HILLTOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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A Beyond SCHOOLS TRUST ACADEMY

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Policy Statement

At Hilltop Primary School, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and inspiring early years environment where children feel valued, develop confidence and achieve their potential. Through strong relationships, high-quality teaching and effective safeguarding practices, we support every child to become a successful learner and a confident member of our school community. We place a strong emphasis on communication and language, self-regulation, school readiness, wellbeing and independence, ensuring all children are equipped with the foundations they need for lifelong learning.

Introduction

At Hilltop Primary School, we recognise that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a unique and important phase of education. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and ambitious learning environment where every child is valued as an individual and supported to achieve their full potential.

Our EYFS provision is underpinned by the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and informed by Development Matters. We provide a carefully planned curriculum that promotes children's learning and development through meaningful experiences, high-quality interactions, play, exploration and sustained shared thinking.

We believe children learn best when they feel safe, secure, valued and encouraged to become active participants in their learning. Through positive relationships and enabling environments, we nurture confident, resilient and independent learners who are prepared for the next stage of their education.

Statutory Guidance

This policy is based upon:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Development Matters
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 Years
- Equality Act 2010

This policy should be read alongside the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from 1 September 2026. Where this policy summarises a requirement, the statutory framework takes precedence.

Aims

The aims of our EYFS provision are to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where all children can thrive.
- Ensure every child receives an ambitious and engaging curriculum.
- Foster curiosity, creativity, independence and resilience.
- Promote communication and language as the foundation for learning.
- Support children to develop strong personal, social and emotional skills.
- Enable children to make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Ensure all children, including those with SEND and EAL, can access the curriculum and achieve success.
- Develop positive partnerships with parents and carers.
- Prepare children effectively for transition into Year 1.
- Develop children's independence, communication, self-regulation, executive functioning and learning behaviours to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

EYFS Principles

Our practice is guided by the four overarching principles of the EYFS.

A Unique Child

Every child is a unique child who is continually learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise individual strengths, interests and needs and ensure all children are valued and respected.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships. We develop warm, supportive and respectful relationships with children and their families to promote wellbeing and learning.

Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in environments that meet their individual needs. Our indoor and outdoor learning environments are engaging, inclusive and carefully planned to encourage exploration, independence and challenge.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn at different rates. We provide an ambitious curriculum and differentiated support to ensure every child can achieve their potential.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

We actively promote the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning throughout our provision.

Playing and Exploring

Children investigate and experience things first hand. They are encouraged to explore, take risks and engage in new experiences.

Active Learning

Children concentrate, persevere and experience satisfaction through achievement. They are supported to remain motivated and engaged in their learning.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children are encouraged to develop their own ideas, make links between experiences and develop strategies for solving problems.

These characteristics underpin all teaching and learning experiences and support children to become confident, independent learners.

Curriculum Intent

At Hilltop Primary School, our curriculum is designed to provide all children with the knowledge, vocabulary, skills and experiences they need to become successful learners.

The curriculum is:

- Ambitious for all children.
- Inclusive and accessible.
- Language-rich.
- Knowledge-based.
- Responsive to children's interests and needs.
- Carefully sequenced to build learning over time.
- Focused on developing confident, capable and resilient learners.

High-quality interactions between adults and children are central to our approach. Practitioners extend children's thinking, language and understanding through questioning, modelling and shared exploration.

Cultural Capital

Through a carefully planned programme of experiences, enrichment opportunities, visitors, educational visits, high-quality texts and community engagement, children develop cultural capital and gain the knowledge, experiences and understanding they need to succeed in future learning and later life.

Our curriculum broadens children's understanding of the wider world and ensures that all children, regardless of background, have access to rich and meaningful experiences that support aspiration, curiosity and achievement.

Curriculum Sequencing and Progression

Our EYFS curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure that children build knowledge, skills and understanding over time.

In Nursery, learning prioritises the Prime Areas of Learning:

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

Children develop the foundations for future learning through nurturing relationships, play, exploration, communication and the development of independence.

As children move into Reception, these foundations are strengthened and extended through increasingly challenging learning experiences across all seven areas of learning.

Key knowledge, concepts and vocabulary are deliberately planned, revisited and embedded throughout the year to support children's long-term learning. Adults ensure children make connections between previous and new learning opportunities.

Vocabulary is explicitly taught and modelled throughout the curriculum to strengthen communication and language development and support future learning.

By the end of Reception, children are equipped with the knowledge, skills, vocabulary and learning behaviours needed to successfully transition into Key Stage One.

