to Year 1 is a smooth one.

- During the Summer term children will be given ample opportunities to visit the Year 1 classrooms whether this is to simply become familiar with the indoor and outdoor environments, spend time playing or to meet the staff and begin to build good relationships.
- Children will also visit both classrooms for regular story times with the Year 1 teachers.
- Foundation stage teachers provide Year 1 teachers with a clear overview of each child at the end of their reception year. This includes whether the child has met the end of the year expectations, an overview of their characteristics of effective learning and specific assessment and tracking data for phonics, key word recognition and KIRFs.
- The organisation of the Year 1 classrooms during the first half of the autumn term is very similar to Foundation Stage and learning is very much play based. As the Autumn term progresses so does the set-up of the environments. This is to ensure children transition to a more 'formal' approach of teaching and learning.

### **Monitoring and review**

The Early Years Leader and Preschool Manager are the senior members of staff with responsibility for ensuring that this policy is followed.

The Head Teacher and Early Years Leader monitor and evaluate practice in the Foundation Stage and preschool as part of the whole school monitoring and evaluation cycle.

There are named governors with the responsibility for monitoring Early Years. This committee provides information and feedback to the Governing body. All policies at Pendragon also apply to EYFS for example Safeguarding and Prevent.

# Appendix 1a

## Learning Overview example

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduced phonemes (sounds) s, a, t, p</li><li>• Practised letter formation</li><li>• Introduced Oxford Reading Tree family, Mum, Dad, Kipper, Chip, Biff and Floppy.</li><li>• Talking about a book, for example the different characters, where the story is set and the events.</li><li>• Predicting what happens next in a story.</li><li>• Recognising own name and writing our name.</li><li>• Recognising the initial sound of our name</li><li>• Practising mark making in different media, for example porridge oats, sand and flour.</li><li>• Singing nursery rhymes.</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Maths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Counting on and back in ones to 10 then 20.</li><li>• Using our fingers to show different numbers for example show me 2, 5 etc.</li><li>• Counting objects into a tin, counting out, how many?</li><li>• Counting objects.</li><li>• Using Numicon shapes to introduce numbers 1-5, learning which coloured shapes represent each number.</li></ul> 
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ideas for activities to do at home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practise writing own name</li><li>• Reading book in the book bag</li><li>• Practise letter formation sheet</li><li>• Play homemade snap using phoneme cards s, a, t, p</li><li>• Find objects around the home that begin with the phoneme (sound) s, a, t, p</li><li>• Look for s, a, t, p when out and about, for example road signs, label in shops etc</li><li>• Practise counting as you play, how many altogether?</li><li>• Play quick fingers, show me 2,3, 6 using your fingers</li></ul> <p>Please add any comments to the WOW star if you see or hear your child make reference to any of the above learning. We will add these to their learning journals.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Observations from home</b></p> 

## Appendix 1b

### Pre school Newsletter example

We have had a lot of fun exploring shape this week. We have been using different shapes to create pictures and to match with. During group times Miss Williams has been encouraging the children to count in rhymes.

Throughout the week the children have been telling stories using the puppets and the puppet theatre, practicing their mark making skills on the whiteboards. Some children have been using their name cards to copy and others writing other children's names! The children have been really enjoying using the duplo and wooden bricks to create different models which they like to show to their friends during circle time.

We have enjoyed feeding the birds in the garden and trying to be really quiet to see which ones will visit us! Also in the garden we have enjoyed lots of physical play with the bikes and scooters.

The children were really excited to do bread mark making. We used edible natural colourings to decorate... look at some of our masterpieces!



The children went over to school for their school visits to read a story with the class teachers- bear on a chair was a big hit!

During music with Mrs Pinnock and Mrs Taylor we have focused on the song 'London bridge is falling down'. Mrs Pinnock led the children and they copied the first notes, then the words, leading up to singing and playing. We recapped on last week's song, Mary Mary. I wonder what next week's song will be?

