

UNICORN SCHOOL

EYFS POLICY

This policy applies to all children at Unicorn School in Red & Orange classes.

*The Head of EYFS is:
Polly Fraley*

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EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. 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. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

This policy is written with reference to:

Early Years Framework for School Based Providers 2025

The Childcare Act 2006

SECTION 1 - LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

At Unicorn School 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, which is reflected in our planning.

Characteristics of effective learning

Playing and Exploring

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They 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 can express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. We encourage children to be independent and to take control over their learning by planning a balance of structured and self-initiated activities, providing appropriate resources and facilitating independent learning through questioning and scaffolding. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions and feel a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically

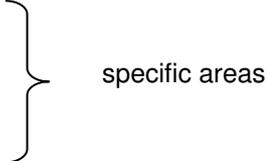
Children should be given opportunities to be creative within all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning. There are three prime and four specific areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

} prime areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Understanding the World
 - Expressive Arts and Design
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In the EYFS none of these areas is delivered in isolation from the others as 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 there are development statements and Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

In addition, we at Unicorn school actively promote and develop:

- partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- understanding that practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- A range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- A carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS;
- provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- good relationships between our school and other settings in the area, through our relationships with the borough Early Years Consultants and termly cluster meetings with other independent settings.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Our planning follows the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025 and Medium Term Plans (MTPs), which we record on a cross-curricular topic web. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter them in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning which shows a breakdown of activities to be followed each day, with specific learning intentions. Planning is flexible and takes into account the children's interests and suggestions as well as any observations made by staff.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS primarily takes the form of observations, and this involves the EYFS practitioners, including specialist teachers, as well as input from other people who have significant contact with

the children and can contribute towards a rounded picture of them, including parents, other relatives, carers, non-teaching members of staff. These observations are recorded in the online learning journal 'Tapestry'. Parents have access to written records about their children and we encourage their comments and contributions. We also keep information passed on from other settings and agencies. All staff are aware of the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

Inclusion and arrangements for children with SEND

We value the diversity of individuals and all children are treated fairly regardless of race, background, gender, religion or abilities. In our nurturing environment, we give every child the opportunity to achieve their best, taking into account of their range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, which are reflected in our planning to meet the needs of: boys and girls, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), children who are able and talented, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds (please refer to individual policies).

We 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;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and making reasonable adjustments in the light of any SEND need. These might include the use of visual timetables, now and next boards, additional adult support for activities such as swimming and PE
- 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;
- welcoming children whose home language is not English and taking action to provide support as necessary;
- making regular observations of the children.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are organised in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales from when indoors. We encourage the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help them to develop in all seven areas of learning. In addition we have access to a large playground with climbing equipment and the children receive specialist P.E. and gym lessons.

SECTION 2 – ASSESSMENT

Assessment at the end of the EYFS – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

In the final term of Reception, just before a child moves on to year 1 (Yellow class) their teacher will complete the early Years Foundation Stage Profile which gives parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well- rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals (Please see Annex 1)

The Year 1 teacher is given a copy of the Profile report as part of our comprehensive handover procedure.

The Profile and a written report will be sent to parents/carers before the end of term so they are able to discuss this with their teacher should they so wish to do so.

If a child moves to a new setting during the academic year Unicorn send their assessment of the child's level of development against the early learning goals to the relevant school within 15 days of receiving a request.

If in exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child remains in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they reach age 512 will continue throughout the child's time within EYFS provision and the Profile will be completed once only, at the end of the year before the child moves into year 1.

The Profile will be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with SEND must be made as appropriate. Children will have differing levels of knowledge, skills and abilities across the Profile, and it is important that there is a full assessment of all areas of their development, to inform plans for future activities and to identify any additional support needs.

We will provide the EYFSP to the local authority on request.

SECTION 3 SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE REQUIREMENTS

Safeguarding

The following whole school policies apply to all staff (including volunteers and students) in the EYFS:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Low level Concerns about staff
- Safer Recruitment
- Use of Mobile phones and technology
- Attendance Policy

Please note:

The DSL for the entire school is David Gladstone. However on the safeguarding team, the deputy safeguarding lead, Polly Fraley, will have particular reference to the EYFS.

All staff in the EYFS will have specific training on those items in Annex C of the EYFS statutory Framework

Attendance:

Even if a child is below statutory school age, parents must notify the school if their child will be absent for a regular session. The school will follow procedures outlined in the Attendance Policy to follow up any unexplained absence.

