Gillamoor CE Primary School

Early Years Policy

Ratified by Governors: November 2026

Review Date: November 2027

At Gillamoor CE Primary School we recognise and value the importance of the EYFS in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development and understand our responsibilities in ensuring that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

Through the implementation of this policy we will provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2026) 'Early years foundation stage statutory framework'
- DfE (2024) 'Early years foundation stage profile: 2024 handbook'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Pupil Inclusion Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy

- Administering Medication Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff.
- Ensuring that there are appropriate policies, procedures, and practices in place to deliver the Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework in line with statutory requirements.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the Headteacher Standards and the expectations of the school community.
- Creating a culture where children experience a positive and enriching school life.
- Upholding ambitious educational standards which prepare children from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life.
- Ensuring teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains.
- Ensuring valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing children's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and ensuring effective use is made of formative assessment.
- Understanding and acting within the statutory assessment frameworks which set out the duties, responsibilities and reporting arrangements to be followed. In particular as set out in Annex B of the EYFS framework for group and school-based providers.
- Ensuring all relevant staff read and implement this policy.
- Ensuring that staff have received the appropriate training to deliver and report EYFS assessments.
- Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development and targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices and procedures.

The EYFS lead will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff members read and implement this policy.

- Ensuring that all staff are up-to-date with current statutory and Ofsted expectations, including the early years team and the SLT.
- Supporting the policies, ethos and vision of the school and actively promoting high levels of achievement in the early years stage.
- Leading the early years team in the planning and delivery of a creative and stimulating curriculum based on the educational programmes of the 'Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework'.
- Ensuring the educational provision and practice is based on the EYFS characteristics of effective teaching and learning, supports a range of learning needs and develops children's independence.
- Taking responsibility for high-quality teaching provision throughout the early years stage.
- Ensuring the requirements for the EYFS, including the arrangement of assessment, are met in line with the relevant statutory requirements.
- Monitoring the progress of children and reporting evaluated data to the headteacher.
- Developing and maintaining effective relationships with parents, colleagues, the governing board and the local community.
- Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development and targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices and procedures.

Staffing and Ratios

At Gillamoor CE Primary School the Early Years is a part of the Explorer Class – this is a mixed aged class of Reception, Year 1 and 2. The class is led by a qualified teacher and has the support of teaching assistants at all times to ensure that there is adequate staffing to meet the needs of all the children and ensure their safety. There is always a staff member that holds the Paediatric First Aid qualification.

Learning and Development

In partnership with parents, the school will promote the learning and development of children to ensure they learn and develop well, are kept healthy and safe and have the knowledge and skills they need to start school.

Curriculum planning

Provision and practice within the early years will be centred around the requirements of the DfE's 'Early years foundation stage statutory framework'.

The EYFS framework outlines seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in the early years. These are categorised as prime areas and specific areas.

Prime areas – defined as the areas that are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide a basis for learning in all areas. The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social, and emotional development

Specific areas – defined as the areas through which help strengthen and develop the three prime areas, and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm. The specific areas are:

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

When planning the early years curriculum, staff will:

- Consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.
- Stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.
- Reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carer and agree how to support the child. Staff will also consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.

For children whose home language is not English, practitioners will:

- Take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.
- Ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring they are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Key Stage 1.
- If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, staff will explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

When organising and implementing educational programmes, the school will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep 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.

All staff members will have due regard to the learning and development requirements as set out in the school's Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy.

Each child will be assigned a key person (the class teacher) who will help to ensure their learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

In line with the statutory framework, the school will undertake a summative assessment of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception. The requirements of the RBA are set out in Annex B of the EYFS statutory framework.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) – a comprehensive assessment completed in the final academic year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than the 30 June, to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1. The EYFS profile will be shared with the child's year 1 teacher, to help inform a discussion between the reception and year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs. It will also assist with the planning of activities in year 1.

Ongoing formative assessments will be used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Staff will interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.

Parents and/or carers will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents. The school will ensure that teachers actively engage children, their parents and other adults who have significant interaction with specific children in the assessment processes to provide a well-rounded picture of their development and attainment.

In exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child might remain in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they reach age 5. In these exceptional cases, assessment are continued throughout the child's time within EYFS provision and the profile will be completed once, at the end of the year before the child moves into year 1.

When undertaking assessment activities, all staff members will have due regard to the any advice from the LA, and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook and the Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) for that year.

The school must report EYFS Profile results to local authorities, upon their request.

Inclusion

All children will be valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Pupil Inclusion Policy will ensure that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The EYFS curriculum will be planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy will ensure all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.

Safeguarding

The school will take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well and comply with the requirements of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' to:

- Safeguard children.
- Ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children.
- Promote good health.
- Support and understand behaviour.
- Maintain records, policies, and procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Samantha Bond. All incidents are recorded securely via CPOMS.