### Wow Words

Our wow words this week are 'Slimy' and 'Scared'. The children chose these after reading with Mrs Frost about a slimy slug and a scared bear. They have been very popular too. We will continue to explore these words next week, the children want to make their own slime so if we have any slime experts amongst our parents please let us know if you would like to come in to make some with the group!

### Forest School

Unfortunately, it was necessary to cancel forest school this week due to staffing- we decided to go outside and feed the birds as a large group instead!

### Dates to Remember

-Preschool closes for half term **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> Feb- Friday 21<sup>st</sup> Feb**

**Thank you, have a nice weekend.**

**Mrs Frost**

## Appendix 2a

### Foundation Stage Outdoor Continuous Provision Risk Assessment

Potential Hazard & risk identified	Risk to child	Risk Rating	Control measures to reduce risk	Outcome
Gates	Exit route	High	Closed by person on morning gate duty Outdoor area supervised by an adult	low
Fences	Splinters Trapped hands Climbing	Med Med High	Checked daily Activities carefully planned and monitored Adult supervision	Low
Play House	Trapping hands in doors	Med	Door can be tied back Adult supervision – 3 only	Med
Water Tray	Temperature Drinking	Med Med	Change every morning Rules known to children Adult supervision – 4 only	Low Low
Sand Tray	Eating Throwing Animal faeces	Med High Med	Rules known to children Adult supervision – 4 only Covered at the end of day Checked daily	Low Low Low
Mud Kitchen	Eating Throwing Tools & equipment	Med Med High	Rules shared with children Adult supervision – 4 only Checked daily	Low Low Med
Digging Area	Animal faeces Digging tools	High High	Checked daily Adult supervision – 6 only Hands washed when finished	Med

Wild Area	Slipping	Med	Children aware of risk when entrance into area is wet Children aware of branch heights, procedure for reporting cuts, scratches etc. First aid kit in both classrooms Adult supervision – 3 only	Med
	Skin cuts and abrasion	Med		Med
	Trapping fingers and feet			Med
Tunnels	Slippy when wet Falling off	Med	Checked daily Excess water cleared off Removed altogether in extreme weather Adult supervision	Low
Stepping stones	Slippy when wet	Med	Checked daily Excess water cleared off Removed altogether in extreme weather	Low
Tyres	Weight Water inside Slippy when wet	High	Rules shared with children Checked daily Adult supervision	Med
Picnic table	Falling from Trapped fingers/legs	Med	Adult supervision – 6 only	Low
Crates	Trapped fingers and other body parts	Med	Children know rules of crate handling Adult supervision	Low
Water Butt	Drinking	Med	Rules known to children Adult supervision	Low
Bricks	Picking up bricks Trapped fingers	High	Shown how to handle bricks with two hands Adult supervision	Med
Building tools including hammers and nails	Harming fingers	High	Shown how to use tools correctly and safely	Med
Climbing equipment	Children falling Moving equipment	High Med	Children clear on the rules Adult supervision	Med Med

Wild Area	Slipping	Med	Children aware of risk when entrance into area is wet Children aware of branch heights, procedure for reporting cuts, scratches etc. First aid kit in both classrooms Adult supervision – 3 only	Med
	Skin cuts and abrasion	Med		Med
	Trapping fingers and feet			Med
Tunnels	Slippy when wet Falling off	Med	Checked daily Excess water cleared off Removed altogether in extreme weather Adult supervision	Low
Stepping stones	Slippy when wet	Med	Checked daily Excess water cleared off Removed altogether in extreme weather	Low
Tyres	Weight Water inside Slippy when wet	High	Rules shared with children Checked daily Adult supervision	Med
Easels	Trapping fingers  Falling	Med	Rules known to children ie use of pegs Secured to fence Checked daily	Low
Picnic table	Falling from Trapped fingers/legs	Med	Adult supervision – 6 only	Low
Storage bins	Trapped fingers and other body parts	Med	Equipment for use is stored in grey bins Children know rules of adult only or under supervision	Low
Water Butt	Drinking	Med	Rules known to children Adult supervision	Low