Welfare Arrangements

The following whole school policies include the EYFS:

- Medicines Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

In addition please see the specific EYFS policies:

- Food and Nutrition in the EYFS
- Toileting and Intimate Care Policy

Paediatric First Aid (full course):

EYFS staff undertake a rolling programme of obtaining full Paediatric First Aid Certificates as outlined in Annex A of the EYFS statutory Framework 2025.

A practitioner with a current certificate is always on the premises or trips with EYFS children.

A practitioner with a current certificate is always present when children from the EYFS are eating.

A list of staff qualified in full PFA is displayed on the EYFS noticeboard in the Coach House.

Medicines and First Aid

The administration of medicine, whether prescription or non-prescription will only take place with written parental consent. We maintain a record of all accidents and injuries and first aid treatment.

At least one member with a current full paediatric first aid certificate is on site and available at all times when children are present and accompanies children on any outings.

Premises and safety

The EYFS learning environment meets the space and safety requirements set out in the EYFS statutory framework. There are:

- Adequate indoor and outdoor space for play and learning
- Suitable toilet and washing facilities for children and staff
- Appropriate arrangements for privacy, hygiene and confidentiality
- A secure outdoor play area with daily access to outdoor activities
- Fire detection and control equipment and clear procedures for evacuation and emergency response
- Risk assessments are undertaken regularly including for off-site visits and reviewed in line with the school's Health and Safety policy

Staffing, Positive Relationship and Parent Partnerships

Children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make, particularly as a parent-owned school. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

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- talking to parents about their child before they start our school through the offer of home visits;
- giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school to meet the staff and to become familiar with the setting;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception classes, allowing free access to all the children's records, including the observations (to which they have continual access through Tapestry), and encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- providing a formal meeting for parents in the Autumn and Spring terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- writing reports on their child's attainment and progress, with reference to Development Matters, Early Learning Goals and Characteristics of Effective Learning;
- providing a variety of opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents. They help on a weekly basis with cooking, hearing readers, reading stories, helping with ICT and swimming. Throughout the year there are class assemblies, Sports Days, galas, parties, productions and trips, which parents are encouraged to support.

- access to Tapestry so parents can make comments or upload photos and so on relating to the children's achievements.

Staff involved with the EYFS develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Staff and children from the EYFS are included in all relevant school events.

Key People

A key person is allocated to each child in Red and Orange Class, in accordance with statutory requirements. The role of key people is explained to parents as part of our information to parents and parents are informed as to their child's key worker.

Staff-pupil ratios

There are comprehensive qualification and ratio requirements outlined in the Statutory Framework for School based providers in the EYFS 2025.

A list of Unicorn staff, their qualifications and ratios is available on the EYFS noticeboard in the coach house.

Staff supervision

In addition to staff appraisals and meetings there is direct feedback in the classrooms, observation of and interaction with peers and colleagues and one-to-one coaching, as necessary. Supervision meetings are held twice a year (and on request) for teachers and teaching assistants in the EYFS and all staff who work with EYFS children are able to request a supervision meeting at any time. All new members of staff participate in the mentoring scheme.

English language skills

All staff at Unicorn have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care.

Supporting and understanding children's behaviour

Staff are responsible for supporting, understanding, and managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

Staff at Unicorn will not give or threaten corporal punishment or any punishment which could negatively affect a child's well-being.

If physical intervention is necessary to avert immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used will be logged on CPOMS and parents/carers will be informed.

Complaints

The EYFS is included in the whole school Complaints Policy. This meets the specific EYFS requirements. A written record is kept of all complaints relating to the fulfilment of EYFS requirements including outcome and any actions taken. The complainant is notified of the outcome within 28 days of the complaint being received.

Parents may contact Ofsted directly at any time:

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

In line with the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework the school notifies Ofsted of any significant events or changes including:

- Serious accidents, injuries or illnesses and any action taken
- Food poisoning affecting two or more children
- Any change to the premises or provision which may affect the quality of care or education
- The results of any investigation by other agencies

When an inspection is due parents will be informed and copies of the inspection will be made available to them.

Information for Parents

In accordance with paragraph 3.84 of the EYFS Statutory Framework, the following information is made available to parents:

- How the EYFS is delivered in our setting and how parents can access further information;
- The daily routine of the setting and the range of activities and experiences provided;
- How we support children with special educational needs and disabilities;
- Details of the food and drink provided;
- The name of the child's key person and their role;
- The staffing arrangements and ratios;
- The procedures for a child who is uncollected at the end of a session or missing during the school day;
- Contact details for the setting, including an emergency number.

This information can all be found on the website below and on the EYFS noticeboard in the coachhouse:

<https://early-years-unicorn-0gbrxtg.gamma.site>