Child protection

Staff will be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS will be required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL is Samantha Bond. The deputy DSL is Lorraine Hugill.

The DSL will be responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services and Local Safeguarding Partners as appropriate. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.

Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect as set out in Annex C of the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers.

Where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare the school will:

- Immediately notify the LA's children's social care team and, in emergencies, the police.
- Have regard to the DfE's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', the 'Prevent duty for England and Wales' and 'KCSIE'.
- Inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse of children by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises and the action they have taken in response to the allegations. Notification will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Child absences

The school is required to follow up any absences in a timely manner.

If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time or if their parents and/or carers haven't informed the school of the absence, then the school will attempt to contact the parent and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. The school will consider the child's vulnerability, parent's and /or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or police welfare check requested.

Further information on child absences can be found in our Attendance Policy.

Nutrition

Gillamoor CE Primary School has a school cook that provides nutritious balanced meals based on the latest guidance. There is always a Paediatric First Aider with the children at meal and snack times as per guidance.

Staffing

The school will:

- Ensure that people looking after children are suitable, have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. This also applies to any person who may have regular contact with children.
- Take appropriate steps to verify qualifications, including in cases where physical evidence cannot be produced.

- Obtain an enhanced criminal records check in respect of every person aged 16 and over who works directly with children or works on the premises – additional criminal records checks will also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad.
- Tell staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- Not allow anyone whose suitability has not been checked, including through a criminal records check, to have unsupervised contact with children.
- Record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks, references and vetting processes that have been completed – this must include the criminal records check reference number, the date a check was obtained and the details of the person who obtained it.
- Make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where a member of staff is dismissed, (or would have been, had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.
- Ensure that no disqualified person is employed to work in connection with early years provision.
- Take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children if they become aware of any information about staff that may lead to their disqualification.
- Notify Ofsted of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children in their setting and provide specific details of any order made.

References

The school must obtain a reference for any member of staff (including student and volunteers) before they are recruited.

The school will:

- Not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern.
- Not rely on applicants to obtain their reference.
- Ensure any references are from the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority.
- Not accept references from a family member.
- Obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed.
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children). If the applicant has never worked

with children, then ensure a reference is from their current employer, training provider or education setting.

- Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source.
- Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided.
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the applicant.
- Establish the reason for the applicant leaving their current or most recent post, and ensure any concerns are resolves satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

The school will provide references for previous employees in a timely manner, upon request.

All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues.
- Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.

Information and records

Information will be stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

The school will:

- Maintain records and obtain and share information, as appropriate, to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting and ensure the needs of all children are met.
- Enable a regular two-way flow of information with parents and/or carers and /or between providers in cases where more than one setting is attended.
- If requested incorporate parents' comments into children's records.
- Ensure that records are easily accessible and available.
- Ensure that confidential information and records about staff and children are held securely and only accessible and available to those with the right or professional need.
- Be aware of their responsibilities under Data Protection legislation and, where relevant, the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- Ensure that staff understand their responsibility to protect and respect the privacy of children and the legal requirements requiring confidentiality of information and records.
- Allow parents access to all records about their child, provided that no relevant exemptions apply to their disclosure under the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Retain records relating to individual children for a reasonable amount of time after they have left the setting.

Transition

Children from local pre-schools will be invited to attend play sessions at Gillamoor CE School over the year. The early years lead will visit local pre-schools to meet the children due to join the nursery and liaises with the pre-school managers where possible.

The early years lead will also contact previous settings to share learning records and obtain information about children, particularly those with SEND.

Staff will support both parents and children where possible to help ease the separation anxiety that can often occur.

During the first term of reception:

- Children will undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks of starting Reception. Children will not be required to prepare for the assessment and, in most cases, children should not be aware that they are being assessed. Children with SEND or EAL will be included in the assessment. The RBA will not be used as a formative or diagnostic assessment.
- Reception children will attend for the full school day.
- A parents' evening will be held to provide parents with information about the curriculum and give them the opportunity to reflect on the transition process, as well as address any questions or concerns.

Throughout the year, parents will be encouraged to share any information, concerns or successes with staff.

In the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS profile will be completed for each child and submitted to the LA upon request.

The EYFS profile will provide an outline of each child's progress, assessed against the ELGs and their readiness for Year 1.

For each ELG, teachers will judge whether a child is:

- Meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS – expected.
- Not yet reaching this level – emerging.

During the first term:

- The Year 1 timetable, in terms of provision, planning and child-led learning, will remain similar to Reception, including free choice opportunities, sand, water and malleable play, and morning and afternoon outdoor play, as far as possible.
- Children will continue to be assessed on the EYFS profile, if appropriate.
- Consideration will be given to the links between the seven areas of learning in the EYFS and the national curriculum subjects.
- The more formal teaching of Year 1 will be introduced gradually.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS will be required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is November 2027.