Educational Programmes and Early Learning Goals

The statutory educational programmes shape the experiences and opportunities provided across all seven areas of learning. In Reception, staff work towards the statutory Early Learning Goals (ELGs). The ELGs describe the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS and are not used as a curriculum or assessment checklist.

Prime Areas

Communication and Language

Children develop listening skills, understanding and speaking through high-quality interactions, rich conversations, storytelling, songs and meaningful experiences. Adults provide sustained opportunities for discussion, vocabulary development, questioning and oracy, enabling children to express their thoughts, ideas and learning with increasing confidence and accuracy.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children learn to regulate their emotions, manage their behaviour, develop executive functioning skills, build positive relationships, show resilience, develop confidence and become increasingly independent. Adults explicitly support self-regulation, attention, working memory and flexible thinking through well-planned interactions, routines and learning experiences.

Physical Development

Children develop gross and fine motor skills, coordination, strength and independence in self-care.

Specific Areas

Literacy

Children develop a love of reading alongside early reading and writing skills. Systematic synthetic phonics forms the foundation of early reading instruction.

Mathematics

Children develop understanding of number, numerical patterns and mathematical concepts through practical, engaging experiences.

Understanding the World

Children learn about people, communities, cultures, technology and the natural world through exploration and enquiry.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children develop creativity, imagination and self-expression through art, music, dance, role play and design opportunities.

Teaching and Learning

Our teaching is responsive, ambitious and informed by ongoing assessment.

Practitioners:

- Observe children's interests and development.
- Plan meaningful learning experiences.
- Use sustained shared thinking to extend learning.
- Model rich vocabulary and language.
- Provide a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed learning.
- Encourage independence and problem-solving.
- Support children's self-regulation and executive functioning skills.
- Adapt learning to meet individual needs.
- Promote sustained back-and-forth interactions that deepen learning and language development.
- Provide opportunities for children to recall, revisit and apply previous learning.
- Explicitly develop self-regulation and executive functioning through consistent routines and expectations.

Learning takes place through carefully planned indoor and outdoor provision, direct teaching, exploration and purposeful play.

Outdoor Learning

At Hilltop Primary School, we recognise that high-quality outdoor learning is an integral part of the Early Years curriculum and contributes significantly to children's learning, development and wellbeing.

Children have daily access to a stimulating outdoor environment that is planned with the same intent and ambition as the indoor learning environment. Outdoor provision is viewed as an extension of the classroom and provides opportunities for children to explore, investigate, take risks, solve problems and apply their learning in meaningful contexts.

Our outdoor environment supports all seven areas of learning and development and provides opportunities for children to:

- Develop gross and fine motor skills through active play.
- Build independence, resilience and confidence.
- Develop communication and language through collaborative play and exploration.
- Apply mathematical knowledge in practical situations.
- Explore early reading and writing opportunities in meaningful contexts.
- Investigate the natural world and seasonal changes.
- Develop creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills.
- Learn to assess and manage risk appropriately.
- Strengthen self-regulation, cooperation and social skills.

Practitioners carefully plan outdoor experiences that build upon prior learning and are linked to curriculum goals. Adults use high-quality interactions, modelling and questioning to extend children's thinking, vocabulary and understanding.

The outdoor environment includes opportunities for:

- Physical development and movement.
- Nature exploration and environmental awareness.
- Construction and large-scale creative activities.
- Investigation, enquiry and problem-solving.
- Role play and imaginative experiences.
- Literacy and mathematical development.
- Quiet reflection and wellbeing activities.

Children are encouraged to become active learners who develop curiosity, perseverance and confidence.

Impact of Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is fully integrated within our curriculum. Learning opportunities are carefully sequenced to enable children to revisit, practise and apply previously taught knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts. Practitioners use assessment and observation to ensure learning in the outdoor environment contributes directly to children's progress across all areas of learning. Children increasingly demonstrate independence, resilience, curiosity and confidence as they apply their learning in new situations.

Assessment and Monitoring Progress

Assessment is an integral part of effective teaching and learning.

We assess children's progress through:

- Daily observations.
- Professional discussions and interactions.
- Ongoing formative assessment.
- Assessment of learning within continuous provision.
- Monitoring of children's knowledge, skills and vocabulary acquisition.
- Evaluation of children's independence and learning behaviours.
- Phonics, reading, writing and mathematics assessments.
- Parent contributions and discussions.

Assessment information is used to:

- Identify children's strengths and areas for development.
- Inform future planning.
- Adapt teaching and provision.
- Provide support and intervention where necessary.
- Monitor progress and attainment.
- Ensure all children make progress from their starting points.

