



# EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

Policy Approval	
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## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young pupils build the rest of their education. It is an education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Cavendish Learning Trust (CLT).

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy, the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at individual academies within the CLT. This is available to pupils who enter school after their 3rd birthday (or 2<sup>nd</sup> for some children entitled to 2yr funding) for Nursery pupils, and the September of the academic year in which they turn 5 for Reception pupils up to the end of the Reception year.

### **Our Ethos**

Our focus throughout the early years is on developing happy, confident, resilient learners who enjoy coming to school. We promote an enquiry-based approach to teaching and learning, where pupils are encouraged to 'discover for themselves'. We use a range of learning experiences, which stimulate pupil's imagination and thinking skills. The learning environment supports our ethos of pupil-led learning, whilst providing an atmosphere, which enables pupils to make progress socially as well as academically.

### **Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the Early Years settings at CLT we believe that all pupils are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both academically and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all pupils are unique and special.
- Working in partnership with carers and external agencies.
- Understanding that pupils develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where pupils feel happy and know that the practitioners looking after them value them.
- Fostering and nurturing pupil's self-confidence and self-esteem by developing their awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging pupil's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their own investigations and play in a safe environment.
- Developing pupils' understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting pupils to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in pupil's learning and development.

- Providing learning experiences in play, which reflect pupil's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences, which build on pupil's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage framework**

Teaching in the Early Years settings within the CLT, is delivered in accordance with the Government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

The curriculum is centred on three prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas, which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

Provision in Early Years involves activities and experiences from the prime and specific areas of learning. Provision for Nursery pupils is focused on developing the three prime areas, as a firm foundation for the specific areas.

These Areas of Learning and Development address pupil's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, pupil-centred curriculum which allows pupils to make lots of links between what they are learning.

At CLT, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of pupil's education.

**On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 the New Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum became compulsory and all schools in CLT follow this new curriculum.**

## **Active Learning through Play**

At CLT we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve pupils for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our Early Years settings are centred round an ethos of play-based learning.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator, encouraging pupils to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the pupil, therefore providing numerous ways for pupils to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the Early Years settings at CLT schools, practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage pupils in practical, first-hand experiences, which will support pupils to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. These play opportunities are also set up to provide pupils with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding. In providing these active learning opportunities through play, we understand the central position of play within the Early Years framework.

## **Assessment and Record Keeping**

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the of all Early Years settings at CLT, and involves all practitioners. As part of the new curriculum there is a commitment to reduce the amount of paperwork being completed by staff and a focus on increasing high quality interactions with the children. Children will therefore be assessed continually throughout the day and staff will record observations of children at 3 key points during the year. The amount of written records is at the discretion of the individual academy and teacher.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of pupils in a variety of teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of pupil's learning.

Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual pupils. It informs them of pupil's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, pupil's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support all pupils.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each pupil's development working from a baseline assessment within the first few weeks that the pupil enters school. Baseline assessment is carried out during the pupil's first weeks upon entering the setting. Ideally this will be in the first 2-3 weeks but no later than 6 weeks. Judgments made on pupil's development are based on practitioners' evidence of their behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all areas of learning and development.

In September 2021 the Department for Education introduced a statutory baseline assessment, which is a way to measure the progress primary schools make with their children. The CLT schools complete the assessments on a 1:1 basis with each child, but do not get the results of these assessments. This information is with the Department for Education. As part of this assessment process all parents are informed via letter and provided with privacy notices and more information about the baseline assessment process.

At the end of the Reception year children are assessed against the EYFS frameworks Early Learning goals using the EYFS profile.

The EYFS profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It gives:

- the child's attainment in relation to the 17 early learning goal (ELG) descriptors

When compiling the profile, teachers must review the evidence gathered in order to make a judgement for each child and for each ELG. The judgement must say whether the child's learning and development is:

- best described by the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS ('expected')
- not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS ('emerging')

## **Planning**

The Early Years framework provides a long-term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Class themes are driven by pupil's interests and provision enhanced to address any identified gaps in attainment, for both individual pupils and the cohort as a whole. Medium term planning is created with all early years' practitioner's involvement and considers the individual pupil's learning and developmental needs. CLT schools use Development Matters or Birth to 5 to support the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage

All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access within the settings. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult initiated and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. The outdoor environments within CLT EYFS settings will be used daily, using a common-sense approach to the weather conditions.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support pupil's learning within the curriculum.

## **Parents as Partners**

At CLT we place a high value on establishing positive and effective relationships with parents and carers. We understand that an effective partnership between school and

home will have a positive impact on pupil's learning and development. Parent/carer contributions are highly valued so practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the pupils with parents.

We value the role of parents/carers as pupil's primary educators. Through questionnaires and informal discussions at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their pupil, providing further insight into the pupil as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to pupil's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, texts home and informal discussions at the beginning and end of the day. Whole school newsletters are sent home regularly. Parents are invited to attend termly parents' evenings during the course of the academic year as well as receiving a summative report, which include comments on the characteristics of effective learning.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share pupil's learning, development and well-being with parents include end of year reports and celebration assemblies where pupil's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to be involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support pupil's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where pupils show them their work and special events such as stay and play days, family craft sessions and information sessions.

The CLT EYFS settings have a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents and carers are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

## **Admissions and Induction**

CLT provides full-time Early Years education for pupils in the Reception Year. This is for pupils who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Nursery pupils are provided with their entitlement of 15 funded hours, starting after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and subject to vacancies. Some of our nursery settings also offer 2yr funding and / or the extended 30 hours entitlement. To access the 2-year-old funding (in certain settings) and the 30 hours funding, parents / carers have to have a tax free related childcare code from the Government Gateway Website.

Before they start in the setting, all pupils are offered a series of visits during the term prior to their start date. The purpose of these initial visits is for the pupils to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. Families may be offered a home visit with school staff prior to their child starting school. The aim of these meetings is for practitioners and families to get to know a little about each other prior to the child starting school, to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.

In the summer term all parents of future Reception children are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and the ethos of the setting is shared. There is also time for informal discussions and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting detailing school routines and expectations.

*See admissions policy for more information.*

### **Equal Opportunities**

All practitioners at CLT have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the Early Years settings at CLT

*See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.*

### **Special Educational Needs**

*See Special Educational Needs Policy.*

### **Safeguarding**

*See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.*