



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

VERSION: January 2024

"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."

"Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage",
Department for Education, 2012

At Donisthorpe Primary School, we are committed to providing a high quality early years' education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. Our aim is to provide a caring and stimulating environment, where every child feels empowered to develop as an independent learner. We ensure that learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

The Reception year children will follow a curriculum that enables them to make maximum progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage on entering compulsory education.

Learning and Development

At Donisthorpe Primary School, we follow the aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We recognise that all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

We ensure that the children receive a balance of adult led and child initiated activities, giving them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of Reception.

We recognise that three areas of learning are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three prime areas are:

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

We also teach the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

We focus on the prime areas of learning first, the balance then shifts towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the child's parents/carers, and agree how best to support the child. EYFS staff will liaise with the school's SENCo to consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Our Enabling Environment

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through firsthand experience. Resources are clearly labeled and organised into learning zones, enabling the children to access them with a high level of independence. Practitioners regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the learning zones and make adaptations as necessary.

We encourage the children to play an active role in shaping their learning experiences. Adults engage in discussion with the children about what they are interested in, which skills they would like to develop further and which resources they need to support their learning.

We aim to provide an attractive, challenging learning environment that offers high quality opportunities for the children to learn through play, both indoors and outdoors. There is a range of "continuous provision" available in the classroom, that is designed to offer open-ended, practical learning opportunities. Children are supported to think creatively and imaginatively and explore how resources can be adapted. Each week, the provision is enhanced with additional resources, based on the previous week's observations.

Adult led activities are practical in nature and based on first hand experiences wherever possible. The children are supported to develop problem-solving skills through open-ended tasks and opportunities to share their thinking with others. The number of adult led activities that the children take part in increases throughout the year, as their concentration develops.

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Planning

Our planning has a sharp focus on the children's needs, their interests and their stages of development. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links between them. We aim to deliver the curriculum through planned, purposeful play and present new concepts in meaningful contexts that enable the children to build on what they already know.

Observation and Assessment

At Donisthorpe Primary School, we use a range of strategies to gather information about the children's learning and development and use this information to ensure that our planning meets the needs of all learners. During child initiated activities, practitioners make 'snapshot' observations on observation forms. Notes about guided activities are recorded on class record sheets. Each child has a 'Learning Journey' and all significant observations are gathered here along with examples of work and parental contributions. There is also a 'Transition file' with children's preschool records.

From the first half of the Autumn term onwards, the Reception teachers use their knowledge of each child to decide which band of 'Development Matters' they are working on in each area of the curriculum. This allows learning opportunities to be pitched appropriately and also provides a baseline of the children's attainment. This information is closely monitored to ensure that all children are making good progress.

In the Summer term, practitioners consider the 17 ELGS in the EYFS Profile to decide whether each child is working at the expected levels, exceeding the levels or have not yet met the levels. Judgements against the ELGs are based on ongoing observation; all relevant records; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

The results of the Profile are shared with parents/carers, and there are opportunities for them to meet their child's class teacher to discuss this information.

At the end of the year, Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This helps to create a smooth transition and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

The EYFS profile results are reported to the local authority, who monitor and moderate the judgements made.

Staffing and Organisation

At Donisthorpe Primary School, we have one Reception class that has the use of a large classroom and dedicated outdoor area. The classroom space is organised into learning zones for the children to access. There is a full time teacher, supported by a full time learning support assistant. Other learning support or teaching assistants may be deployed in Reception based on the needs of the children.

Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult led and child initiated experiences throughout the day. Most sessions include free flow access to the outdoor area. Practitioners are aware of the need to be flexible in order to respond to unplanned events that the children are interested in.

Parent Partnerships

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- The EYFS staff hold a 'transition meeting' where new parents have the chance to meet the team and explore the classroom.
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher and teaching assistant before starting school for a morning and an afternoon session
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class and allowing free access to the children's 'learning journey' books
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher or teaching assistant if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents twice a year at which the teacher, teaching assistant and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents are invited into the classroom to talk to EYFS staff every Thursday after school

- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: nativity play, sports day etc
- Inviting parents into school once each half term at the end of the topic to celebrate the work the children have completed over the half term and talk to the teacher and teaching assistant
- Noting any observations of progress the parents have seen at home and recording this in the child's learning journey or their own personal file as appropriate

Community Links and the Wider World

Over the year, we arrange visits from members of the local community to support our topic work. The children take part in several educational visits linked to their topic work. Film clips, non-fiction texts and artefacts are also used to introduce new concepts in real-life contexts. We aim to develop the children's awareness of other cultures by exploring different countries and celebrations.

