

Early Years Policy

2025

Bushmead Primary School



Contents

1. Aims and Objectives	1
2. Legislation and Guidance	1
3. Roles and responsibilities	1
4. A unique child	2
5. Positive relationships	3
6. Enabling environments	3
7. Learning and development	4
8. Assessment	6
9. Safeguarding and welfare	7
10. Monitoring and assessment	8
11. Links with other policies and documents	8

1. Aims

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up..”
(All quotes, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023)

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

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency
- A secure foundation
- Partnership working
- Equality of opportunity

2. Legislation and guidance

The Statutory Framework (2025) sets the standards for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Bushmead Primary School.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Early Years Lead

Be responsible for leading the direction of the EY’s policy in conjunction with the Head Teacher, follow the principles stated in this policy.

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage Leader to review the policy regularly.

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage Leader to discuss EYFS practice with members of the Foundation Stage Team.

3.1.1 The Early Years staff

Will provide any feedback and raising any issues with the policy that require discussion.

3.2 The Governor/s

Will work with the head teacher and EY’s leader to determine the strategic development of the policy and provision in the school.

The Governing Body will review this policy in line with the Policy review schedule at the C&S committee meetings.

3.3 The Headteacher

Will work with staff, parents and governors to determine the strategic development of the policy and provision in the school.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and SLT to monitor the effectiveness of the EYFS Team.

4. A Unique Child

At Bushmead School we recognise that every child is a competent learner, who is constantly learning and 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, challenge, questioning, our whole school ethos 'Ready, 'Respectful', 'Safe' and shared learning and experiences, to encourage all children to develop a positive, resilient attitude to learning, where they feel confident to have ago, challenge themselves and be the best that they can be!

4.1 Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Bushmead School are treated fairly regardless of gender, race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We take into account our children's range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set appropriate expectations to meet the needs of our pupils. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special education 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 skills, 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, enthuse, support and challenge children to help them to learn effectively and enabling them to reach their full potential
- 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
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support and challenge as necessary

It is important to us that all children are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children in our care.

5. Positive Relationships

At Bushmead Primary School we believe that children become strong and independent, learning from secure relationships. We strive to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

5.1 Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and/or carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents and/or carers play, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents and/or carers about their child at the start of the school year
- Children being given the opportunity to spend time with their teacher together with their parents and/or carers before starting school during a Stay and Play session
- Offering a Parent's Induction Evening, providing information about the Foundation Stage and also the whole school, before children start with us
- Offering parents and/or carers opportunities to talk about their child's progress formally during Parent Consultation Evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms
- Operating an 'open door' policy for parents with any queries
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourages collaboration between child, school and parents and/or carers, including sharing pupils work
- Publishing a Topic Map each half term to inform parents and/or carers of the activities and learning opportunities taking place in school
- Providing opportunities for parents to share children's experiences at home using the online platform, Tapestry
- Using Social media and our class page on the school website as a secondary platform for relaying messages and celebrating pupils learning
- Updating families weekly of upcoming events using the weekly round up on tapestry
- Sending a report of their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Foundation Stage
- Giving parents and/or carers the opportunity to share their children's interests/achievements via Tapestry during the academic year
- Inviting parents and/or carers to come into school and talk about their jobs or read books to the children.
- Inviting parents and/or carers to termly stay and play sessions

All staff working within the Early Years Setting continually strive to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to their wants, needs, achievements and learning successes.

6. Enabling Environments

At Bushmead School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's key skills learning and development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging, hands on and skill based activities and providing real life experiences from which children can develop and extend their learning.

6.1 The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage class is 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 classroom is set up to

ensure the promotion of learning across the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum. Children are encouraged to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The learning environment contains continuously available resources to ensure that children can repeat and extend their learning.

The Foundation Stage class has two enclosed outdoor learning 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 when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan continuously available provision, enhanced provision and adult led activities for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

During the year the children are also given the opportunity to learn within Forest school.

7. Learning and Development

At Bushmead, 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.

7.1 Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our Foundation Stage class.

Features include:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- The understanding that teachers have a good knowledge of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- The 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 Year
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- The identification of progress (skill progression) and clear Next Steps through observations, for each child, which are shared with parents

7.2 The Learning and Developing Requirements

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise of seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes

The Early Learning goal, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year

The assessment requirements

The Bushmead EYFS team use 'Development Matters' the non-statutory guidance for the EYFS, to support our delivery of the EYFS learning and development requirements.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in the early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

7.2.1 Prime Areas

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

7.2.2 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 equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

In each area the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

7.3 Characteristics of Effective Learning

7.3.1 Playing and Exploring

“Play is an essential part of every child’s life – vital to his or her development. It is the way that children explore for themselves the world around them; the way that they naturally develop understanding and practise skills. Play is essential for healthy physical and emotional growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills. Play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious. Children’s own culture is created and lived through their play.”

