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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Aims:

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

The Preschool and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available from the school office or to download at [EYFS Framework](#). This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive [Development Matters Curriculum Guidance](#), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.



The prime areas are;

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development – Gross and fine motor skills
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are;

- Literacy – Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the World – Past and Present; People, Culture and Communities; The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Preschool and Reception teachers guide and plan activities within the Preschool and Reception classrooms 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 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.



Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them.

Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own.

They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them.

The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

Whilst we place great emphasis on child-initiated learning, we also understand the importance of routines and we set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on introducing new ideas, numeracy, literacy, language, phonics, songs and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc.



In Reception we start to include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children are exposed to a wide range of books and stories and will leave the EYFS with a love of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is able to access books throughout the day in the reading corner and adults support and encourage this.

Planning

We believe that children have a natural desire to learn and explore. So instead of holding their hand through a variety of preset activities, we allow them to find their own interests, and use this to enhance and build upon their existing knowledge.

In early years we follow the 'planning in the moment' approach which can be broken down into 3 stages:

- The Child's Spark – This is when the child first shows an interest in something. There should be an air of fascination around the object and concentration in what they are now doing.
- The Teachable Moment – The teacher will notice this and approach the child. This is the opportunity to extend their interest, by asking open-ended questions and considering ways to apply this interest to other options within the environment.
- The Documentation – At a later date, you can document the observation. Include the spark, the teachable moment and what you did next. This will help you to map out each child's interests, and plan an environment that works for them.

As part of the wider school, we sometimes engage in aspects of shared topics that are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests but might include school themes, cultural celebrations and local or national events.

From Spring Term our older preschool children join the primary school children in an outdoor day, and from Summer Term all preschoolers, to build on characteristics of independence, resilience and challenging oneself and is an excellent opportunity for peer learning.



Children in early years also have a special week once per term, where their parents guide us towards a special interest area that the child has and the adults plan activities around that child's special interest.

Visits and Visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at the school is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. Due to our central location, we have access to a lot of facilities on our doorstep and we have regular library and city farm visits, as well as weekly swimming for Reception children.

Visitors to the school might include people from our wider community such as police, fire brigade or doctors or dentists.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily and independently.

Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have different areas to spark curiosity which might include, but are not limited to: creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day.

The outdoor area and outdoor learning is an important part of the classroom and culture of the school where we encourage children to learn outside for much of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction. Physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running and other active games being key. We use the courtyard area in front of the school but also Highbury Fields daily.

Each child has their own labelled peg and box in the classroom and we encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, bags and creations safely in one place.

Assessment, Observations and Learning Journeys

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual Learning Journey.



We use Tapestry to record observations but the child's Learning Journey also forms a valuable collection of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal meetings during each day or in the weekly planning meetings, these next steps inform planning for the next day and week ahead.

Staff have access to an iPad which is used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. The Learning Journey is given to parents at the end of each school year via pdf or printed and they also receive a report using the online EYFS tracker.

On entry to Preschool we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the Head Teacher showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning.

At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' meeting in Reception.

Role of staff and Key Worker

Each child has a named key worker in the setting. In Reception this will be the class teacher. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the preschool and Reception visit days we offer coffee morning sessions at the beginning of the school year and sporadically throughout the school year.



Parents occasionally ask staff to engage in activities outside of the school, such as babysitting or birthday parties; this is not encouraged by the school as it can present a conflict of interests and permission must be sought from the Headteacher or Board of Governors.

Settling In

Over the first few days at the school we encourage parents and carers to stay for as long as they wish in the classroom to ensure the transition to the school goes smoothly. We have a slow staggered entry into Preschool and a slightly quicker staggered entry into Reception.

In Preschool (and for new children in Reception) we sit down with each parent within the first few days to go through their 'All About Me' and learn more about the child and their family.

After each child's special week parents are also invited to a parents' meeting to review the child's progress and areas of development.

We are aware that most parents will be part of the school for the next seven or eight years and want them to get to know their child's peers and their families, so we have half termly celebrations in the school hall where we showcase our learning or celebrate relevant festivals together as a whole school. All school staff attend so we can meet the parents in a more informal setting. We also host cheese and wine events periodically.

Reception parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting in Autumn term and teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

Safeguarding

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 the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance (2022) [KCSIE 2022](#) and there is a section in our school Safeguarding Policy that directly refers to practice in the early years.

Katie Howard, the Headteacher, is the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Karina Samura is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, and all concerns are discussed with them in line with our safeguarding policy. All staff have a duty of care to report any concern whether low-level or serious confidentially and immediately.



It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. This is in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

Members of staff do, however, use school iPads or school phones to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS.

These photographs are used in children's portfolios, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their pupil contract.

Healthy Eating

We are a healthy school and in preschool we ask that parents daily to bring in a piece of fruit for us to share. In Reception morning snacks could be bread, crackers and fruit, vegetables or yoghurt. We discourage cakes, biscuits or sweets unless for a special occasion.

Our staff model good eating habits by eating alongside the children and all children in Preschool and Reception have hot lunch provided daily by an outside early years specialist caterer.

In the afternoon we provide a light daily snack of crackers and fruit and vegetables.

Health & safety

We take all accidents seriously and always log each accident for review by the Headteacher. Should there be a head injury we inform a parent immediately as per our Health & Safety Policy. Cold compresses are stored in both kitchens.

We support children using nappies, potty training and self-toileting. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets.

All large climbing and play equipment is checked annually and fire alarms are checked weekly with half termly drills in line with the school Health & Safety policy. There is an annual external check of equipment.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits, where risk assessments are carried out in accordance with our policy.



Equal Opportunities

At Dania School we also recognise the importance of the Equality Act 2010. This replaced and unified all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It aims to ensure that all people (pupils/teachers/parents/family/visitors etc) have equality of opportunity in accessing and experiencing the life of the school. When carrying out our day to day work, we should have regard to the following: • eliminating discrimination • advancing equality of opportunity • foster good relations across all people, whatever their characteristics may be.