Behaviour Management

Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy.

Safeguarding

Please refer to the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We have a responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference. We can support each child's needs by:

- Removing or helping to overcome barriers where these already exist
- Being alert to the early signs of needs that could later lead to difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as required
- Stretching and challenging all children

Please refer to the school's Equality of Opportunities and SEND Policy.

Premises and Security

All access to the school is through the main school door, which is kept locked. Staff use a key fob to gain access to the building and sign in and out. The office staff are responsible for verifying the identity of any visitors before they enter school. Visitors are asked to sign in to the school visitor's log and are given a visitor badge to wear. Staff are aware of their role in challenging anyone who is not recognized and asking for identification from anyone claiming to be from an outside agency.

The external classroom doors are kept locked, except when the children enter and leave the setting at the beginning and end of their sessions and when the children access the playground for playtimes and lunchtime. The door to the outdoor area is kept locked when this area is not in use.

The external doors are closely monitored by staff when children are entering or leaving the setting, to ensure that they cannot leave unaccompanied. All staff are aware of the need to monitor the external doors to ensure that they are secure during the session. The register is used to check how many children are present. When moving from one area school to another, head counts are used to check that all children are present before leaving.

Arrival and Collection of Children

Children can enter school grounds from 8:30. Children can then enter their classroom from when the bell goes at 8:40 to when it rings again at 8:50. Each child is marked in on the day's register by the class teacher. Parents/carers use the external classroom doors when collecting their child(ren) at the end of the school day. Parents wait in the playground and each child is handed over to their parents individually. If a child needs to be collected during the school day, parents report to the school office.

Under no circumstances is a child allowed to leave with anyone other than those named on the child's registration form, unless the parent has given written permission. Parents write a list of people who are able to collect their child. If there are queries regarding a child's collection, the class teacher will contact the child's parent/guardian to discuss the situation with them.

If a child is not collected and the parent/guardian is uncontactable, the other names on the child's registration form will be called to collect the child. If no-one on the child's registration form is contactable, the head teacher should telephone the Social Services Duty Officer or Out of Hours Duty Point. Arrangements should then be made for the child to be removed to an appropriate place of protection agreed by the Social Services Department. It remains the responsibility of the Social Services Department in conjunction with the Police to contact the parents and if appropriate, to inform them of their child's whereabouts.

Missing Child

If a child disappears during the school day, practitioners will; check with all members of staff when the child was last seen and that they have not been collected by a parent/carer, organize a thorough and systematic search of the building and surrounding playground etc, inform the head teacher of the situation and telephone the child's parents or other emergency contact to explain the situation and double check that the child is not there or their whereabouts known. If the child is still unable to be located, the school will notify the police of a missing person.

Outings

Written parental permission to take the children into the local environment is sought upon admission to the school. Further permission is obtained for any other outings. Risk assessments are completed for each type of outing.

Key Person Approach

The class teacher is responsible for the well being of all of the children in the Reception class. In EYFS, each child is assigned a "Key Person" At Donisthorpe, the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistant

The key person's responsibilities include:

- Helping the child to become familiar with the setting
- Building a relationship with each child's parents, working in partnership with them to ensure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family
- Responding sensitively to the child's needs, feelings, ideas and behaviour
- Ensuring that the learning opportunities on offer meet the needs of each child

Promoting Awareness of Dangers and How to Stay Safe

We encourage the children to take an active role in ensuring their own safety and involve them in discussions about health and safety issues. For example, the children may take on the role of a 'Danger Detective' and look for possible hazards around the classroom or use photographs of a place that they will visit on a school trip to complete their own risk assessment.

Risk Assessments

In addition to the school's risk assessment, daily risk assessments are completed in Reception to ensure that any hazards are identified and managed before the children enter the classroom and outdoor area.

Complaints

Please refer to the school's Complaints Policy.

Information for Parents and Carers

We provide a pack for new parents and carers that includes information about our daily routines, the types of activities provided, staffing and food and drink. A newsletter is sent out every half term which includes what the children will be learning and how to aid learning at home.

