EYFS Policy

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1. Aims

We believe The Early Years Foundation Stage is a unique phase in a child's life and is crucial to successful future learning. At Mulberry Baird Primary, we seek to provide each pupil with the best possible start to their school career and believe that each unique child should be at the very heart of our teaching and learning approaches.

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.

As a Trust, this document also complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

At Mulberry Baird Primary we offer an Early Years Village Approach to learning where children are fully supported on their journey. This journey begins with children from three years of age within our nursery. Then children may choose to move to our reception classes in the academic year after they have turned four (currently compulsory schooling begins the term after they have become five).

Our nursery takes pupils from the term after their third birthday. We offer all pupils 30 hours of free provision regardless of eligibility, recognizing the importance of strong early starts to education. We operate a waiting list and therefore parents are able to book their child's place in advance of their third birthday. This enables us to ensure that we have the correct staffing in place to meet the EYFS Statutory ratios.

We currently operate two reception classes with a Pupil Admission Number of 45.

At Mulberry Baird Primary, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Families are given clear guidance on the staff that they will meet and their role in the setting.

To enable children to make secure attachments to practitioners and to develop positive relationships, we operate a Co-Key Person system in the Nursery. In Reception classes, the Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants also take on this role. This allows two practitioners to work in partnership to implement an effective Key Person system which ensures strong relationships with high quality communication and support through the range of attendance patterns.

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
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

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
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The Prime Areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in Specific Areas of learning. Across all of these areas we promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning where children develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role in their learning and think creatively. We observe and monitor these skills and report them to parents.

4.1 Planning

Curriculum mapping is in place to promote a wide ranging and progressive curriculum where children are challenged with new experiences. It is made up of a range of broad topic themes which are linked to our core books and rhymes. These are also sometimes linked to seasonal changes and/or events, whilst being flexible to respond to observed needs and current interests.

Long term, medium term and weekly plans are prepared carefully to ensure a thorough coverage of skills to be taught.

Our curriculum takes into account and responds to the pupils' developmental needs and allows them to make good progress related to their differing abilities.

In order to achieve this, we ensure that:

- we provide quality, play-based learning experiences which use children's interests and curiosities to motivate and foster learning
- we provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum which covers the statutory framework

- we create effective partnerships with parents and carers to support and enhance the development of pupils

- we create a curriculum that tailors learning to children's unique needs, abilities and interests while providing appropriate support and challenge

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.

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.

4.2 Teaching

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. At Mulberry Baird Primary, we understand that young children achieve well when learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning. Learning is often play-based with increasing challenge and expectations as a child develops.

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 Stage 1.

We teach phonics using Sounds Write. This begins in the Nursery with children experiencing the 'Getting reading for reading' Sounds Write programme. This is a daily programme which prepares young children for formal phonics when they enter reception. Formal Sounds Write teaching starts from day one in reception where children learn the initial code before learning the extended code into Key Stage 1 (see phonics policy).

4.3 Environment

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an exciting indoor and large, well-equipped outdoor environment that is set up to provide development within all areas of learning.

We operate a free flow approach which includes the sharing of our outdoor as well as our indoor spaces when possible, across the age phases. In this way children can access a range of self-initiated challenges alongside structured adult-led learning experiences.

Learning spaces are clearly defined, and resources are easily accessible so that children can develop as independent learners by following their own schemas and fascinations. We recognise the importance of open-ended experiences to promote purposeful and challenging play. Practitioners observe and extend

this play as appropriate, use inspiring language to promote 'Sustained Shared Thinking'. They further use these observations to enhance provision and extend individual learning

5. Assessment

The Development Matters Bands and Early Learning Goals provide the basis for assessment throughout the Foundation Stage. Children are quickly assessed at their entry point to the Foundation Stage (both nursery and reception) to establish a baseline. Progress is monitored and tracked consistently through electronic learning journeys and an electronic tracking system (Sonar). Parents have access to an online platform called Tapestry which tracks observations made by staff to demonstrate each child's progress. Parents are encouraged to interact with this platform to share learning at home as well.

At Mulberry Baird Primary, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their progress, development and interests. Observations are logged on Tapestry and used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account 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.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the reception baseline assessment (RBA). This is an informal assessment, carried out by staff who are well known to the child.

Summative assessment information is then tracked on a termly basis and discussed in pupil progress meetings on a termly basis.

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) and determine whether each child has reached a 'Good Level of Development'. 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 EYFS profile (but not the reception baseline assessment) with their parents and/or carers.

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 local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. We submit EYFS profile data to the local authority on request.

