Harbour Schools Partnership

A guiding light for education

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Reviewed on:

Author/owner: Board of Trustees

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NB. 'Trustees' means the Directors referred to in the Trust's Articles of Association.

Introduction

History of most recent policy changes

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation
1	Dec 26		Previous Ventrus & Tarka polices replaced. Policy updated upon merger to reflect latest EYFS guidance.	merger

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a secure foundation for learning, development and good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), effective from 1 September 2025.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five years. At Orchard Vale Community School this includes the Nursery class, Reception class and a Reception/ Year 1 class.

4 overarching principles we acknowledge and underpin our practice here at Orchard Vale School are:

- That every child is unique, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- That children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- That children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences, between birth and age five, have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important. 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." -*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education*

Nursery

At Orchard Vale Community School we operate for 38 weeks per year from 08.30am - 15.30pm. Children can join us from 0-3 years old. We offer options that are deliverable within our nursery setting to parents who are entitled to the Working entitlement for children from 9 months, Targeted 2 year old funding, universal 15 hours funding as well as those entitled to the additional 15 hours Working Entitlement. Parents are also able to pay for additional hours.

The Nursery day is broken down into 3 sessions with children being able to access any of the following: a morning session only, an afternoon session only, a morning and lunchtime session, a lunchtime and afternoon session or a full day.

Please click **HERE** to see our current hourly rates and for further information on our Nursery.

Reception

At Orchard Vale Community School, all children join us in their reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five years old. All children start full-time on the first day of the autumn term unless a part time approach is agreed in the interest of the child. Before starting in Reception, children will have had a planned transition period to include visiting their new classroom. Orchard Vale Community School staff also contact prior settings, where appropriate, for information regarding each child's progress, achievements and interests and share the Early Years transition documents to share records. Parents/carers have the right to request deferred or delayed entry into Reception. In both cases, parents/carers must outline their reasons for this request and explain how a

deferred or delayed entry is in the best interests of their child. Requests for delayed or deferred entry must be made formally in writing to the Headteacher and in good time for allocation of school places.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that we must teach. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and language**

  This area focuses on developing children's ability to listen, understand, and express themselves effectively through speech and language.

- **Physical development**

  It promotes children's gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and understanding of healthy practices to support overall physical well-being.

- **Personal, social and emotional development**

  This area helps children build confidence, manage emotions, form positive relationships, and develop social skills for learning and life.

We also support the children in 4 specific areas which help strengthen and develop the 3 prime areas, and ignite the children's curiosity and enthusiasm:

- **Literacy**

  This area focuses on developing children's reading and writing skills through phonics, stories, and mark-making activities.

- **Mathematics**

  It helps children understand numbers, shapes, space, and measures to build early problem-solving and reasoning skills.

- **Understanding the world**

  This area encourages children to explore and learn about people, places, technology, and the natural environment.

- **Expressive arts and design**

  It promotes creativity through art, music, movement, role play, and imaginative activities.

4.1 Planning

Our staff are ambitious for all children, and plan activities and experiences for the children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. To do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas followed by the specific areas in Reception in accordance with the framework.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests and development of each child in their care, and consider whether the child needs any additional support. They use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability (SEND), staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding the children's activities, staff reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and take these into account.

4.2 Teaching

Staff make sure that the children experience the 3 key characteristics of effective teaching and learning: playing and exploring; active learning; and creating and thinking critically.

They respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As the children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more focus on teaching essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning, to help the children prepare for Key Stage1.

5. Assessment

At Orchard Vale Community School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their progress, development and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers and keep them up to date with the child's progress and development. Staff will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

Schools with a nursery or pre-school

When a child is **aged between 2 and 3**, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed. It also focuses on any areas of possible concern, which may indicate a disability, special educational need or developmental delay. The progress check will describe the activities and strategies that the school intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns, involving parents and/or carers and other professionals as appropriate.

Reception

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the reception baseline assessment (RBA).

In the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age 5, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child (before 30 June in that term). Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging)

We share the EYFS profile with the child's Year 1 teacher. This helps to inform a discussion between Reception and Year 1 teachers about the child's stage of development and learning needs and helps with planning activities in Year 1.

The school shares the results of each child's 'progress check' and EYFS profile. This is done twice, each academic year.

In exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child might stay in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they turn 5. In these exceptional cases, we will continue to assess the child throughout their time in EYFS provision and complete their profile at the end of the year before they move into year 1.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other schools in The Harbour Schools Partnership, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. We submit EYFS profile data to the local authority on request.

6. Working with parents and carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between our staff and each child's parents and/or carers.