Transition from Pre-school to Reception

We work closely with our feeder settings to ensure that the children make a smooth transition to school. We have contact with the settings throughout the year and in the Summer term, we organise opportunities for the teacher and teaching assistant to visit each setting to see the children who will be moving up to Donisthorpe in the Autumn term. This also gives EYFS staff the opportunity to talk to pre-school staff.

We hold a transition meeting for new parents in the Summer term, where we outline daily routines and expectations. Parents are invited to attend two 'taster' sessions with their child where the children visit the EYFS classroom for half an hour with their parents. The children are then invited to two morning sessions in the Summer term before they start in September.

The children start school on a part-time timetable. After one week of part time attendance, they begin full-time.

Transition from Reception to Year One

In the summer term, we begin a programme of transition to support the children with their move to Year One. This involves visits to the Year One classroom, discussion with current Year One children, walks to look at where they will enter school and opportunities to ask any questions about the next year. The school holds a 'Move Up' morning, giving the children a taste of their new class.

Being Active

The children have access to an outdoor area, which provides a range of physical activities; including soft play blocks, large balls, bats and balls, etc. They are also able to access the outdoor learning environment off the main playground. The children take part in one PE session each week.

Food and Drink

Children have 'snack time' near break time. A range of healthy snacks are available, supplied by "The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme". Children are supported to wash their hands with soap before selecting a snack and pouring their own drink. The drink station is accessible throughout the day, allowing the children to make decisions about when they thirsty. Fresh drinking water is available at all times and in hot weather, it is also provided in the outdoor area. All food is stored according to manufacturer's recommendations and in line with food hygiene legislation.

Information about the children's dietary needs is sought when they enter the setting. A list of the children's dietary needs is available in the classroom and in the register and all practitioners have regard to this when putting out food and drink in the snack area or when leading a cooking or food tasting activity.

Parents are provided with information about what can be stored safely in a packed lunch, including how to keep lunchboxes cool, as they are not refrigerated. The packed lunch sheet also provides advice about appropriate food content. The school dinner menus are displayed in the notice board so that parents and carers can support their children to choose their food.

Illnesses and Injuries

Parents and carers are asked not to send their child to school if they are unwell and to inform the school office of their absence. Parents/carers are asked to inform staff if their child is suffering from a minor ailment so that appropriate care can be given. Children must not return to school within 48 hours of a bout of sickness or diarrhea.

If a child becomes unwell whilst at school, a member of staff will:

- phone the parents/carers, explain that their child is unwell, explain the symptoms noted and ask them to collect their child.
- sit with the child in a quiet place away from other children, if possible, until the parents arrive.
- if the child has had sickness or diarrhoea, explain the policy of at least a 48-hour clearance of either symptom before the child may return.

Advice relating to notifiable diseases is displayed in the school office.

In the case of an injury, appropriate first aid will be administered by a qualified first aider. A first aid kit is kept in the Reception classroom and its contents are in accordance with advice from the Health and Safety Executive and the Community Health Physician. First aid cover is provided at playtimes and lunchtimes. All accidents are recorded in one of the school's accident books and signed by the member of staff who dealt with the incident. The staff member dealing with the incident is responsible for completing an accident slip and this is sent home with the child at the end of the day. Parents/carers may be contacted by telephone to inform them of an injury if deemed necessary.

We ask for written parental consent to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future when the children are admitted to school. In the case of a more serious accident to a child, the practitioner/school will contact the parent/guardian to agree a course of action if time permits. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted the practitioner/school will seek appropriate medical attention or treatment for the child. The child should not be given anything to eat or drink. If a child or adult needs to be transported to hospital, every effort should be made to use a car with fully comprehensive insurance including business use. Two adults must accompany the child, and one adult must accompany a member of staff. Should an ambulance be required, one adult must accompany the child or adult. The child's registration form must be taken to the hospital with the child.

Medicines

Only drugs/medicines prescribed by a registered Medical Practitioner will be administered to children. Parents should complete and hand in a Medication Consent Form, along with medicine, to a member of staff. Drugs/medicines must only be administered to the child for whom they are prescribed and all drugs/medicines must be kept in the original container stating whom they are prescribed for and dosage information. Unwanted or unused medicines must be returned to the parent for disposal. A record of the drugs given should be made indicating the time, dosage and signed by the person administering the dose. The child's parent should sign this each day that medicine is given.

Training for prescribed medication that is invasive i.e. EPIPENS etc is available via the school nurse. If an individual child requires a care plan, this will be drawn up in partnership with parents and the school nurse.