(Play England-The Charter for Children’s Play)

Through play in the Foundation Stage 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, develop the ability to think critically 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 re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

7.3.2 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. The children are encouraged to make choices about the learning taking place and the resources available.

7.3.3 Creating and Thinking Critically

“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 are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults in the Foundation Stage classes support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

8. Assessment

8.1 Observation, Assessment and Planning

We regularly observe and reflect on children’s spontaneous play. We build on this play by resourcing and planning for a challenging and stimulating environment, which supports and extends specific areas of children’s learning. This may be in the moment or built in to future planning. We aim to extend and develop children’s language and communication in their play by using different methods such as higher order questioning, ambitious vocabulary.

The Planning within the EYFS follows the achievements; interests and needs of the children, following careful observation of each child and taking into account each child’s ‘Next steps’ and the clear building of skills.

We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. These assessments are recorded using Tapestry.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of ongoing observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. There is no obligation for all observations to be recorded formally. We record observations of ‘wow moments’ and key progress in learning to ensure that members of staff and parents and/or carers have a good understanding of pupil’s learning and development.

This evidence is summarised termly by the teacher alongside pupils Key workers to identify if pupils are on track or not on track with the expected progress. Where pupils are identified as being not on track, next steps are identified to support pupils to get back on track.

8.2 Statutory Assessment

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile forms the assessment at the end of Foundation Stage. Children are assessed at the end of the year against the 17 Early Learning Goals and in the 3 Characteristics of Effective Learning.

The Early Learning Goals support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child’s development and their readiness for Year 1.

8.3 Transition

For Transition into Year 1, the children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher before moving on to their new class and every effort is made for this to happen for parents. The Year 1 classroom is laid out to provide the same opportunities as in the Foundation Stage. The identified Next Steps from the end of the Reception Year are passed on to the new class teacher in order for the child’s needs and interests to be planned for. There is planned discussion time for the class teachers to hand over information on each child including each child’s Profile, individual tracking assessment and Learning and Development Summary which includes short commentaries on each

child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning. Year 1 teachers and LSA's spend time with pupils in the EYFS setting before they move to Year One.

The planning and learning opportunities in Year 1, focus on play based learning opportunities in order to ensure a smooth transition between Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 including the use of 'Drawing club' writing.

The Year 1 teachers recognise that many children moving into Key Stage 1 are still covered by the Foundation Stage Framework and plans accordingly.

9. 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 Bushmead Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with all Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements as stated in the most current Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. Including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Intimate Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Suitable People – see Recruitment Policy
- Staff qualifications, training, support and skills, suitable people – see safer recruitment policy and Volunteers in School
- Key Person. Each child is assigned a key person before they start in Foundation Stage. This person is responsible for ensuring that the children settle well into school and builds a relationship with their parents.
- Staff: child ratios. At Bushmead Primary School, we ensure that in the Foundation Stage there are no more than 30 children per school teacher (in line with infant class size legislation).
- Behaviour policy
- PE policy

9.1 Health

- Medicines –Medical Policy
- First aid policy
- Food and drink – see Health and Safety Policy
- Accident or injury – see COVID First Aid Policy Addendum

9.2 Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment

- Health and safety policy
- Risk assessment.
- In Early Years Foundation Stage, we have procedures for assessing risks in the indoor and outdoor environment. We review the risks indoors and outdoors on a yearly basis and produce a written risk assessment. On a daily basis, the adults monitor the risks and the children are involved in managing their own risks.
- Play policy

9.3 Outings

- EVC Educational Trips Policy

- Equal opportunities – see Accessibility Plan also see Equal Objectives statement on school website
- GDPR policy
- Information for parents and carers
- Complaints – see Complaints Policy
- Information about the provider – see UK GDPR Policy

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Early Years Leader every year. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the governing board.

11. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to our policies on:

1. Keeping Children Safe in Education
2. Intimate Care Policy
3. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
4. Recruitment Policy
5. Infant Class Size Legislation
6. Behaviour policy
7. PE policy
8. Medical policy
9. First aid policy
10. Health & safety policy
11. EYFS Risk assessment.
12. Play policy
13. EVC Educational Trips Policy
14. Accessibility plan
15. GDPR policy
16. Complaints policy

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