



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

VERSION: January 2026

NEXT REVIEW: January 2028

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential."
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE, 2021)

This EYFS policy is written in line with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2021), which sets the standards for learning, development, and care for children from birth to the end of Reception.

At Donisthorpe Primary School, we are committed to providing a high-quality early years education, giving children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurturing 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 encourage a curiosity-driven approach where children are inspired to ask questions, investigate real-world phenomena, and make connections between their learning and everyday life.

This vision is delivered through a structured yet flexible curriculum that supports all areas of learning and development. 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 key principles:

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

The Reception year children 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, our EYFS practice follows the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, supported by Development Matters, a non-statutory DfE guidance document that helps practitioners plan and assess children's learning and development. 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

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 SENDCo to consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Children learn in different ways and at different rates. In EYFS, we promote the three Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** – engaging with new experiences and "having a go"
- **Active Learning** – showing persistence, concentration, and enjoyment in achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – developing ideas, making links, and solving problems

These characteristics are woven through all areas of learning and guide how we plan, support, and extend children's learning.

Our Enabling Environment

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming, and stimulating environment that nurtures curiosity. Children are encouraged to explore, investigate, and experiment with real-life materials and situations, making meaningful connections between their learning and the world around them. Resources are organized to enable the children to access them with a high level of independence. Practitioners regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the provision 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.

Our outdoor provision is planned as an integral part of the EYFS curriculum and is designed to support learning across all seven areas of development, not only physical development.

Resources are designed to provoke questions and inspire investigation, supporting children to follow their own interests and discoveries.

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. Notes about guided activities are recorded on class record sheets.

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. 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. Staffing levels are maintained in line with statutory EYFS ratios. The Reception class has a full-time teacher supported by a full-time learning support assistant, with additional staff deployed as required, where this is deemed necessary (for example for children with high needs), subject to available funding. 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.

All EYFS staff have undergone appropriate vetting checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance, references, and qualification checks, and are deemed suitable to work with children. EYFS staff

participate in ongoing professional development to keep up to date with early years practice, safeguarding procedures, and the EYFS curriculum.

Parent Partnerships

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this in a variety of ways:

- 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 or afternoon session and are invited with parents to a stay and play session
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class
- 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 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, for example Christmas craft events, sports day, open classrooms etc
- Noting any observations of progress the parents have seen at home

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

Behaviour in EYFS is managed in a positive and age-appropriate way, using strategies such as modelling, praise, encouragement, and clear routines. Please see our Behaviour and Relationships Policy for more information.

EYFS Welfare Requirements

At Donisthorpe Primary School, we are committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all children in Reception. EYFS staff follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Medicines Policy, Intimate Care Policy, and Health and Safety Policy at all times. Children are appropriately supervised in line with EYFS ratios. Daily risk assessments are completed for both indoor and outdoor areas to ensure a safe environment.

Staff follow safe procedures for personal care, medication, illness, food, and drink, and are trained to respond effectively to any accidents or emergencies. Outings and trips are carefully risk-assessed, and children are accompanied by staff according to statutory requirements.

These measures ensure that all children in our early years setting are safe, healthy, and supported to thrive, and demonstrate our compliance with the welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2021).

Key EYFS welfare measures include:

- Safeguarding and child protection, including staff training and reporting procedures

- Staff deployment, supervision, and Key Person responsibilities
- Daily health and safety risk assessments for indoor and outdoor areas
- Safe personal and intimate care in line with the Intimate Care Policy
- Administration of prescribed medicines and management of illness
- Healthy food and drink, hygiene, and dietary needs
- Positive behaviour management in line with the Behaviour Policy
- Controlled access, secure premises, and register/headcount procedures
- Risk-assessed outings with appropriate supervision
- Recording and reporting of accidents, incidents, or emergencies

Safeguarding

EYFS staff follow the school's safeguarding and child protection policies at all times. Staff are trained to identify and respond to signs of abuse or neglect and understand the procedures for reporting concerns. Children are always supervised appropriately, in line with EYFS ratios and risk assessments, both indoors and outdoors. EYFS staff follow the Intimate Care Policy when supporting personal care, ensuring children's dignity and safety. The use of mobile phones, cameras, and digital media is strictly managed to protect children. Arrival, collection, transitions, and outings are conducted safely, and all accidents or safeguarding concerns are recorded and reported in line with school procedures.

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

Children with identified or emerging SEND are supported in line with the SEND Code of Practice, with individual plans implemented in partnership with parents and other agencies, to ensure all children make progress and have access to the curriculum. Please refer to the school's Equality of Opportunities and SEND Policy.

In Reception, we promote equality and respect for all children. We provide opportunities for children to learn about similarities and differences, to understand and respect different beliefs, cultures, and abilities, and to develop positive attitudes towards diversity. Age-appropriate British Values are embedded throughout the curriculum: children are encouraged to make choices (democracy), follow clear expectations (rule of law), develop independence (individual liberty), and show respect and tolerance towards others. Children also attend weekly age-appropriate 'Everyone Belongs' assemblies, modelled on the 'No Outsiders' approach to teaching tolerance, respect and understanding of protected characteristics. These values are embedded through everyday routines, interactions, classroom rules, learning activities, stories, and play.

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.

All areas used by children meet required safety standards. Fire exits are clearly marked and emergency evacuation procedures are in place and practised regularly. Electrical equipment is checked in line with statutory guidance to ensure the safety of all children and staff

Arrival and Collection of Children

The EYFS classroom is open for children to be dropped off from 8.30 until 8.45 every morning. 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 to the office. 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, organise 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 curriculum update 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 a stay and play session with their child. The children are then invited to a classroom-based session 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 large-scale construction, marking-making, water play 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.

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 diarrhoea.

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.