



**PONTEFRACT**  
ACADEMIES TRUST

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



**Summary:**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

<b>Author</b>	Director(s) of School Improvement		
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**Document Control**

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06.03.23	1.0	New policy created	
10.05.23	1.1	Revision	Updated (at the request of the Education and Standards Committee) to include more overt reference to Trust SEND policy at section 11.

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## 1. Aims

Pontefract Academies Trust aims to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children by giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. In creating a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences, children are enabled to become confident and independent.

We value the individual child and work alongside parents, carers and others to meet their needs and to help every child reach their needs and to help every child reach their full potential. As outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework *‘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 experience between birth and age five has 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.’*

**The EYFS Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Accessibility Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- SEND Policy.
- Behaviour & Relationships (Primary Phase) Policy.
- Administering Medications Policy.
- Complaints Policy.

## 2. Principles into practice

Four guiding principles shape practice in our early years settings:

- 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 supporting 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 practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- An acknowledgement that children develop and learn at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum based on the EYFS Framework across the prescribed seven areas of learning, using play as the basis for this learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination practice.
- Provide early interventions for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers.
- Work in partnership with key professionals.
- Plan stimulating and challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment both indoors and out.

- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are both adult-initiated as well as child-initiated support by the adult where appropriate.
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children.

### 3. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

### 4. Structure

At Pontefract Academies Trust there are a variety of schools of which some children attend from age 3 to 5 years and others 4 years to 5 years. Children start school in our nursery class in either September or January, after they turn 3 years old. The timing of the school day differs from setting to setting. Please contact the school for further information.

### 5. Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the [EYFS statutory framework](#) that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn from relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

### 6. Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also consider the individual needs, interests and stages of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

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

## 7. Teaching and assessment

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interest and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers. This information is used to capture and evidence each child's learning journey.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the seventeen early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development.
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents/carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other schools within the Trust, to ensure consistent assessment judgement.

EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

## 8. Working with families

Children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between EYFS staff and parents/carers. This begins with effective transitional arrangements into the school.

Prior to any child being welcomed into our setting a home visit will be made shortly before this child is due to start Nursery, or who are new to Reception.

The visit will give the staff the opportunity to meet parents/carers and the child in their own familiar and secure surroundings. If home visits are not possible, arrangements will be made for the family to meet in school. Meetings will be used, not only to get to know the parent/carer and child, but additionally to explain routines, times etc. and to answer any questions that may be asked of the

setting. They will enable staff to interact with the child and provide them with a reference point for the formal start of their provision in Nursery. Meetings will give an opportunity for both parents/carers and school to discuss mutual expectations or support that may be offered. In nursery there are planned play and stay sessions. Open evenings are held for parents/carers prior to children starting in reception. Visits to school are encouraged as this provides an opportunity for parents/carers and children to meet key members of staff and explore the EYFS learning environment.

Parents/carers are regularly kept up to date with their child's progress and development and the EYFS profile helps to provide parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Parents/carers are actively encouraged to keep their child's teacher updated with the achievements their child makes at home.

## 9. Children

In Nursery and Reception each child is assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All children are taught by a qualified Teacher with the support of suitably qualified Learning Support Assistants. Across EYFS children may, at some points be supported by student Teachers or staff completing EYFS specific qualifications. Within EYFS children will encounter new experiences in order to extend their skills, develop their confidence and build on what they already know. Children will be encouraged through interaction and modelling to deepen their understanding by playing, observing, talking, planning, questioning, experimenting, respecting, reflecting and responding to adults and each other. Play will be a key factor in our daily activities, well planned play and deepening of understanding through adult questioning will enable the children to learn with the environment and challenge throughout the foundation stage.

## 10. Safety and safeguarding

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. Pro-active and dynamic risk assessments are completed by the member of EYFS staff and safe staffing ratios, as detailed in the EYFS framework, are maintained. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risk. We adhere to the Trust Policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and snacks, and following set procedures when the children become ill, have an accident or require the administration of prescribed medication. Outside agencies are actively encouraged to support the health and welfare of the children in EYFS through working closely with the school's pastoral team.

The school promotes good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children and families about:

- The effect of eating too many sweet things.
- The importance of brushing your teeth.

We introduce supervised tooth brushing, by following [statutory guidance](#) for safety around supervised tooth brushing.

Detailed safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in the policies detailed at the beginning of this document.

## 11. Inclusion

The Trust is determined to meet the educational needs of all our pupils, to encourage independence and full participation in the life of the school. A number of pupils will, at some stage of their school career, experience some degree of special educational need. Working within the guidelines of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice, it is our intention that the educational needs of all pupils are identified and provision made to meet these as early as possible. All relevant information concerning children with special educational needs will be treated with the appropriate respect and confidentiality. We value all our children as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child support that they need and in doing so we work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies.

Further information relating to the Trust's SEND provision, which is applicable to all educational phases can be found [here](#).

## 12. Transition

Transitions are carefully planned and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition point, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish partnerships with parents/carers and those involved with the child, including those from other settings, e.g. nurseries, childminders and health professionals.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. Throughout the year when children across the EYFS take part in child-initiated learning, they can choose to access provision across many different areas of the EYFS to help them become more familiar with the different learning environments. Children also get the opportunity to work closely with adults across the phase, so relationships are formed as they move through the different year groups.