EYFS Policy

September 2025

ST CHRISTOPHER'S
HAMPSTEAD

EYFS POLICY

Policy to be reviewed annually			
Action	**Owner**	**Date**	**Completed**
Reviewed	Head of EYFS (Jennie McGovern)	October 2025	✓
Reported	Head (Mark Maddocks)	October 2025	✓
Approved	Education Committee	November 2025	

Date of next review: September 2026

To be published on	
School network	✓
School website	✓

Accessibility notice

To enable easier reading, this Policy is available in a larger font upon request.

Introduction

This EYFS Policy for St. Christopher's aligns with the Statutory Framework for Early Years (as updated for September 2025). It provides a comprehensive view of the school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision, emphasizing the significance of early childhood education and care. As stated in the framework; "Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years, and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances." Meeting the individual needs of all children lies at the heart of the Early Years Foundation Stage. At St Christopher's we deliver personalised learning, development and care to help children get the best possible start to life.

Commented [JM1]: Following guidance from Katie Paynter to remove year as framework changes so often.

Guiding Principles

While we are exempt from the Learning, Development, and Assessment requirements of the Statutory Framework for Early Years, we adhere to the following guiding principles:

- **Every child is a unique individual**, constantly learning and capable of resilience, confidence, and self-assuredness
- **Positive relationships** with caring adults foster children's independence
- **Enabling environments** tailored to individual needs, with strong practitioner-parent partnerships, support children's development
- Acknowledging that **children learn and develop** at varying rates, including those with special educational needs and disabilities

Implementation of EYFS Principles

In line with EYFS principles, at St. Christopher's, we:

- Adopt a key person approach, promoting close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment, both indoors and outdoors
- Offer a balanced curriculum which reflects the school's aims and ethos, providing a stimulating and enjoyable education that fosters curiosity, independent thinking, imagination and creativity
- Plan challenging and enjoyable learning experiences based on each child's unique needs, informed by observation, assessment, and the child's interests
- Embrace the School's metacognitive teaching tools, such as Thinking Moves and St Christopher's Habits
- Encourage children to engage in activities initiated by both adults and children
- Work in partnership with parents and with the wider community
- Cultivate a thoughtful attitude in pupils towards their immediate and wider environment
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring the inclusion and support of every pupil

The Early Years Curriculum

We design an engaging and challenging curriculum by focusing on the Prime and Specific Areas of learning from the Statutory Framework for Early Years. This curriculum is continually reviewed and enhanced based on our observations of the children's needs, interests, and stages of development. The statutory early learning goals are organised into seven areas of learning and establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Prime Areas of Learning

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Physical Development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Communication and Language involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Specific Areas of Learning

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

Understanding the World involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Each Area combines both adult-led and child-initiated learning, allowing for whole group and small group teaching. Whole-class input increases as pupils progress through Reception, preparing them for a more formal learning environment in Year 1.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are an integral part of our educational approach, guiding us in tailoring our teaching methods to meet the unique needs and interests of each child. We believe that by nurturing these characteristics, we set our children on a path towards becoming enthusiastic, lifelong learners who are not afraid to explore, experiment, and think critically.

1. Exploration and Play

- **Investigating and Discovering:** Children are natural explorers from birth, driven by a profound curiosity about their world. We encourage them to investigate and experience, fostering an environment where their innate sense of wonder can thrive.
- **Engaging with What They Know:** Children love to play with what they know. We believe in building upon their existing knowledge and experiences to spark their enthusiasm for learning.
- **Willingness to Experiment:** At this stage, we embrace a culture of "having a go." We celebrate experimentation and understand that learning often involves making mistakes and learning from them.

2. Active Learning

- **Persistence**: We cultivate a mindset of persistence, teaching children to keep trying even when they encounter difficulties. Through this characteristic, we instil the value of resilience and determination.
- **Engagement and Concentration:** Active learning hinges on a child's motivation and their ability to concentrate on tasks. We create stimulating environments that keep children engaged, excited, and focused on their learning journey.
- **Celebrating Achievements:** In the EYFS, we believe in celebrating every achievement, both big and small. We understand that every step towards a goal is significant, and we encourage children to take pride in their accomplishments.

