



3.2 Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage

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POLICY FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

This EYFS Policy is in accordance with the Statutory Framework for Early Years, giving a view of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision at Notting Hill Preparatory School.

“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.

The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. (Introductory paragraphs 1 and 2 of The Statutory Framework for the EYFS)”

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Whilst we are exempt from the Learning, Development and Assessment requirements of Statutory Framework for Early Years, the EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development, recognising that children develop and learn at different rates

A Unique child

At Notting Hill Prep, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children at Notting Hill Prep School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, gender, identity or abilities. All children and their families are equally valued. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our 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.

In 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 boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. 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;
- 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;
- managing children's behaviour in a supportive, understanding and appropriate way (no corporal punishment to be given or threatened in any circumstances)
- ensuring arrangements are in place to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary, liaising closely with the Learning Support Department (see Learning Support and EAL Policies).

Positive Relationships

At Notting Hill Prep School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Staff working with children in the early years at NHP aim to develop positive relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, the Reception Form Teacher acts as the 'key person' for the children, supported by the teaching assistant in each class.

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 play, in educating their children. We develop parent partnerships by:

- communicating with parents about their child before he/she starts in Reception at NHP
- providing the parents with a 'settling-in guide' including information on how to prepare their child for school and information on life in Reception
- giving children the opportunity both to spend time with their new teacher during the summer term before starting school and to get to know their new class mates at the New Reception Teddy Bears' Picnic
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting/presentation at the start of the Autumn term
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress
- encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents in the Autumn and Spring terms at which the teacher and parents discuss the child's progress. These are confidential meetings. Parents receive a report on their child's Early Learning Goals, characteristics of learning and progress at the end of the Autumn term and a full report at the end of the summer term. The end of year

report provides personalised targets under the title 'Next Steps'. Opportunities are given for parents to discuss these judgements with their Form Teacher, the Head of Early Years or the Head of Lower School.

- organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child,
- school and parents: show and tells, parent speakers, class assemblies, stay and plays, Sports Day, etc.

Pre-Schools as Partners

At Notting Hill Prep, we recognise that it is extremely important to build relationships with local pre-schools and nurseries. Having strong relations with these settings provides an opportunity to help children ease through the transitioning process. We encourage visits from other pre-school/nursery practitioners to our Reception classes to share information and offer suggestions to support the smooth transition of the children. Nursery visits are organised for our new children, prior to them joining us, so that we can see the children in their pre-school setting and liaise with pre-school staff to talk about individual children and their needs. Nursery staff have a wealth of knowledge about their children which is key to them settling quickly and securely into their new school lives at NHP. Head of Early Years and Head of Lower School attend Cluster Group and Early Years Leadership Network meetings; made up of nursery head teachers and playgroup leaders. They share quality provision and best practice.

Enabling Environments

At Notting Hill Prep, 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 the children's learning.

Planning and Provision

EYFS staff are responsible for planning and implementing a creative, inspiring and ambitious curriculum, which is based around learning themes. Planning is flexible and designed to meet the needs of the child and follows the EYFS framework, and the school's schemes of work. Planning in Reception is also informed by observations and the interests and experiences of the children. Staff spend time observing and planning for their key children, ensuring good communication and consistency within a year group. Awareness of next steps and progression of skills is key when planning. It is monitored by the Deputy Head (Academic) as well as the Head of EY&LS.

In Reception at NHP, our provision allows for a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities. We have focused phonics, English and maths sessions often followed by a carousel of practical, multi-sensory activities to consolidate and assess the learning outcomes of the session. Reception children benefit from specialist teaching in music, drama, PE, games, library and Spanish lessons, which are scheduled across the course of each week.

At NHP, we recognise the importance of learning through play in the EYFS. We believe that play offers a rich learning experience for children. It allows each child to progress at his/her own pace, it gives children practice in choosing, and in dealing with, the consequences of choice, and it encourages a more flexible and open-ended use of the resources. Continuous provision allows for play and early learning activities, planned across the seven areas of learning, where children are free

to select their own learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors. Free-flow sessions takes place twice a week, allowing children to move freely and interact with their peers across the year group. The class teacher will often lead a focus activity during continuous provision, allowing for a phonics/handwriting/maths focus, individual reading or targeted interventions based on observations of the children's learning that week. Teaching assistants and support staff support and guide children in their learning, encouraging the habits of independence and collaboration, moving their learning and thinking on with meaningful questioning. Regular assessments are made of the children's learning and this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework states that *'schools should not include burdensome evidence gathering requirements against any of the areas of learning in their assessment policies so that teachers and practitioners can spend as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development. However, teachers may find it helpful to record, in a simple way, particularly noteworthy achievements, such as what phonemes and numbers a child has learned, in order to determine what to teach next.'* (Building knowledge of the child)

At NHP, our priority is knowing and focusing on each individual child and working closely with them in whole class, group and 1:1 sessions, across the week, to continually monitor their learning, progress and wellbeing. Assessment in the EYFS includes observation, which involves the Form Teacher, teaching assistants and other adults as appropriate. Each child's level of development is observed against the prime and specific areas of learning and development derived from the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and Development Matters objectives as well as observations of the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Teachers ensure children who are 'exceeding' in the areas of learning are challenged and stretched through mastery, questioning and extension opportunities.

