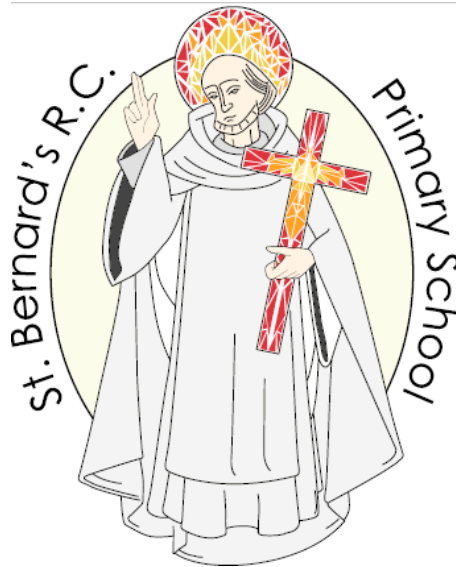




Early Years Policy

“A unique family in faith, love and learning.”

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Statement of intent

At St Bernard's, we greatly value the importance of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage of their education, and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2021) 'Development Matters'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2015) 'The Prevent duty'
- Early Education (2021) 'Birth to 5 Matters'
- UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Education for a Connected World'

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Photography Policy.
- Ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer. These issues are addressed in the school's Whistleblowing Policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The EYFS lead, in conjunction with the headteacher, has responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.

Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- Remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

3. Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.

- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Four overarching principles shape our practice:

- 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 the school and parents.
- **Learning and development** is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, the school:

- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

4. Learning and development

In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

The EYFS provision and practice is based on an observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning and development in school are planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language:
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical development:
 - Gross motor skills

- Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development:
 - Self-regulation
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy:
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics:
 - Numbers
 - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world:
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design:
 - Creating with materials
 - Being imaginative and expressive

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the school will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

5. Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

Ongoing formative assessments are used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Practitioners interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs, and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.

The EYFS setting will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting reception year.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

The school reports EYFS Profile results to the LA when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

The EYFS lead will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress with the child's parents, especially where this concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.

The school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to establish whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.

6. Inclusion

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Equal Opportunities Policy: Pupils ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

7. The learning environment and outdoor spaces

The learning environment is organised in such a way that children can explore and learn independently in a safe and interactive environment.

Children have access to an enclosed outdoor environment, and daily access to the outdoor environment is planned, unless circumstances, such as the weather, would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe.

8. Safeguarding and welfare

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy,

and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL is the Headteacher. The deputy DSL is the deputy Headteacher.

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

9. Mobile phones and devices

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets.

Use of personal mobile phones by staff members

Staff members must not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present. Staff may use mobile phones on school premises outside of working hours when no children are present. Staff may use mobile phones in the staffroom during breaks and non-contact time. Mobile phones should be safely stored and in silent mode whilst children are present.

Staff may take mobile phones on trips, but they must only be used in emergencies and should not be used when children are present. Mobile phones must not be used to take images or videos at any time during trips.

Staff who do not adhere to this policy will face disciplinary action. Staff must report any concerns about another staff member's use of mobile phones to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Staff may use their professional judgement in emergency situations.

Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors and contractors

Posters are used around the school to indicate that it is a mobile free zone.

Parents, visitors and contractors are not permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission.

Use of the school's mobile phones and cameras

Staff are provided with a school device to ensure that only school devices are used to take photographs and videos. School devices must have passcode protection.

School devices must only be used for work related matters, for example recording and documenting a child's learning. School devices must only be used to take photographs in the presence of another staff member and only with the consent of the child's parent.

Staff must not take photographs of bruising or injuries for child protection reasons. Instead, recording concerns forms and body maps are used to record observations relating to child protection concerns – these can be acquired from the DSL.

School devices must not be taken off school premises without prior written permission from the headteacher. Where staff members have concerns over material on a school device, they must report all concerns to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Health and safety

The school will promote the good health of children in the EYFS, including the promotion of good oral health.

The EYFS lead will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book, located in the Reception classroom. The headteacher will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.

A first-aid box is located in the Reception classroom.

Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered. The school's Administering Medication Policy outlines the procedures for administering medicines.

Any food or drink provided to children is healthy, balanced and nutritious. The headteacher will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.

Smoking is not permitted on the school premises.

The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

The school has a Fire Safety Policy in place.

11. Staffing

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues.
- Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

The EYFS lead holds a PGCE alongside at least two years' experience working in an early years setting. The full time Teaching Assistant holds a full and relevant level 2 qualification.

A fully qualified level 3 or HLTA will provide cover for the EYFS lead in their absence and is deemed fully qualified to do so by the EYFS lead and headteacher.

There will be at least one member of staff who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate on the school premises at all times, and will accompany children on any school outings.

The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.

For children in Reception classes class sizes will be limited to 30 pupils per school teacher.

Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.

12. Information and records

Information is stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

The following information is recorded for each child:

- The child's name and date of birth
- The name and address of every parent or carer who is known to the school, including information about all persons who have parental responsibility for the child and which parent or carer the child normally lives with
- The emergency contact details of the child's parent or carer

The following information about the school is recorded:

- The school's name, address and telephone number
- The school's certificate of registration
- The name, address and telephone number of anyone who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children

- A daily record of the names of the children being cared for in the school, their hours of attendance, and the names of each child's key person

The following information is made available to parents:

- The school's privacy notice for parents and pupils
- How the school delivers the EYFS and how parents can access more information
- The daily routine and the activities offered in the school's EYFS and how parents can assist their child's learning at home
- How the school's EYFS supports children with SEND
- Details of the food and drink provided to the children
- Details of the policies and procedures in place in the school's EYFS
- Staffing details, including the name of their child's teacher

Ofsted will be notified if there are any changes to the following:

- The address of the school
- The school's contact details
- The hours during which care is provided
- Any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the school or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with, children to look after children

13. Parental involvement

We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents.

Parents are invited to a parental conference twice a year and will receive an end of year report; however, the school has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day. The orchard room will be utilised for confidential discussions between staff and parents. Parents are also invited to a number of 'Stay and Play' sessions with their child throughout the academic year.

Parents are asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.

Parents are asked to complete admission forms, a medical form and to write a brief synopsis about their child to help the school to understand their character and personality.

14. Transition periods

Before their child starts school parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes, and to voice any concerns they may wish to express.

During the Summer term, children are invited to meet their new teacher and spend time in the Reception classroom.

In the Summer term, Reception and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

15. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every three years by the governing board and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.