Early Years (Foundation Stage) Policy

September 2026

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'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

1. Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Our Early Years department accommodates children from the age of 6 months to 5 years. In our school we have one Baby room, one Nursery Class, 2 Pre School classes and one full time Reception class. In the Baby room, Nursery and Pre School we offer sessional or full-time places for 51 weeks of the year. We also offer a term time only pattern for those in Nursery. We offer 30 and 15 hours funded places for eligible families. We believe that early childhood is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives and we greatly value the importance of the EYFS and its role in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We aim to offer a solid foundation for the children which will be enhanced as they move through the setting.

2. Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners across the Foundation Stage. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

In the Early Years we will provide the following:

- A happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning to support and develop all children's experiences as they begin their journey through the school.
- We provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that is set in place to provide a firm foundation for further learning and development in our Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and next steps and helping each child to progress. We will use a variety of assessment methods including ongoing and more formalised observations.
- Develop positive relationships with parents and carers to build strong partnerships in supporting their children.
- The revised EYFS has been implemented into our practice from September 2026.
- We will focus on promoting the good health of all children through a range of activities.
- Children will understand the importance of oral health and what this means in their daily lives.
- Providing a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.
- We will enrich children's learning through a range of activities to promote and support spoken language, conversation, and storytelling.
- We will support children with attachments providing them with strong, warm supportive relationships.
- We will focus on the importance of reading and comprehension, which begins from birth, and word reading which comes in later as children grow and develop.
- Writing will be divided into transcription and composition.
- Children will have a deeper understanding of numbers including patterns and relationships between these numbers developing spatial reasoning skills. They will be encouraged to develop a positive approach to maths, not being afraid to make mistakes but to keep on trying.
- Children will be encouraged and supported to make sense of their physical world and their community, visit parks, libraries and museums, and meet different members of our society to enrich their curiosity of the world. We have regular visits from the police, fire service, nurses, dentists, doctors and many other visitors to share new experiences with the children.
- We believe it is important to ensure children are able to have new experiences and a broad selection of books and rhymes to foster the understanding of the culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world we live in.
- We welcome all children from a range of different backgrounds and needs as we feel this enriches children's life experiences.
- We provide a range of opportunities for children to engage with the arts and develop a cultural awareness, through stories, songs and music as well as hands on creative experiences. We encourage children to take risks whilst in a safe and secure environment.

3. Learning and Curriculum

The EYFS is based on 4 principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child – Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that each child is an individual who develops at their own rate and by our flexible approach to planning, including next steps planning, we aim to enable each child to reach their full potential. This encourages children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. Children learn through building positive relationships with each other and the adults in our setting. We endeavour to develop caring, respectful and productive relationships between the pupils themselves and between the pupils and the adults they work with in our Early Years and through the school.

Enabling Environments – Children learn to play because they feel relaxed, comfortable and "at home" in their environment. By providing a space where children feel emotionally safe and secure, they are able to explore. Our Early Years classes are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. These are specific areas where children can be active, be quiet, be creative and be themselves.

Learning and Development – Through play**,** children investigate and experience things, and learn to "have a go". Children become active learners. Children are able to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and also enjoy their achievements. We ensure that the educational programmes are well planned and resourced to have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning. They provide interesting and challenging experiences that meet the children's needs. Planning is based on secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children and what they can achieve. We implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) set by the Department for Education that sets standards to ensure all children learn and develop well. We support and enhance children's learning and development holistically through play-based activities alongside structured planned activities. We review all aspects of learning and development and ensure a flexible approach is maintained, which responds quickly to children's learning and development needs. We develop tailor-made activities based on children's observations which inform future planning and draw on children's needs and interests. This is promoted through a balance of adult-led and child-led opportunities both indoors and outdoors. Direct observations are supplemented by a range of other evidence to evaluate the impact that teachers have on the progress children make in their learning including:

- Evidence of assessment that includes the progress of different groups of children.
- Assessment on entry, including parental contributions
- Two year old progress checks where applicable in ongoing formative assessments.
- The Early years Foundation Stage Profile where applicable or any other summative assessment when children leave us.
- Building strong links to enhance and extend children's learning both within the Early Years environment and in the child's home.

