Matthew Arnold Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Date: October 2026

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a secure foundation for learning, development and 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

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), effective from 1 September 2025.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Structure of the EYFS

At Matthew Arnold, we have a 2 year old provision Matthew Arnold Pre School (MAPS), a 52 place 3-4 year old Nursery setting and a 30 place Reception class.

We offer 15 hour funded places, and a limited number of 30 hour funded places, in both MAPS and Nursery.

Our MAPS and Nursery settings are split in to AM and PM sessions. The morning session is from 8.40-11.40 and the afternoon session is from 12.30 - 3.30.

Our Reception class day starts at 8.50 and finishes at 3.20.

Curriculum

At Matthew Arnold Primary School we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life. We provide the children we teach with a warm, welcoming and nurturing learning environment. We want our children to establish solid foundations on which they can develop into independent, lifelong learners. We offer a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum which provides children with the life skills and knowledge they need to grow into well rounded individuals. We encourage children to develop confidence and independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere and environment. We want all children to feel safe, secure and happy in our setting and support children in building positive relationships with children and staff. We encourage the children we teach to recognise their own strengths and achievements and to leave our EYFS confident, happy and secure learners.

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that we must teach. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important 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

We also support the children in 4 specific areas which help strengthen and develop the 3 prime areas, and ignite the children's curiosity and enthusiasm:

- Literacy
- Mathematics

- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

At Matthew Arnold, we follow the Birth to 5 Matters guidance. Our curriculum is available to view on our school website. It is regularly reviewed and amended in order to meet the needs of our children.

Planning

Our staff are ambitious for all children, and plan activities and experiences for the children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. As the children move through our EYFS setting and become more secure in the 3 prime areas we plan for the specific areas.

At Matthew Arnold, all areas of the curriculum are delivered through a story and theme led approach which allows flexibility to ensure that children's individual learning needs and interests are planned for. We deliver a well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum with a focus on play based learning and opportunities to develop communication and language skills. We recognise the importance of supporting children in their individual development in the Prime areas of the curriculum and acknowledge that play has an integral role in a child's development. We plan a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage, our planning ensures that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level.

Our curriculum ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

We recognise and value how each child develops differently and we plan to meet the individuals next steps.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability (SEND), staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. We follow a graduated approach.

Teaching

As a staff, we ensure that the children experience the 3 key characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

1. playing and exploring
2. active learning
3. creating and thinking critically

We prioritise quality interactions and ensuring we are supporting children in all areas of development. Our staff respond to the child's emerging needs and interests and guide their development through warm, encouraging and positive interaction.

Staff work together to plan for the individual needs of the children. Taking care to ensure the learning environment both indoor and outdoor are planned for to meet their needs. We prioritise and deeply value learning through play ensure that our children have ample opportunities to learn through.

As the children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards an increased focus on teaching essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning in readiness for Key Stage 1.

Assessment

At Matthew Arnold Primary, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their progress, development and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

In MAPS, staff review pupils' progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed. It also focuses on any areas of possible concern, which may indicate a disability, special educational need or developmental delay. The

progress check will describe the activities and strategies that the school intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns, involving parents and/or carers and other professionals as appropriate.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the reception baseline assessment (RBA).

In the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age 5, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child (before 30 June in that term). Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

We share the EYFS profile with the child's year 1 teacher. This informs discussion about the child's stage of development and learning needs, and supports with planning activities in year 1.

The school shares the results of each child's 'progress check' and EYFS profile with their parents and/or carers.

In exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child might stay in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they turn 5. In these exceptional cases, we will continue to assess the child throughout their time in EYFS provision and complete their profile at the end of the year before they move into year 1.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. We submit EYFS profile data to the local authority on request.

Working with parents and carers

At Matthew Arnold Primary we deeply value building positive relationships with parents / carers. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between our staff and each child's parents and/or carers. We have an open door policy and encourage parents/carers to come straight to us if they have any concerns about their children.

At different stages throughout the year we invite parents in to school. Throughout the year we have 'stay and play' sessions throughout our EYFS. In MAPS and Nursery we inform parents through observations on the Evidence ME app and information on the school Instagram page. We hold transition meetings for Nursery and Reception in the summer term.

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

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to make sure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We ask parents/carers to provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers for their child (where possible).