Progression is measured through what children know, remember, understand and can do over time. Practitioners regularly check children's understanding through observation, interaction and discussion. Assessment focuses on children's ability to independently apply previously taught knowledge, vocabulary and skills in different contexts. This enables staff to evaluate curriculum effectiveness, identify gaps in learning and plan appropriate next steps.

Reception children complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment and the EYFS Profile assessment at the end of the academic year.

Assessment remains purposeful and does not take practitioners away from working directly with children.

Statutory Assessment Arrangements

Reception Baseline Assessment is completed within the statutory assessment window for eligible children entering Reception.

The EYFS Profile is completed for every child at the end of Reception, unless an exemption applies.

Judgements are made against all 17 ELGs and reported as expected or emerging.

EYFS Profile outcomes are shared with parents and carers, the Year 1 teacher and the local authority as required.

Assessment is based mainly on practitioners' knowledge of each child and does not require excessive evidence collection or lengthy written records.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We are committed to providing an inclusive environment where all children can succeed.

We:

- Identify emerging needs at the earliest opportunity.
- Work in partnership with parents and external professionals.
- Follow the graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do, Review.
- Adapt teaching and provision to meet individual needs.
- Ensure children with SEND access the full curriculum.
- Promote participation, independence and achievement for all learners.

Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure children with SEND can fully participate alongside their peers.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

We value and celebrate linguistic diversity.

Children learning English as an additional language are supported through:

- Rich communication opportunities.
- Visual prompts and modelling.
- Repetition and vocabulary development.
- Opportunities to maintain and develop their home language.
- Strong partnerships with families.

We ensure children have sufficient opportunities to develop English language skills while valuing their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

School Readiness

Promoting school readiness is a key aspect of our EYFS provision. Through carefully planned learning experiences and high expectations, children develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for future success.

School readiness includes:

- Communication and language development.
- Independence in self-care and daily routines.
- Self-regulation and emotional wellbeing.
- Positive attitudes to learning.
- Early literacy and mathematical understanding.
- Social skills and positive relationships.
- Resilience, perseverance and confidence.

By the end of Reception, children are equipped with the foundations needed to successfully transition into Key Stage One.

Partnerships with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators.

We develop strong partnerships through:

- Open communication.
- Daily interactions.
- Parent consultations.
- Tapestry learning journals.
- Workshops and information sessions.
- Stay and play opportunities.
- Sharing achievements and next steps.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey and celebrate successes both at home and at school.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Hilltop Primary School follows all safeguarding and welfare requirements set out within the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

Safeguarding Policy and Designated Safeguarding Lead

The school's EYFS safeguarding procedures align with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and cover concerns about a child, allegations against adults, whistleblowing, online safety, mobile phones, cameras, electronic devices and the sharing of images.

A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) with appropriate status, authority, training, time and support leads safeguarding practice. Staff know how to record and refer concerns promptly.

Child Absence and Attendance

Parents and carers must notify the school of the reason for absence. Unexplained or prolonged absence and concerning patterns are followed up promptly, with the child's vulnerability, home circumstances and welfare considered and safeguarding action taken where appropriate.

Suitable People, Recruitment and Staff Suitability

Robust safer recruitment procedures apply to employees, volunteers, students and apprentices. Identity, qualifications, employment history, references and required suitability checks are obtained and recorded.

New employees do not commence employment before required criminal records checks have been received. Staff must disclose information or changes in circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children.

Staff Qualifications, Ratios, Deployment and Supervision

Staffing qualifications, deployment and staff-to-child ratios meet statutory requirements at all times. Children are adequately supervised, including while eating, and staff are deployed effectively to meet children's needs and ensure safety.

Practitioners receive induction, ongoing training and regular supervision that supports professional development and discussion of children's development, wellbeing and safeguarding.

Key Person

Each child in Nursery is assigned a key person who helps the child become familiar with the setting, builds a settled relationship with the child and family, responds sensitively to individual needs and supports development and wellbeing.

Paediatric First Aid

At least one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises and available whenever EYFS children are present and accompanies children on outings. Staff included in ratios meet the applicable qualification and paediatric first aid requirements.

Medicines, Accidents, Injuries and Illness

Medicines are administered only with written permission and sufficient information and training. A written record is kept and parents and carers are informed.

Parents and carers are informed of accidents, injuries and first aid treatment. The school notifies Ofsted and other agencies of serious incidents where the statutory framework requires this.

Food, Drink and Safer Eating

Fresh drinking water is available and accessible. Meals, snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced and nutritious, and dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances and health needs are recorded and acted upon.

Children are seated safely and supervised appropriately while eating. Food is prepared in a way suitable for each child's development, and staff understand choking risks and responses to choking and allergic reactions.