- Sharing information about the EYFS curriculum with parents.
- All parents in Early Years are invited to parents' evenings where they can discuss their child's learning. We use online learning journals to support interactions between home and school life.

Seven areas of Learning in the EYFS

There are seven areas of learning and development these are implemented into our pedagogy through fostering the knowledge of each individual child. All our staff working in our Early Years do this through a range of teaching and modelling discussions and conversations providing an enriched new experience for all children. The EYFS has a strong focus on the importance of ensuring that children have a deep, secure understanding of each concept or skill before moving on, rather than rushing them on to the next step.

All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected and none can be delivered in isolation to the others. Children in Warlingham Park School Early Years are provided with a range of learning experiences which enables them to develop competency and skills across these areas of learning. We provide children time to develop and they are given the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year through building on their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive

The seven areas of learning in the EYFS are as follows:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

PSED 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 and a positive attitude towards learning. To give children the best opportunities through positive relationships, adults form caring relationships with all children and provide enabling environment opportunities for play and learning.

Communication and Language

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. This, in turn, ignites children's interests in reading and writing. We provide the best opportunities for developing Communication and Language through positive relationships which support children to communicate their ideas and thoughts with each other and with adults. Our environment contains signs, symbols, words, songs and notices. They also have books and pictures that consider interests, backgrounds and cultures. Children are taught how to extend their sentences and add to their vocabulary and encouraged to talk about what happens next in a story.

Physical Development

Physical Development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their coordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food. This area provides children with a range of manipulation and movement skills. It develops understanding of the importance of being physically active and healthy eating. Children are supported in their understanding of exercise, sleep and eating to promote health. They take part in a range of activities in our environment, both indoors and outdoors; from encouraging energetic physical play on our large field and playground to

learning and development of snack time promoting their social skills and the ability to make healthy choices for themselves.

Literacy

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials; books, poems, picture cards, story sacks and other written materials to ignite their interests. We have a strong phonics programme in Early Years and follow the ReadWriteInc. programme. Children learn through a set programme in which all staff have training to deliver.

Mathematics

Mathematics provides children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and looking at patterns in our environment. This area supports children's understanding in different situations by providing opportunities to explore, practice, learn and talk. They practice skills and gain confidence and competence. Children use mathematical words and ideas in their play. We provide an environment where children have the resources for counting, calculating and making their own patterns both indoors and outdoors.

Understanding the World

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. This area offers children opportunities to explore and observe the environment and extending knowledge and experiences for all children. We use a range of open ended questions to support children to ask questions "How can we…? "What would happen?..." are used. We provide children with learning and development through first-hand experiences which encourage them to observe, predict and make decisions.

Expressive Arts and Design

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. This area supports children's curiosity and play as they explore and share their own thinking and ideas. We incorporate a wide range of music from around the world for children to listen to while they paint and draw. Children are encouraged to join in with movement, dance and music activities. We have a home corner area in all our classes alongside role play. This is often linked to our Book of the Month story where children will use their own self-expression to act out the story, taking on different roles and characters.

EYFS changes from September 2026

The main changes to be aware of are:

- Safer sleeping requirements are now written directly into the EYFS, rather than relying on separate guidance.
- Screen use: settings must have regard to the new guidance on screen use in early years settings.

- Banned dog breeds: registered childcare cannot be provided on premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present.
- Safeguarding notifications: settings must notify Ofsted of allegations of “harm”, rather than only “serious harm”, involving someone living, working or looking after children on the premises.
- DBS checks for volunteers: enhanced DBS checks are required for volunteers, including supervised volunteers.
- New employees: staff must not start work before their required criminal record check has been received.
- Staff suitability: wording has been strengthened around information that staff must disclose where it could affect their suitability to work with children.
- Domestic premises: group settings providing childcare on domestic premises have additional notification requirements for people aged 16+ living or working there.
- Level 2 English: the Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards have been updated to clarify Level 2 English requirements.

Nursery

Younger children from babies to 2-year-olds focus on three prime areas of the EYFS these are as follows:

- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Although younger children focus on the three prime areas of learning they also have experiences of all seven areas of learning (EYFS).