3. Creating and Thinking Critically

- **Developing Unique Ideas:** We promote the development of individual ideas and encourage children to express their creativity. Our girls are empowered to think outside the box and innovate.
- **Establishing Connections:** We emphasize the importance of making connections between ideas and concepts. Children are encouraged to think critically and develop a deep understanding of the world by recognizing relationships and patterns.
- **Exploring Diverse Approaches:** We provide children with diverse opportunities to approach tasks and problems. Through various forms of play, including role-play, construction, and artistic activities, they can explore alternative approaches to different situations.

Play

Play underpins all development and learning for young children. It is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. The skills children develop through play help them to thrive long after their school days and empower them to become lifelong creative learners.

Much research examines children's response to various aspects of play, with five factors emerging prominently: children excel in learning when play is meaningful, joyful, iterative, and involves social interaction and active engagement. Providing thoughtfully planned experiences centred on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which our teaching staff support girls to learn with enjoyment and challenge. Children independently access the Early Years' environment's continuous provision, taking the lead in their learning. In addition, the Early Years team devise plans for 'Independent Play', enhanced provision linked to our topics of study. These plans are continually reviewed and updated, reflecting the girls' interests and individual stages of development. We emphasize the importance of our St Christopher's Habits in our approach to playful learning which include; being curious, creative, and adventurous, finding your voice and listening to understand, collaborating, persisting, finding humour, managing impulsivity, caring for our environment and making good decisions.

The Learning Environment

Following the Reggio Emilia approach, we believe that a rich learning environment acts as the 'third teacher'. Children are active participants in their own learning, and their surroundings play a pivotal role in facilitating their growth and development. Our Reception classroom and playground are organized to support the Prime and Specific Areas of learning and encourage independent and collaborative exploration. Children learn to care for their environment and manage their resources, deepening their understanding of their individual and collective impact and the importance of sustainability. The space is designed to be adaptable and to provide our girls with a stimulating, engaging, and supportive space where they can develop their skills and understanding. Skilled and attentive adult interaction is a crucial component of a rich learning environment. Teachers are responsive to children's interests and needs, supporting their learning through observation, scaffolding, and facilitating learning experiences.

Inclusion

We value all our pupils as individuals, irrespective of their backgrounds, abilities, or cultural diversity. We provide support and additional resources for those with special educational needs and create an inclusive, diverse learning environment. The Early Years team work closely with the school's Learning Enrichment Coordinator to facilitate early identification and intervention and ensure provision is appropriate. Children who have English as an additional language are monitored during Pupil Progress reviews which are held termly. These are attended by all staff who teach in the EYFS and ensure that the progress of these pupils is in line with their abilities and predicted levels of attainment. Opportunities for children with EAL to share their home languages and cultures in school in their learning and in play is encouraged. We celebrate and respect cultural and linguistic diversity among our pupils.

(Please see Learning Enrichment Policy)

Observation and Assessment

We use ongoing observational assessment to track pupils' progress, understand their needs, and tailor activities and targeted support. Pupils are assessed via CEM Baseline in September, EExRec in the first half term and at the end of each term in all 7 strands of learning. A CEM Baseline Progress assessment at the end of year enables us to weigh progress and facilitates a smooth transition to Year 1. Termly meetings are held to discuss judgments, set targets, and implement booster and support groups as needed. In addition, a formal report is provided at the end of the academic year covering the Prime and Specific Areas and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Transitions

A high-quality Early Years' experience provides a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success. Key to this is ensuring continuity between all year groups and that children's social, emotional and educational needs are addressed appropriately. Transition is seen as a process, not an event, and is carefully planned for and discussed with children, parents and Year 1 teachers. At St Christopher's we communicate information which will secure continuity of experience for the child between Year Groups. We use the summative assessment of each child recorded in the EYFS Profile to support planning for learning in Year 1. Year 1 teachers are familiar with the EYFS and likewise EYFS teachers are familiar with the KS1 curriculum.