6. Working with parents and carers

At Mulberry Baird Primary, we understand parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played and

their future role in educating their children and believe that high quality communication is integral to a child's achievement. 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 engage and encourage collaboration by:

- arranging parent and teacher/practitioner meetings before a child starts in the setting
- arranging settling-in and transition programmes before beginning Reception
- having a staggered start in September which lasts for a week and allows teachers to welcome children into Reception and embed routines
- creating home learning challenges, linked to the class topics, which encourage parents and children to work together on different learning activities. These are then shared and celebrated in school
- making the Tapestry app accessible to all parents so that parents and carers can see the journey their child's learning is taking.
- ensuring parent voice is captured at key times during the year, which include Parents' Consultation Evenings and more informal occasions like 'Stay and Play' sessions
- inviting parents/carers to 'Stay and Play' sessions
- inviting parents/carers to termly Celebration Afternoons where they can share in and celebrate pupils' achievements
- encouraging parents/carers to attend workshops around the curriculum and supporting at home
- sending home weekly Weduc (parent communication app) updates that explains the learning from that week

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

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 safeguarding 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, which can be found on our website at https://mulberrybaird.org/document/child-protection-and-safeguarding/

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, including:

- Obtaining a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited

- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references

See our safeguarding policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures, which can be found on our website at https://mulberrybaird.org/document/child-protection-and-safeguarding/

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.

In the event that a member of staff feels that they need to blow the whistle on misconduct, they should report their concern to the principal. If the concern is about the principal, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair of Governors – Sharon Simpson – chair@mulberrybaird.org

See our whistleblowing policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures and more detail on our procedures for handling whistleblowing in our whistleblowing policy at https://mulberryschoolstrust.org/governance/trust-policies/

7.3.1 Malicious or vexatious allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith, but investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

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 https://mulberrybaird.org/document/child-protection-and-safeguarding/ for more information.

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, e.g. on a visit, we will inform Ofsted within 14 days of the allegation being made. We will also inform them of any action we have taken in response to the allegation(s).

8.1.1 Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the Principal – referred to from here as the 'recipient' – they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative or other accompanying person

- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information

- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there **is**, then:

    - Arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the Chair of Governors, if appropriate. In some cases, the recipient may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police

    - Inform the person who raised the concern about how the matter is being investigated and give an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps

8.1.2 Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred.

The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority in line with local reporting procedure, or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the headteacher, governors and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

While we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

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:

- Within nursery - for children aged 3 and over:
    - Where there is a person with qualified teacher status, early years professional status, or early years teacher status, an instructor or another suitably-qualified, overseas-trained teacher:
        - For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 30 children
        - For all other classes, 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
    - Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children
        - At least 1 member of staff must hold 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

Within reception:

- We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils

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. All staff training is tracked on a spreadsheet and 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

We're required to promptly follow up on absences.

We ask that parents and carers contact us on the first day of absence and each day thereafter. If we do not hear from a parent with a reason for the absence, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts. If we continue to have no contact, we may make a home visit.

See our attendance policy, which can be found on the website, 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 through a range of approaches:

- Talking to the children about healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves healthy
- Encouraging the children to taste healthy foods and explore new healthy fruit and vegetables
- Talking to the children about the effects of eating too many sweet things
- Teaching the children about the importance of brushing your teeth and teaching how to brush your teeth
- Cleaning our teeth daily in class

We operate a supervised tooth brushing programme, to support the children's oral health. We follow government guidance on supervised toothbrushing to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe. We also send home toothbrushes and toothpaste on a termly basis for children to use at home.

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

8.7 Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric 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. All staff have received allergy training in line with our Allergy Policy.

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 kit (which contains appropriate items for children) always accessible.

We keep a written record of accident or injuries and any first aid treatment. This is recorded in Medical Tracker and details are sent to parents and carers following an incident.

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.

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.

Parents are expected to supply any required resources for nappy changing such as wipes, nappies etc. These are not provided by the school.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the EYFS Leader 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, see https://mulberrybaird.org/key-documents/policies/

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy https://mulberrybaird.org/document/child-protection-and-safeguarding/
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy https://mulberryschoolstrust.org/document/mst-health-and-safety-policy/
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy https://mulberrybaird.org/key-documents/policies/
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy https://mulberryschoolstrust.org/document/mst-health-and-safety-policy/
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy and visitors policy https://mulberrybaird.org/document/child-protection-and-safeguarding/ https://mulberrybaird.org/document/visitors-policy/
Procedures for a parent/carer failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy https://mulberrybaird.org/document/child-protection-and-safeguarding/
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy https://mulberryschoolstrust.org/document/complaints-policy-2026/