Dishforth CE Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

Policy date: November 2026
Review date: November 2027

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1. Aims

This EYFS policy aims to ensure that at Dishforth CE Primary School:

A safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment is provided, in which every child feels secure, valued, and confident.

All children in EYFS can access a broad and balanced curriculum that allows them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to make good progress through school and life.

The quality and consistency in teaching and learning allows every child to make good progress and no child gets left behind.

The skilled EYFS team is well-trained, reflective, and has effective staff who understand child development and the EYFS framework. Ongoing professional development ensures high-quality teaching and care.

Close working partnerships between staff and parents and/or carers

Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

The promotion of children's physical and emotional wellbeing through consistent care and safeguarding practices.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1st September 2026.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

3. Structure of the EYFS

In Early Years at Dishforth CE Primary School, we recognise the value of introducing and developing our collective vision for children to be Rooted and Grounded in Love. We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first teachers, and we are the first step in a child's school based- educational journey. We work closely alongside families, carers and the local community to provide a welcoming environment for children to learn and develop. Our curriculum offer begins for many of our children in Nursery or Reception and we acknowledge the importance and impact of our curriculum, as laid out in the EYFS:

'Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances.'
EYFS Statutory Framework, 2026

We are able to offer our children a dedicated Early Years setting in which to deliver the EYFS curriculum, and are able to impact children's learning for 2 years, undoubtedly giving us opportunities to have an increasingly positive impact on children's learning opportunities as noted in our latest OFSTED inspection:

'In early years, there is a strong focus on communication and language. Children listen

attentively and speak with confidence. They enjoy a variety of songs, rhymes and stories. This helps to develop their confidence further, enabling them to use a wide range of vocabulary in their play. They develop well in their learning.

(OFSTED, December 2024)

3. Curriculum

Our curriculum is carefully designed using the EYFS Statutory Framework and our extensive knowledge and experience of the needs of our children. It is adapted year on year as we evolve our practice to continue to meet the needs of our children and families.

Our Early Years setting provides a warm, unique and secure environment for our youngest children to learn, play and flourish. Through play, the children explore and make sense of the world. They practice new skills, construct and secure their understanding, and have daily opportunities to think creatively. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems, discuss and negotiate plans, and learn to manage their behaviour. We encourage all our children to become independent learners and thinkers and we recognise the importance of a high-quality education for all.

There are four overarching, guiding principles stated in the EYFS Framework which shape early years practice at Dishforth CE Primary School:

- 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 and/or carers
- learning and development is very important. Children develop and learn at different rates

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, the 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas laying the foundations for successful future learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

These seven areas are underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We recognise the Characteristics of Effective Learning as central to how young children develop, explore, and

make sense of the world. We actively support children to engage through playing and exploring, encouraging curiosity, independence, and a willingness to try new experiences. We nurture active learning by providing an environment where children can concentrate, persist, and take pride in their achievements. We also promote creating and thinking critically, offering opportunities for children to develop their own ideas, make connections, and solve problems in meaningful contexts. These characteristics underpin all areas of learning and guide our approach to planning, teaching, and assessment, ensuring that every child is supported to become a confident, motivated, and resilient learner.

We have developed a curriculum based on the educational programmes outlined in 2026 EYFS statutory framework. We believe in a balanced curriculum. A balance between child led and adult led play and activities, between children's interests and what we deem necessary knowledge for the children to know and experience. Our curriculum is flexible and subject to change if we feel a different approach, topic or focus would have a greater impact on the children's learning.

3.1 Planning

Planning is based on our curriculum. It is flexible to take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child, and we use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

Each day we consider the learning in each area of the indoor and outdoor classroom, any adult led carpet sessions, and focused activities which support the children's learning.

The areas in the classroom are planned for and we constantly observe and play with the children in those areas both inside and outside, in order to keep them interesting and challenging.

We use recognised, approved schemes including Read, Write, Inc Phonics and White Rose Maths (taught through Master the Curriculum resources) to guide our teaching and provide a systematic, progressive approach through Nursery and Reception. These schemes continue to be used throughout Key Stage 1. We teach PSED through the EYFS resources in the One Decision scheme. Mark making and early writing are supported through the use of the Drawing Club approach.

We consider each child when we are planning activities and ensure all of the children are supported and thriving. Where a child may need extra support, possibly due to a special educational need, we work with parents, our SENDCO and any relevant agencies to provide the best support and plan for that child.

3.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

At Dishforth we teach and learn inside the classroom and outside in our outdoor learning environment

We scaffold learning through quality interactions and promote the use and understanding of excellent vocabulary. We question, model, prompt, resource and guide children in their learning.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for learning in Key Stage 1

Assessment

At Dishforth CE Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) when we consider children to be settled enough.

We assess phonics progress in Reception children every half term.

We complete our own summative assessment for both Nursery and Reception children, based on our curriculum, every term. These assessments are completed on the seven areas of learning and development. These assessments shape the planning for the following term.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child and support our transition conversations as children continue their learning journey into Key Stage 1.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the moderation case study materials) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

4. Working with parents and carers

In our school we work hard to develop good relationships with our families and we often receive positive comments about the family feel in our school. The Early Years classroom is not only the child's first step on their education journey, but also an important stage for parents and carers. We need parents as partners so we can both support their child's education as a team. Parents have daily opportunity to speak to the class teacher about any worries or concerns they may have. We encourage parents to share 'wow' moments from home which help us gain a holistic picture of the child and this also feeds into our assessment. This daily contact and support builds strong links allowing for children's needs and ongoing development to be at the forefront of our communications with families. We also provide parents with information events such as 'Starting School,' and 'How We Teach Phonics' sessions.