Evidence and observation are gathered in the following ways:

- Quest baseline and end of year assessments to track progress
- Half termly Anima Phonics assessments
- Termly in-house maths assessment
- Half termly reading trackers
- Pupil progress meetings
- Observations of children through play and questioning
- Recorded learning in English and maths books
- Individual scrap books
- Children of concern trackers, observations and support from learning enrichment team
- Wow cards celebrating a specific success in a given area of learning

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is 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. Where possible, the classroom is set up in learning areas, for children to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor area and access to the front and Newton Centre play areas. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for

doing things in different ways and on different scales than can be achieved indoors. It allows children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning and characteristics of effective learning. The children also engage in Forest Friday activities which take place in either our own bespoke Woodland area or off site, in Holland Park or Hampstead Heath, which further encourages exploration and play in an outside environment.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Our policy on Teaching and Learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school from Reception – Year 8. At Notting Hill Prep, and in the early years foundation stage, 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.

In 2021, NHP applied to opt out of the learning and development requirements of the Government's EYFS framework. We believe that it is a matter of choice for independent schools to decide how they wish to approach teaching and learning. NHP followed the protocol of informing parents and the local authority. The exemption took effect from 12 August 2021. The exemption allows teachers the freedom to exercise their professional judgement in implementing a curriculum and teaching learning strategies that are best suited to the children at NHP.

In acknowledgement of the fact that children develop at different rates, we ease children into the new routine and environment at the beginning of the school year by starting with optional half-days for the first two weeks of term. In the first half term, children also have an optional half-day on Wednesdays. In the second half of the Autumn term, and Spring and Summer terms, all children are in school for five full days, in order to prepare them for the transition to Year 1.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

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 express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

‘When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.’

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended 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:

The Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language
- Physical Development

The Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are all 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 Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The members of Senior Management, Head of Early Years and the Head of Lower School will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule (see **Staff Monitoring Policy**), as well as regular monitoring of planning and delivery of lessons, ensuring that all areas of the curriculum are covered.

The EYFS are involved in regular Lower School moderation meetings to monitor the work produced and measure children’s progress against their cohort, as well as against the upcoming expectations for the year.

Safeguarding and Welfare

“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.”

At Notting Hill Prep, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- Safeguard children
- Ensure the adults who have contact with children are suitable
- Promote good health
- Support and understand behaviour (See **Managing Behaviour Policy**)
- Maintain records, policies and procedures

It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. (See **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**). We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they are here. 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. Where appropriate, all children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.

We monitor attendance carefully. Any absence of a child will be tracked and followed up to ensure we can support parents and have a greater understanding of why their child is not in school. In addition to this, holding two emergency contacts for each child allows for greater home communication.

As a provider of childcare and education we have a responsibility to all children and parents to provide security and promote confidence and independence. It is essential that all staff are familiar with the school’s safeguarding and health and safety policies and procedures. Safeguarding procedures will be adhered to. NHP has an allocated safeguarding governor.

Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children. We hold a weekly staff meeting where we discuss any issues concerning child development, wellbeing and any Health and Safety issues. We expect all staff to follow all School Policies, including the Staff Code of Conduct.

Safeguarding Concerns

- **Concerns about a child:** In line with the school’s **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**, if a member of staff has any concerns about changes in a child’s physical or emotional wellbeing, s/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **An upset child:** If a child becomes distressed or very unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, this should be reported to the Head of Early Years/Lower School or Head. The matter will be investigated at an appropriate level and outcomes recorded.

- **Concerns or Allegations about a Member of Staff:** Anyone who is concerned about the behaviour of an adult or is made aware of an allegation of abuse against another member of staff, volunteer or any adult involved with the school must inform the Head (or if the Head is absent, the Chair of Governors) immediately. If the concern or allegation is about the Head, the Chair of Governors must be informed immediately without informing the Head (see **Whistleblowing Policy**).

We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children. Our Policy for **Safeguarding and Child Protection** (which follows statutory guidance from **Keeping Children Safe in Education**, the **Prevent guidance** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children**) and related policies (e.g., **Dealing with Bullying**, **Supervision of Children**, **Health and Safety**, **E-Safety**, **Staff IT Acceptable Use**, **Educational Visits**, **Pastoral Care**) outline safeguarding procedures and policies for the school as a whole.