Recognizing the importance of a smooth transition from nursery to reception, we are committed to providing a series of opportunities for new children and their parents to familiarize themselves with the Early Years team and setting before the official start of the school year. Understanding that starting school is a significant step for both children and parents, we aim to establish a strong foundation of trust and communication from the outset. Our transition initiatives include:

Pre-Reception Summer Term

- **Starting School Discussion** – This meeting is a cornerstone in building the partnership between parents and the school. Led by our experienced Early Years teachers, the discussion covers essential topics such a settling in, the daily routine in Reception, the curriculum, how to support learning at home, and how to address any concerns or questions parents might have.
- **New Parents' Barbecue** – Enabling families to meet one another, fostering a sense of community from the very beginning.
- **Welcome Pack** – A resource for parents with detailed information about the school day, uniform requirements, school policies, and tips on preparing their child for school. This pack also includes a 'What to Expect in Reception' guide, offering insights into the educational journey their child is about to embark on.

Throughout the Reception Year

Adjustment takes time and our Early Years team provides ongoing support to children and parents throughout the first year.

- **Regular updates on children's progress**, informal catch-ups at drop-off and pick-up times, and scheduled parent-teacher meetings ensure a continuous dialogue and support network
- **Workshops** aimed at equipping parents with strategies to support their child's learning and emotional well-being at home
- **Fostering a sense of belonging and community**, new Reception children are paired with older pupils who act as buddies. These buddies help the younger children navigate the school day, model positive behaviour, and offer friendship during this new chapter.

From Reception to Year 1

The EYFS and Year 1 team collaborate to support a smooth transition. In the Summer term of the Reception school year there will be;

- **Regular involvement of the Year 1 team in Reception** – Daily reading, PSED lessons, playground supervision and story time sessions with the Year 1 team is an important part of the Summer Term timetable. This will lay the foundation for positive relationships and enhance children's readiness for Year 1.
- **A joint Reception and Year 1 trip –** This allows Reception children moving up to Year 1 to experience a shared educational outing and to become familiar with Year 1 routines, expectations.
- **A Move Up Day** when they can meet their new class teacher. In their new classroom, girls will enjoy taking part in 'Getting to know you' games, arts and craft activities giving them a sense of life in Year 1.

Partnership

We value strong, caring, and professional relationships with pupils and their families. We encourage parents to actively participate in their child's education at home and at school. Parents are asked to regularly read with their child during the school week. We work with external services and organizations to meet the needs of our pupils. Visitors and parents are encouraged to come into the classroom as much as possible to share their enthusiasm and expertise.

School Trips

The Reception class go on at least two school trips linked to our learning across the year. We also have a Heath Day with Year 6 in the summer term focused on Outdoor Learning. We ensure that there are at least 6 adults to supervise, with each adult having responsibility for a group of 5 girls maximum.

Commented [CB2]: @Jennie McGovern (Head of EYFS) Hi Jennie, following the governors' review of policies, they have asked for some more specific procedural information pertaining to trips. Please can you add a line or two more so it is ready to publish at the end of the week? @Alistair Wade (Head of School Operations and Partnerships) FYI

Safeguarding and Welfare

The safeguarding and welfare of our pupils are paramount. The Head of EYFS is a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and we have stringent policies, procedures, and measures in place to ensure the children's safety and well-being. Pupils are taught and supported to make safe choices, assess risks, and protect themselves. We comply with all regulatory requirements related to safeguarding and welfare. The EYFS adheres to the school's Health and Safety Policy. In addition, Reception form teachers are responsible for completing a health and safety check twice a day at the start of the morning and before lunch playtime to ensure the area is safe. A record is kept of the checks using a checklist.