Supporting Behaviour and Physical Intervention

Corporal punishment is never used or threatened. Physical intervention is used only where necessary to prevent personal injury or serious damage to property. Significant incidents are recorded and reported to parents and carers within the statutory timescale.

Premises, Equipment, Hygiene and Outdoor Access

Premises, equipment and outdoor spaces are safe, suitable, secure and fit for purpose. Required indoor space, toilet, handwashing, confidential discussion and care-for-ill-child arrangements are maintained.

Children have access to an outdoor play area. Where this is not possible, outdoor activities are planned and taken daily unless circumstances make this inappropriate.

Risk Assessment and Outings

Risks are identified, checked and managed through proportionate risk assessment. Outing arrangements consider parental permission, adult-to-child ratios, hazards, emergency arrangements, vehicles and drivers, medication and paediatric first aid.

Information, Records and Confidentiality

Required EYFS records are accurate, accessible, secure and retained in line with legal requirements. Confidential information is shared only with those who have a professional need to know, unless sharing is required to safeguard a child.

Information for Parents and Carers

Parents and carers receive clear information about the EYFS provision, staffing and key person arrangements, curriculum, routines, food and drink, policies, safeguarding responsibilities, emergency contacts, complaints and how to contact Ofsted.

Complaints

Written complaints relating to EYFS requirements are investigated and the complainant is notified of the outcome within 28 days. A written record of the complaint, outcome and action is retained and made available to Ofsted on request.

Children's Screen Use and Electronic Devices

The school has regard to government guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. Screen use is purposeful, age-appropriate, supervised and balanced with active, social and hands-on learning.

Use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices is governed by safeguarding procedures that protect children's privacy and prevent inappropriate capture or sharing of images.

Safer Sleep and Premises Restrictions

Where children sleep, the school follows the safer sleep requirements in the statutory framework, including safe arrangements agreed with parents and carers and checks appropriate to children's age and needs.

Registered childcare will not be provided from premises where a banned dog breed is kept or is present.

Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing

We promote healthy lifestyles through:

- Daily physical activity.
- Opportunities to learn about healthy choices.
- Healthy snacks in line with school expectations.
- Access to fresh drinking water throughout the day.
- Good hygiene and self-care routines.
- Support for children's emotional wellbeing.

All dietary, medical, religious and cultural requirements are respected and recorded.

Nursery Provision

Hilltop Primary School Nursery forms an integral part of our EYFS provision and reflects the same inclusive, nurturing and ambitious ethos as Reception.

Nursery Aims

- To provide a stimulating and engaging environment for children aged 3 to 4 years.
- To promote children's learning and development through play and exploration.
- To build strong partnerships with families.
- To ensure children develop the skills needed for a successful transition into Reception.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

Nursery practitioners work closely with Reception staff to ensure continuity of learning and development. Information regarding children's strengths, interests, characteristics of learning, attainment and next steps is shared effectively to support a smooth transition.

Children are provided with opportunities to visit Reception, develop familiarity with routines and build positive relationships with staff prior to transition.

Nursery Funding and Places

The Nursery offers:

- Universal 15-hour funded places.
- 30-hour funded places for eligible families.
- Additional sessions subject to availability.
- Wraparound and lunchtime provision where applicable.

Further information regarding admissions, funding and fees is available from the school office.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the EYFS Lead in consultation with staff, governors and parents.

The effectiveness of the EYFS curriculum, teaching, assessment and provision is monitored through:

- Learning walks.
- Observations.
- Pupil voice.
- Scrutiny of assessment information.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Professional dialogue with staff.
- Evaluation of outcomes for different groups of children.

This policy will be updated in response to:

- Changes to statutory guidance.
- EYFS framework updates.
- School improvement priorities.
- Ofsted recommendations.
- Developments in best practice.

Statement of Equality

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Equality Impact Assessment

Who is the policy or process intended for?	Pupils	Employees	Govs/ Trustees	Volunteers	Visitors
	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Status of the policy or process:	**New policy or process**			**Existing policy or process**	
	☐			☑	

Analysis				
Protected Characteristic	**Impact analysis**			**Explanation of impact analysis**
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**	
Age:	☐	☑	☐	
Disability:	☐	☑	☐	
Sex:	☐	☑	☐	
Gender reassignment:	☐	☑	☐	
Race:	☐	☑	☐	
Religion or belief:	☐	☑	☐	
Sexual orientation:	☐	☑	☐	
Marriage or civil partnership:	☐	☑	☐	
Pregnancy and maternity:	☐	☑	☐	
Pupil groups (PP/SEN/CLA):	☐	☑	☐	

Evaluation and decision making	
Summary of action taken:	
Final decision:	