We keep parents and/or carers up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress checks in Nursery and Pre-schools and EYFS profile in Reception help to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

In Nurseries and Pre-schools, it is a requirement that each child is assigned a key person who helps to make sure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We ask parents/carers to provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers for their child (where possible).

7. Staff

7.1 Staff training

We will:

- Train all staff in safeguarding procedures in line with Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance
- Support all staff to feel supported and confident in implementing our safeguarding policy and procedures
- Renew training every 2 years, or more often when it's needed to help maintain skills; keep up to date with any changes to our safeguarding procedures; or because of any safeguarding concerns
- Outline how training is delivered, and how staff are supported to put it in place, in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will:

- Provide ongoing support, advice and guidance to all staff
- Attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework
- Liaise as needed with local statutory children's services agencies and our local safeguarding partners

7.2 Safer recruitment

When recruiting staff, we will follow the procedures set out in the latest EYFS framework, guidance on checking the suitability of new recruits.

See our safeguarding policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures.

7.3 Whistleblowing

We make sure that all staff are aware of our whistleblowing procedures; feel able to raise concerns about any poor or unsafe practice; and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

See our whistleblowing policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures and more detail on our procedures for handling whistleblowing.

8. 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 can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives at home or elsewhere.

See our child protection and safeguarding policy.

8.1 Responding to allegations or concerns

If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will immediately notify our local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures. In emergencies, we will also inform the police.

If any allegation is made of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises or elsewhere we will follow our managing allegations policy.

8.2 Staffing ratios

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 under 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 3 children.
- For children aged 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 5 children
- For children aged 3 and over we have at least 1 member of staff (a qualified teacher) for every 13 children.

Orchard Vale School Nursery Provision:

- Where a person with qualified teacher status, early years professional status, or early years teacher status is working directly with children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children.
- At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status
- At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status. At least half of all other staff hold an approved level 2 qualification

Orchard Vale Reception Provision

- We comply with infant-class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils
- Where classes are mixed, we determine ratios guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of the children within the group

8.3 Paediatric first aid (PFA)

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

8.4 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

We also have a DSL who has lead responsibility for safeguarding children. They are also responsible for:

- Liaising with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSPs (local safeguarding partners)
- Providing support, advice and guidance to all other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Attending a safeguarding training course that complies with the criteria set out in annex C of the latest EYFS framework

8.5 Absence

Even where children have not reached statutory school age, we are required to promptly follow up on absences.

If a child is absent for a prolonged time or if their parents/carers haven't told us about the absence that day, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts.

See our attendance policy for more on this, including our expectations of parents/carers to report child absences.

8.6 Oral health and tooth brushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by actively promoting good oral health by embedding healthy habits into daily routines. Children are encouraged to drink water and avoid sugary snacks, and we provide guidance on tooth-friendly foods during snack times. Staff model and discuss the importance of brushing teeth twice daily and support learning through stories, songs, and activities about oral hygiene. We also share information with parents and carers to reinforce these practices at home, ensuring a consistent approach to maintaining healthy smiles.

We follow government guidance on supervised toothbrushing to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy, which can be found here.

8.7 Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Pediatric First Aid certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating and seated safely in an appropriate chair or highchair and, where possible, in a designated eating space.

Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their…

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

We will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At each mealtime and snack time it will be clear which staff member is responsible for checking that the food meets all the requirements for each child.

We will make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods.

We will consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate. (We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff)
- Discuss their child's progress with solid foods
- Work with them to move on to the next stage at a pace that's right for their child

We will prepare food in a way that:

- Prevents choking
- Meets each child's individual developmental needs
- Is in line with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of the incident and make the child's parents/carers aware. We will periodically review the records to identify whether we can change anything in our practice to make eating safer and then take action as appropriate.

8.8 Accident or injury

We keep a first aid box (which contains appropriate items for children) always accessible.

We keep a written record of accidents or injuries and any first aid treatment.

We will inform parents or carers the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, of any:

- Accident or injury sustained by the child
- First aid treatment given

We will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of any child while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable.

8.9 Safety of premises

We make sure that our premises, including overall floor space and outdoor space, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children we care for and the activities provided on the premises.

We comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.

See our Health and Safety policy for more details.

8.10 Toileting and privacy

We make sure that there are:

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children
- Suitable and hygienic nappy changing facilities
- An adequate supply of necessary items such as clean bedding, towels and spare clothes.
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

During nappy changes and toileting, we will balance children's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs.

See our Intimate Care policy for more details.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Education Support Service annually.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This isn't an exhaustive list of policies and only includes policies specific to the EYFS. For a full list of our policies, click here.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent/carer failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy