



# EYFS POLICY



**TO BE REVIEWED BY NOVEMBER 2026**

## Contents

1. Aims and Vision.....	3
2. Legislation .....	3
3. Structure of the EYFS .....	3
4. Curriculum .....	4
5. Learning Environment.....	5
6. Assessment .....	5
7. Working in Partnership.....	6
8. Working with parents.....	6
9. Key Person .....	6
10. Community Links and the Wider World .....	6
11. Safeguarding and welfare procedures .....	7
12. Promoting Awareness of Dangers and How to Stay Safe... ..	7
13. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities... ..	8
14. Premises and Security.....	8
15. School Trips.....	8
16. Risk Assessments .....	8
17. Transition from Nursery to Reception .....	8
18. Transition from Reception to Year One .....	9
19. Food and Drink .....	9
20. Illnesses and Injuries.....	9
21. Accidents .....	10
22. Medicines.....	10
23. Photographs and Mobile Phones.....	10
24. Monitoring arrangements.....	10
25. Links to Other Policies.....	10
26. Appendix.....	11

## 1. Aims and Vision

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

At Elmley Castle C of E First School, we believe that every child is a light in the world. We love one another, inspire growth, and serve our community with kindness. We embrace resilience, learning from our mistakes and growing stronger together. Each day, we strive to shine in all that we do, creating a safe and welcoming space where everyone can grow in faith, knowledge, and community. Together, we light the way for a brighter future, serving as beacons of hope and love to all.

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." – Matthew 5:14*

### BLISS

Believe in yourself

Love one another

Inspire greatness

Shine with kindness

Serve with a heart of compassion

Let your Light Shine!

## Overarching principles

The four guiding principles that shape practice in early years settings are:

- 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 support 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.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## 2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#)<sup>1</sup> for 2025.

## 3. Structure of the EYFS

We have one EYFS class of preschool and reception children. The children share a large, spacious classroom and two dedicated outdoor areas. The classroom has a carpet area, and the rest of the space organised into learning zones for the children to access. There is a full-time teacher supported by a full time teaching partner. We adhere to adult ratios for nursery children within the setting.

Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult-led teaching and child-initiated experiences throughout

the day. Sessions include free flow access to the outdoor area. Practitioners are aware of the need to be flexible to respond to unplanned events that the children are interested in.

Nursery children can attend for up to 30 hours (8:40am – 3:10pm for 5 days a week). From the term after they are 3, they can claim their universal funded 15 hours. Eligible parents can also claim their 15 extended hours. Any additional hours are charged at a session rate. Hours can be taken in half (morning/afternoon) or full day sessions.

## 4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework<sup>2</sup>. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. 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, form 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

### 4.1 Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The class teacher plans activities within the classroom with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The 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.

### 4.2 Planning

At Elmley Castle, we follow a one-year cycle for our curriculum that builds upon the interests of the child as well as knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need to learn during the Foundation Stage to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception. A balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities, so children develop independence and self-management skills to become confident, critical, and creative learners.

The 3 prime areas are at the core of early years planning. Staff carefully plan activities which enable children to link personal experiences with new learning, providing a wide range of contexts to revisit, practise, apply, and develop transferable skills and understanding. Emphasis is placed upon the importance of play in the development of language skills, alongside enhancing provision for identified groups of children. Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. 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. Staff are reflective in their practice

and systematically observe and evaluate the effectiveness and value of planned provision within the inside and outside learning spaces. They respond to children's levels of interest and engagement, ensuring accurate pitch and pace for developing cognition and learning. Planning and interactions are supported by progressive sequences of questioning to develop thinking, understanding and language for reasoning.

Our short-term planning shows the learning opportunities that will be available over the week. It includes differentiated adult led experiences for all curriculum areas, as well as showing how the learning environment will be enhanced in response to the previous week's observations and assessment of the children. The children have to go to the tasks independently and complete them across a week. The children then receive an award for completing.

#### **4.3 Teaching**

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, language rich and challenging learning environment that offers high quality opportunities for the children to learn through play, both indoors and outdoors. 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. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a 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.

### **5. Learning Environment**

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. Resources are clearly labelled and organized 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 enhancements as necessary to support the children's learning.

### **6. Assessment**

At Elmley Castle CE First School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)<sup>3</sup>.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 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 and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally referring to the Development Matters Guidance<sup>4</sup> and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request. At the end of the reception 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 teaching and learning. This helps to create a smooth transition and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

### **7. Working in Partnership**

We recognise that children may access EYFS provision through other providers throughout the week and that all providers have an equally important role to play in their early years experiences. We seek information about the other settings that our children attend so that we can establish communication about their learning and development.

## 8. Working with parents

We provide a 'Starting Nursery' and 'Starting Reception' pack (available on the website) for new parents and carers that includes information about our daily routines, the types of activities provided, staffing and food and drink. The weekly newsletter, the school mobile app, Twitter and our school website provide updated information regarding school news. We value the contribution that our parents and carers make to their child's learning and take every opportunity to work in collaboration with them. Weekly, we publish a school newsletter and a class news sheet to inform parents of all the exciting learning we have been doing and ways in which they can support their child at home. In the Autumn and Spring terms we hold parents' consultations and in the Summer term we send home detailed reports. There are regular opportunities for parents to view their child's learning in school through our topic sharing afternoons. The reception children take reading books home daily to share quality reading time with their families.

## 9. Key Person

Each child is assigned a key person (usually the class teacher). This 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 and/or carers. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

## 10. Community Links and the Wider World

Over the year, we arrange visits from members of the local community to support our learning in school. The children take part in several educational visits linked to their learning topic. 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 as well as exploring British culture and values in preparation for life in modern Britain.

## 11. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe, and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning. We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff: child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

For children aged 3 and over:

- *Where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children.*
- *Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children.*

For maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools:

- *We have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children.*

For reception classes in maintained schools and academies:

- *We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils.*

We have always at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

Children are to be supervised whilst eating and are always in sight and hearing of a member of staff<sup>5 6</sup>.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by insert your approach here, for example by talking to children about:

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

If you have introduced/want to introduce supervised tooth brushing, insert: We follow the [Public Health England guidance on supervised toothbrushing<sup>7</sup>](#) to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures please see our school's Behaviour, Anti Bullying and Exclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Health & Safety Policy.

## 12. Promoting Awareness of Dangers and How to Stay Safe

At Elmley Castle CE First School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirement as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025<sup>8</sup>.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (Please refer to Elmley Castle CE First School Safeguarding Policy).

## 13. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Please refer to the school's Equality and SEND Policies.

## 14. Premises and Security

All access to the school is through the main school door, which is kept locked. Staff use a code 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 into the school visitor's form and are given a visitor badge to wear. Staff are aware of their role in challenging anyone who is not recognised 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 gate to the staff carpark is kept locked apart from when the children enter and leave at each end of the school day.

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 of school to another, head counts are used to check that all children are present before leaving. (Please refer to Elmley Castle CE First School Health & Safety Policy).

## **15. School Trips**

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 school trips. Risk assessments are completed for each type of school trip. (Please refer to Elmley Castle CE First School Educational Visits Policy).

## **16. Risk Assessments**

In addition to the school's risk assessment, the class one classroom and outdoor area are risk assessed separately to ensure that any hazards are identified and managed before the children use these areas.

## **17. Transition from Nursery to Reception**

If the children that do not attend our nursery provision select Elmley Castle CE First school as their reception choice, we will work closely with our feeder settings to ensure that the children make a smooth transition to our school. In the summer term, we organise opportunities for each setting to bring groups of children to visit. Our EYFS teacher will visit new children at their current setting too. We also provide opportunities for the reception children to talk to the nursery children about their experiences of starting school. The children receive copies of a child friendly booklet about Elmley Castle CE First School and a personal letter from one of our current reception children.

We hold a transition meeting for new reception parents in the summer term, where we outline daily routines and expectations. Parents are invited to attend one 'taster' session with their child, but the children are invited to attend three transition sessions. We also hold 'stay and play' sessions for prospective nursery children at different points through the year as well as a toddler group during the year. In September, we hold parent meetings to start to gather information about the children and answer any questions that parents may have. The children start school full-time to allow a smooth transition into the school routine, however this can be adapted to meet the needs of individual child in the first few weeks. Routines such as Worship and playtimes are built up gradually, with support from the children's teacher and teaching assistant.

## **18. Transition from Reception to Year One**

In the summer term at the end of the reception year 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 and opportunities to ask any questions about the next year. The school holds a 'Moving Up' day, giving the children a taste of their new class. Transition meetings are offered to parents to discuss their child's transition to the next year. We also run a joint Reception and Year 1 weekly forest school session, so the children get to spend learning time together during the Summer term.

## **19. Food and Drink**

We provide a snack table in the class. The children have the opportunity to access this during snack time and collect a healthy piece of fruit. Children are supported to wash their hands with soap before selecting a piece of fruit. Fresh drinking water is available at all times and in hot weather, it is also provided in a seated location in the outdoor area.

Information about the children's dietary needs is sought when they enter school. A list of the children's dietary needs is available in the classroom 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 school hall so the children are aware of the meal choices for that day. The reception children are entitled to free school meals. The nursery children can pay for a school meal if they would like or they can bring a packed lunch.

## **20. Illnesses and Injuries**

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 class one 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 the school's accident book and signed by the member of staff who dealt with the incident. Parents/carers may be contacted by telephone to inform them of an injury if deemed necessary. Parents/carers are always contacted to inform them if a headbump injury has occurred. Please refer to the school handbook (on website, under 'About Us' tab) and Health & Safety Policy.

## **21. Accidents**

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. If a child or adult needs to be transported to hospital, every effort will 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 and any care plan must be taken to the hospital with the child. (Please refer to Health & Safety Policy).

## **22. Medicines**

Please refer to school handbook (on website, under 'About Us' tab) & Supporting pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

## **23. Photographs and Mobile Phones**

Please refer to Online Safety policy.

## **24. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the EYFS Lead and Head Teacher.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board. Reports on the impact and effectiveness of this policy will be presented to governors when requested, according to the monitoring schedule.

## 25. Links to other policies

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour, Anti Bullying and Exclusion
- Health & Safety
- Curriculum
- Teaching, Learning & Assessment
- Marking & Feedback
- Healthy schools (including food)
- Starting Nursery/School Handbooks
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
- Equality
- Attendance & Punctuality
- Online safety
- Supporting pupils with Medical Conditions
- Educational Visits

## Appendix

### 1. Organisation of the day:

We try to keep our daily routine as consistent as possible, providing the children with a level of security that comes from knowing what to expect from the day ahead. Each day begins with Registration and Welcome. All Children are welcomed and they self-register. Nursery take part in a funky fingers' activity while Reception practise some of the skills they have been acquiring in lessons, such as letter formation, writing words and sentences and number work. The register is then taken formally, the child of the day and prayer monitor are chosen, and the children often share their news from home.

Snack and story is a time when all the children have their snack. This provides them with the opportunity to listen to a story, re-group and share their successes from the morning. The children are encouraged to share the responsibility of preparing for snack and clearing away afterwards.

At various points in the day, we enjoy coming together as a whole class to share and review our learning. We display photos/ models, artwork, writing etc from the sessions to help prompt children, to share, talk and celebrate their learning across all areas of the curriculum.

#### Nursery:

Morning nursery sessions run from 8:40am until 11:40am. Afternoon nursery sessions are from 1pm until 3:10pm. The school day is formally timetabled, with child-initiated activities and adult led activities covering all curriculum areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Below is a list of the daily adult led activities.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Phonics	Phonics	Phonics	Phonics	Phonics
Maths	Forest School	Maths	Maths	Maths
Story / literacy	Story / literacy	Story / literacy	Story / literacy	Story / literacy
UTW	Maths	RE	EAD	PE
PSHE	Singing	Oracy	Oracy	Show and Tell
Signing		Singing	Signing	Signing

- Depending on the nursery cohort (see below for further information)

#### Reception:

The school day is formally timetabled, with a balance of carefully planned adult-led focused activities and child-initiated activities covering all curriculum areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Typically, a day will consist of the following: Morning: Phonics, child-initiated learning, whole class maths, story and snack time, Literacy focus followed by either child-initiated learning or an adult-directed activity. Lunch break is for 1hr. Afternoon: Reading, a whole class topic lesson followed by either child-initiated learning or an adult-directed activity, oracy activity, singing and story time, home time. Topic Lessons are cross-curricular, aimed at developing skills in Communication and Language, Personal and Social Development, Understanding the World, and Expressive Art and Design. Topics are chosen that are varied or linked to annual events such as Chinese New Year or Easter. Lessons planned deepen the children's understanding of that topic through different experiences such as art and craft, cooking, drama, role-play etc. The weekly timetable includes a whole class P.E session, Forest School and show and tell.

Successful transition between Reception and Year one is essential for the wellbeing of the children. During the summer term, we gradually move from a child-initiated learning environment to a more formal, subject-based, and adult-directed learning environment where learning sessions become longer, and the children are expected to become more independent. We plan a transition day for children in the summer term, where children get the opportunity to spend some time in their new classroom with their new teacher, getting to know the new systems and expectations to further ensure the transition is smooth and seamless.

## **2. Early Reading:**

At Elmley Castle, we use the Understanding Letters and Sounds Phonics decodable reading books that have been written specifically to match the order in which grapheme-phoneme correspondences are introduced in class. These books are fully decodable, which means that every word in the book can be read using just the children's developing phonics knowledge to build their confidence, motivation, and enthusiasm for reading.

## **3. Our expectations for Phonics at Elmley Castle First School are:**

### **Nursery:**

- By the end of the Autumn term, Nursery children will be working securely within Phase 1.
- The Nursery children with another year of nursery will continue to have three weekly phonics sessions of Phase 1.
- After Christmas, the Nursery children transitioning into Reception will continue to have daily phonic sessions, consisting of three weekly sessions of Phase 1 and two weekly sessions of Phase 2 leading into Phase 3 to aid their transition into Reception.

### **Reception:**

- By the end of the Autumn term children will have completed Phase 2 and will have started Phase 3.
- By the end of Spring 1 children will be working securely within Phase 3.
- By end of Spring 2 children will have started Phase 4.
- By the end of Summer 1 children will be working securely within Phase 4.
- By the end of Reception, all children should be secure with Phase 2, Phase 3 and working confidently within Phase 4.

### **Year 1:**

- By the end of Year 1 children will have completed Phase 5 (consolidating Phase 3 and Phase 4)

## **4. Transition into school.**

- We invite parents and their child for a settling in session. This offers both parents and children the opportunity to spend time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, getting to know staff, other children, activities, and routines, to foster good relationships and communication between home and school.
- The class teacher will talk to parents and other settings about their child before their child starts in our school.
- At the start of the academic year, parents are invited to attend a Parent's Workshop to learn ways of how best to support their children's learning at home.
- Parent consultation evenings are held at various points during the year to formally discuss their child's progress.
- Parents receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Parents will be asked to contribute observations on their child's home life, interests, and achievements through our wow moments, so we can celebrate these at school.
- We use Class Dojo to share our learning and news.

5. This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according to the EYFS statutory framework:

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See First Aid Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and Safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Attendance Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints Policy