Specific safeguarding requirements related to the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage are outlined below:

Safety (including premises)

- We carry out regular fire practices, test fire alarms weekly and an external agency check fire alarms and equipment.
- We have emergency evacuation and critical incident procedures in place. (See **Fire and Critical Incident Policies**).
- Resources and equipment are appropriate to the age and stage of the child's development and are checked regularly for any signs of wear and tear.
- Maintenance and safety issues are reported to the Maintenance Team.
- We hold termly Health and Safety meetings.
- Children's loos are hygienic and agreed procedures are followed (See 'Intimate Care' section in **Safeguarding and Child Protection policy**).
- Confidential conversations may be had with staff in one of the offices and there is a staff room and Board Room available.
- We never release children into the care of anyone unless permission has been given by the parent.
- The external doors are kept secure through electronic key fobs
- Entry to the school is through a secure airlock door, where visitors must sign in. They are required to wear a pink visitor's lanyard or sticker and be supervised by a member of staff while on site
- Any parent volunteers must undertake a safeguarding induction and sign a risk assessment and confidentiality form before they can begin
- Any safety concerns are reported straight to our Maintenance Team, and the Head of Finance and Operations and Head of EY&LS are also made aware. (Please see **Health and Safety Policy** for further details).

Risk Assessments

We take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children are not exposed to unnecessary risks and we manage risks carefully. Our indoor and outdoor areas are regularly checked and assessed, ensuring any new experiences and equipment are included. Staff are vigilant, ensuring the environment is safe and children are closely monitored. Risk Assessments are carried out for all classrooms/areas and when children are taken off site, following the whole school Educational Visits Policy. Staff to child ratios are rigorously followed. (See **Risk Assessment Policy** and **Educational Visits Policy**).

Use of devices

- Staff do not use personal devices to capture images of children. These are stored securely out of reach of the children and only school devices are used for recording children's learning journeys.
- Parents and carers visiting are made aware that the use of any device with imaging and sharing capabilities, such as cameras or mobile phones, are disallowed within the Early Years setting and classrooms.
- Parents are discouraged from using personal devices to record/photograph school events, such as Nativity performances, and are reminded that if they do so, the images are to remain within their family and not to be shared on social media. All performances and events are photographed by designated staff on school devices and these photos can be viewed securely by parents on the school intranet or in the school newsletters.

Health and Safety and First Aid

- Staff members may not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their care of the children. Smoking or vaping is not permitted on site.
- First aid training and epi-pen training is provided to all staff
- All early years staff members hold a valid Paediatric First Aid Certificate. There is always a member of staff on the NHP premises with a Paediatric First Aid certificate
- All medication on the premises must be stored securely, and out of reach of children at all times
- Staff promote good health, including oral health and hygiene
- Parents are aware of procedure and policies for not sending children to school when they are unwell, to prevent the spread of infection
- Children are provided with varied, healthy lunches, catering to all dietary needs. They have access to fresh drinking water.
- Following the nutrition guidance outlined by the EYFS Framework, Reception children are not offered sugary puddings and snacks while in school
- Children bring their own snacks to school. These must be healthy and nut and seed free.
- Early years staff are trained in food hygiene
- First aid boxes are stored securely in all classrooms and are readily available
- Accidental hurt or injury: if a child is hurt accidentally, he or she should be immediately

reassured, and the adult should check that he or she is safe. The incident will be reported immediately to the school nurse and designated line manager. First aid will be administered as needed and parents informed (See **First Aid Policy**).

- At NHP parents have been encouraged to have trained their child to be clean and dry before they start in Reception. However, there may be some children with individual needs, where this is more challenging. In the early years, accidents do happen and there are some circumstances where a child may require help with toileting from staff in school. (For guidance for staff on intimate care surrounding toileting, see relevant 'intimate care' section in Policy for **Safeguarding and Child Protection**).

Suitability, Ratios and Deployment of Staff

- All staff who work with, or come into contact with children in the Early Years have relevant qualifications and training. New staff undertake a period of induction and training to ensure they have the knowledge and understanding to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Induction includes, but is not limited to, emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues.
- All staff working with our Reception children follow the appropriate ratios and qualifications laid out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching staff are deployed within the classrooms following appropriate ratios laid out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (1:30). Children must be adequately supervised at all times. Children must always be within sight and hearing of staff. (See **Supervision of Children Policy & Lost Child Policy**).

Staff Support, Training and Supervision

We ensure statutory staff supervision requirements are met. Early years staff sign supervision agreements each year. We hold regular meetings which provide opportunities for staff to raise and discuss any concerns about the progress or wellbeing of children. There is also the opportunity for staff to raise any other concerns, including staff welfare.

Meetings:

- Provide support
- Give staff the opportunity to discuss concerns
- Identify strengths and areas for development, including training and CPD needs
- Identify coaching and mentoring needs
- Build trusting relationships that provide a culture of information sharing

We are committed to supporting the professional development of our staff. Everyone has access to the Dukes Hub, providing face to face and virtual training and webinars and staff are encouraged to attend external CPD courses. We also have our own school INSET schedule throughout the year, and we are committed to training our own staff. Staff can also have an informal conversation with the Head of EY/LS or any member of the SLT at any time.