(For further details please see the Health and Safety Policy and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

Premises

Indoor space requirement meets the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2023) requirements, of 2.3 square metres for Reception pupils.

Risk Assessments

We ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure staff and pupils are not exposed to risks. Rigorous daily checks and enhanced cleaning procedures are in place. A battery of written risk assessments, informing staff practice and management of risk are available on request. Individual risk assessments are completed and reviewed for clubs, school trips and educational visits.

Paediatric First Aid

All EYFS staff hold recognized Paediatric First Aid certificates, renewing their training every three years, as required by the Statutory Framework. All EYFS staff hold PFA status. Paediatric First Aid training is renewed every three years. Lists of staff holding a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate are displayed in EYFS classrooms, the school office, the lunch hall and outdoor spaces.

Administration of Medicine

We recognise that in certain circumstances, children may require the administration of prescribed medicines during their time in our care. Our Administrations of Medications Policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for administering medications to ensure the health and safety of all children in our setting. EYFS staff members are trained and responsible for the safe administration of medications.

Oral Health

Healthy eating habits and oral health are promoted and regularly reviewed as part of our PSED, PSHCE, and PD curriculum.

Break and Lunchtime provision

As part of their morning break time, the girls are provided with milk and a healthy snack. This comprises of a range of fresh fruit, or a freshly baked low-sugar biscuit or muffin.

A two-course school lunch is provided for all children. All children take their lunch in the dining hall. All food is cooked and prepared on site in our own kitchens. Children are encouraged to take three kinds of food on their plate i.e. meat or protein, vegetables or salad and carbohydrate. A vegetarian

alternative is offered. If children have a food allergy, this should be indicated through the online joining proformas. All medical needs and other dietary requirements must be supported by a letter from a doctor. The school can accommodate most dietary needs and encourages parents to discuss these with us. A no nut policy is operated. All girls with dietary requirements are provided with a lanyard. These are invaluable to the kitchen staff, as they serve the children.

Reception staff regularly eat with the girls encourage them to use a knife and fork correctly, promoting good table manners. Weekly menus are shared via the Classlist app each Friday. They are also displayed across the school.

Staff members present during snack and mealtimes are PFA trained in line with updates to the EYFS Statutory Framework. Staff ensure that children are within sight and hearing when eating to ensure health and safety standards are met.

Behaviour

We have a Behaviour Policy, an Anti-Bullying Policy, and a Physical Intervention Policy all of which pertain to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Head of EYFS and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (EYFS) is responsible for behaviour management issues in Reception.

Ratios

We ensure that pupils are adequately supervised, and we meet the adult-to-child ratios specified in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2023).

Level 6	1:30
Instructor	1:30
Level 3 – 5	1:13
Level 2	1:8 in the presence of a Level 3 or above

Disqualification from Childcare

All staff working with children aged 8 and under in out of School care, and all those working with pupils in the EYFS complete the declaration on disqualification from childcare.

Staff Supervision

EYFS staff receive termly supervision which provides support, coaching and training and promotes the interests of pupils. Supervision fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues. It also provides further opportunities for staff to discuss any issues particularly concerning pupil development and well-being.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a vital component of safeguarding within the Early Years setting. It empowers staff to raise concerns about poor practice, misconduct, or any behaviour that may compromise the safety and wellbeing of children. Our school is committed to creating a culture of transparency and

accountability, where staff feel confident and supported in reporting concerns without fear of reprisal. All staff are made aware of the whistleblowing procedures during induction and through regular safeguarding training. Concerns can be raised internally with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or externally with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Ofsted. The policy ensures confidentiality and protection for whistleblowers, in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Monitoring and Review

The EYFS priorities, staff training needs, and the school's EYFS development plan are regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure the effective implementation of the Early Years curriculum and principles. The Head of EYFS carries out monitoring of the department as part of the whole School monitoring. Whole-school policies equally apply to the EYFS, as they incorporate the mandatory requirements.