Staff training

We will:

- Train all staff in safeguarding procedures in line with Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance
- Support all staff to feel supported and confident in implementing our safeguarding policy and procedures
- Renew training every 2 years, or more often when it's needed to help maintain skills; keep up to date with any changes to our safeguarding procedures; or because of any safeguarding concerns
- Outline how training is delivered, and how staff are supported to put it in place, in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will:

- Provide ongoing support, advice and guidance to all staff
- Attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework
- Liaise as needed with local statutory children's services agencies and our local safeguarding partners

Safer recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the procedures set out in the latest EYFS framework guidance on checking the suitability of new recruits, including:

- Obtaining a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited
- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references

See our safeguarding policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures.

Whistleblowing

We make sure that all staff are aware of our whistleblowing procedures; feel able to raise concerns about any poor or unsafe practice; and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

In the event that a member of staff feels that they need to blow the whistle on misconduct, they should report their concern to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the Headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of governors.

Malicious or vexatious allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith, but investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

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 can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives at home or elsewhere.

See our child protection and safeguarding policy on the school website for more information.

Responding to allegations or concerns

If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will immediately notify our local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures. In emergencies, we will also inform the police.

If any allegation is made of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises or elsewhere, e.g. on a visit, we will inform Ofsted within 14 days of the allegation being made. We will also inform them of any action we have taken in response to the allegation(s).

Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the Headteacher / DSL referred to from here as the 'recipient' – they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative or other accompanying person
- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there **is**, then:
    - Arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the governing body if appropriate. In some cases, the recipient may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police
    - Inform the person who raised the concern about how the matter is being investigated and give an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps
    -

Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred.

The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority in line with local reporting procedure, or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the headteacher, governors and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

While we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

Staffing ratios

In Matthew Arnold we ensure that the appropriate statutory staff : child ratios are maintained to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:.

- For children aged 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 5 children
- For children aged 3 and over:

- Where a person with qualified teacher status, early years professional status, or early years teacher status is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children. At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status
- 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. At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status. At least half of all other staff hold an approved level 2 qualification

Nursery Class

- We have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
- At least 1 member of staff is a school teacher as defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002

Reception

- At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status
- We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils

Paediatric first aid (PFA)

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

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding children. They are also responsible for:

- Liaising with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSPs (local safeguarding partners)
- Providing support, advice and guidance to all other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Attending a safeguarding training course that complies with the criteria set out in annex C of the latest EYFS framework

Absence

In Matthew Arnold, we promptly follow up on absence. We recognise and value the importance of learning

If a child is absent for a prolonged time or if their parents/carers haven't told us about the absence, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts.

See our attendance policy for further information, including our expectations of parents/carers to report child absences (all policies available on the school website).

Oral health and tooth brushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by regularly discussing oral health with the children throughout the year. We have oral health themed continuous provision and quality texts in the environment. We have a visit from the family link worker from the children's centre to discuss oral health with the children. We provide each child in EYFS with a toothbrush and toothpaste.

We discuss

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- How to brush your teeth

Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate. All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating, and seated safely in an appropriate chair and where possible, in a designated eating space.

Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

We will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At each mealtime and snack time it will be clear which staff member is responsible for checking that the food meets all the requirements for each child.

We will make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods. All staff have had statutory allergy and anaphylaxis training.

We will consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate This information is kept up to date and shared with all staff
- Discuss their child's progress with solid foods
- Work with them to move on to the next stage at a pace that's right for their child

We will prepare food in a way that:

- Prevents choking
- Meets each child's individual developmental needs
- Is in line with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of the incident and make the child's parents/carers aware. We will periodically review the records to identify whether we can change anything in our practice to make eating safer, and then take action as appropriate.

Accident or injury

We keep a first aid box (which contains appropriate items for children) always accessible.

We keep a written record of accident or injuries and any first aid treatment.

We will inform parents or carers the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, of any:

- Accident or injury sustained by the child
- First aid treatment given

We will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of any child while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Safety of premises

We make sure that our premises, including overall floor space and outdoor space, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children we care for and the activities provided on the premises.

We comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.

Toileting and privacy

We make sure that there are:

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children
- Suitable and hygienic nappy changing facilities
- An adequate supply of necessary items such as spare clothes
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

All staff are familiar with the intimate care policy which is displayed in toileting areas.

During nappy changes and toileting, we will balance children's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the EYS lead and approved by the governing body annually.