At Warlingham Park School Early Years we provide a wide variety of activities from cooking, music, meditation through mindfulness, yoga, science activities and gardening. We promote children to be curious of the world around them from a young age. Children in the Nursery Class have focussed sessions everyday through a range of songs and games. Children joining the nursery have settling in sessions which will be discussed at registration with your key person.

Pre School

Children in the Pre School focus on all seven areas of learning. Children’s learning will be assessed through the year as they grow in confidence and ability. However, if a child’s progress in any area of the EYFS gives us cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child’s parents/carers and agree how to support the child. Children in Nursery and Pre School follow a phonics programme called ReadWriteInc. As well as a Maths programme called White Rose and this continues in Reception class and up to year 2. Most children start our reception class being able to recognise their initial sounds and writing and forming some letters.

Reception Class

The routine of the day is followed to encourage the children’s independent learning skills. It combines free flow opportunities using continuous provision and enhanced with children following and revisiting their own interests, alongside planned structured activities. Each day

children do a range of phonics work using the ReadWriteInc programme. We focus on phonics through reading and writing. The teacher will sit with the children reading stories and practicing writing sentences in their own books. Children in Reception class learn a range of maths skills ranging from counting money, recognising money from visits to the shops, and calculation. The Reception Class offers a wide range of activities throughout the week from PE, music, art, humanities, science, cooking, religious education, festivals and events, French and topic work. The reception class teacher completes each child's assessments, observations and next steps through our online journal system.

4. Assessment

The Early Learning Goals that summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the academic year in which they turn five have undergone several changes. We will be building on their existing knowledge and continue to support children to learn new skills to help them as they grow and learn a range of life skills.

We will emphasise that the Early Learning Goals are not used as a curriculum, they will be used to assess children's development during the Summer Term of the Reception year as part of the EYFS profile.

Two year old checks

The statutory progress check at age two remains in place and we will continue to provide this on our online system. The two year old check helps us identify a child's strengths and any areas where progress is less than expected.

Reception Class

Reception class will have a Baseline Assessment; this will be undertaken within the first six weeks of a child starting reception. At the end of the EYFS (the end of the academic year after a child turns five) their EYFS profile will be completed. Every child develops differently, and we will be supporting every child through our professional knowledge and experience to achieve this. We will continue to monitor children by assessing them through our judgement criteria, for example "Progressing Well, Requires Support, Requires Specialist Support". The judgement will be based on our knowledge and experience rather than tracked or monitored using tick boxes. The EYFS provides us with the freedom to develop the appropriate broad curriculum for individual children based on their age and stage of development.

At the end of the final term of a pupil's Reception year, we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's Year 1 teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end of year report. In all classes, parents receive an annual written report that offers comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs and gives details of the child's progress. We complete these in the Summer Term and send them to parents before the end of school year.

5. Transitions

We recognise that starting school and moving classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end, we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Children who already attend the Baby room, Nursery or Pre School and who are intending to continue their journey at Warlingham Park School will follow a settling in process. We feel this is the best way to support the transition from one room to another. The Nursery and both Pre School classes regularly join together for various activities so that the transitions are as smooth as possible.

Towards the end of the Summer Term, children entering their Reception year in the next academic year participate in a taster session before their official start date, and any children planning to join from outside the school are invited to this also. Staff are on hand to meet and greet parents at the end of the session to answer any questions they might have.

6. Safeguarding See also the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Early Years is Claire Giles.
All our staff have the following training:

- Safeguarding
- Prevent duty
- Health and Safety
- Paediatric First Aid
- Other relevant online training with Tes

7. Healthy Eating

All children, in Baby room, Nursery and Pre School are provided with a snack. Our focus is on healthy eating at the school and each day children will be provided with a snack from the following: rice cakes, fruit, cucumber, cheese, crackers, water or milk to drink. If your child has an allergy, we will ensure the snack we provide is suitable. Please inform your child's key worker or teacher. Children in Reception can bring a snack from home.

8. Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching, or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are not able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. We actively encourage parents to start helping their children become independent with these tasks as soon as they start in Nursery.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff and parents work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and the Head of EYFS will monitor EYFS provision as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. This policy will be reviewed in September 2027

Revised: September 2026

This policy will be reviewed every year	
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