Parents receive a termly curriculum newsletter, providing information on the planned learning for the next term. Every week parents and carers receive a school newsletter, celebrating what we have been learning this week. We hope these letters provide parents with helpful information in order for them to feel a part of their children's first steps of education. Termly parent consultation evenings provide the opportunity for a more in-depth discussion between parents and teachers. Annual reports are provided to parents at the end of the summer term.

Each child is assigned a key person (the class teacher). However, we do make the point of letting parents know they can talk to any of the Early Years staff as we share information among us in order to ensure all staff have an understanding what is going on with all children.

5. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is at the heart of our practice. We are committed to providing a safe, secure, and nurturing environment where children can learn and develop free

from harm. All staff understand their responsibility to protect children, recognise signs of abuse or neglect, and follow our safeguarding procedures without delay. We work in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework and local safeguarding partnership guidance, ensuring robust safer recruitment, ongoing staff training, and clear reporting processes. The school maintains a culture of vigilance, where children's wellbeing is prioritised and concerns are taken seriously. We work closely with parents, carers, and external agencies to ensure every child is protected and supported. All staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and regular updates to ensure they understand current safeguarding requirements, including safer recruitment, professional conduct, online safety and recognising inappropriate behaviour.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs are responsible for coordinating safeguarding arrangements and supporting staff in responding to concerns. Details of the DSL and Deputy DSLs can be found in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and are displayed around school.

The school adheres to the statutory staffing ratios outlined in the EYFS framework. We ensure that staffing levels meet or exceed the required ratios, and that qualified practitioners are deployed appropriately to maintain children's safety, wellbeing, and learning.

Staff are aware of procedures for reporting concerns about the conduct of colleagues, volunteers or other adults working with children. Our whole school policies include references to clear procedures relating to allegations against staff, whistleblowing, professional conduct, and the safe use of mobile phones, cameras and image-sharing technology.

Our safeguarding policies and curriculum are in line with those of the rest of the school. In addition to this, as an Early Years Unit, we adhere to the safeguarding procedures outlined in the Early Years statutory framework and are aware of the additional safeguarding issues involved when working and supporting younger children and the additional statutory requirements laid out.

In the EYFS we aim to educate and support children on appropriate boundaries and school rules 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 avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe, when their individual needs are met and when they have the chance to build positive relationships with the adults around them as well as their peers. Children are supported to develop positive relationships and understand appropriate behaviour through age-appropriate teaching and modelling. Any incidents of child-on-child harm, including physical violence, will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
The school follows safer recruitment procedures and ensures that all required DBS, barred list and suitability checks are completed in accordance with current EYFS requirements before individuals undertake regulated activity with children.

The class teacher is the named key worker for the children and information is shared with parents and carers regularly. We carry out a formal daily risk assessment of our classroom and outdoor areas, ensuring the equipment and environment is suitable and safe every morning. We continue to monitor these areas throughout the day.

Children's Screen Use

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2026), the school has regard to government guidance on children's screen use. Digital technology is used purposefully to support learning and development and does not replace active play, exploration, physical activity, social interaction or direct teaching experiences. Staff ensure that any use of screens is age-appropriate, educational and supports children's learning outcomes.

Safer Sleep

As a primary school EYFS setting, we do not routinely provide planned sleep facilities or designated sleeping arrangements for children during the school day. Where a child becomes unwell, unusually tired or requires rest, staff will provide appropriate supervision, ensure the child's comfort and contact parents/carers where necessary. Any arrangements made will be based on the individual needs of the child and in line with the school's safeguarding, health and safety, and first aid procedures.

Where children do sleep or rest during the day, safe sleeping arrangements are implemented in accordance with current EYFS requirements and guidance. Staff ensure children are appropriately checked and supervised, length of sleep is recorded and sleep information is shared with parents.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

We promote healthy eating and support children in developing positive attitudes towards food and drink. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices and learn about the importance of a balanced diet as part of their personal development and understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Food and drink provided within school will meet relevant nutritional standards and any dietary, allergy, medical, cultural or religious requirements will be carefully considered. Further information can be found in the school's Food and Nutrition Policy.

Oral Health

The school actively promotes good oral health through teaching, discussion and healthy lifestyle messages. Children are encouraged to understand the importance of toothbrushing, healthy food choices and regular dental check-ups.

Supervision

Supervision meetings take place regularly in the Early Years team, allowing the staff to discuss any concerns with children, identify solutions to problems and receive coaching to develop effectiveness.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local procedures require amendment. The Headteacher and EYFS Lead are responsible for ensuring the policy remains compliant with current EYFS requirements.

- Approved by: Governing Body
- Date approved:
- Review date:
- Version:

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

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection policy and manual.
Procedure for intimate care	See intimate care policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy, medical Policy, First Aid Policy, Medicine Policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy, Medical Policy, First Aid Policy, Medicine Policy
Online safety procedures	See Online Safety Policy
Promotion of positive behaviour choices	See Behaviour 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 failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy, missing Child procedure
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy
Staffing	See Staff Code of Conduct, Whistle blowing policy