

COGNITA

Early Years Handbook

Duncombe School



September 2025

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Handbook is to support all staff who work in the Early Years team. All Early Years provision is governed by statutory regulations. This Handbook helps ensure that we share the information in relation to these regulations with all team members. In addition to the Early Years regulations, the Independent School Standards Regulations apply to pupils from the age of two.
- 1.2 Where our Handbook links to the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, paragraph references are included in **red text**.
- 1.3 Whilst there are specific early years regulations, the work of the Early Year team fits within our whole school context. Where staff should refer to other whole school policies and documents, these are referred to in **green text**.
- 1.4 Our overriding aim is to provide the highest quality education and care to the children in our setting. By working together as a team and following all our policies and procedures, we help to maintain high quality provision for every child.
- 1.5 This Handbook is updated annually and is used as the basis for induction with all staff in the Early Years team.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 The **Early Years** age group refers to children aged from birth until the 31st August following their fifth birthday who go to an Early Years settings that delivers the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - Age 4 – 5 Reception
 - Age 3 – 4 Nursery
 - Age 3 and below Early Kindergarten and Kindergarten
- 2.2 **Registered Provision** refers to provision for children under two years of age. Settings must register for Early Years provision if they provide for:
 - children aged from birth to under two years and at least one child attends for more than two hours a day
 - children who are not pupils at the school, such as a separate pre-school, a nursery for children of staff members or a nursery in a children's centre run by the school (it does not have to be on the school premises to be run directly by the school).

3 People

Headteacher	Jeremy Phelan
Head of Early Years	Katie Copeman
Deputy Manager	Rachel Marshall
EY Designated Safeguarding Lead	Katie Copeman
Deputy EY Designated Safeguarding Lead	Rachel Marshall
SENCO	Matt Girvan
First aiders	Katie Copeman/ Rachel Marshall/ Heidi Murphy/ Fay Morpurgo/ Nicola Brown/ Judith Kendrick/ Jade Butler/ Amy Booth/ Maddy Cleak/ Rebecca Ketteridge/ Belinda Mckenna/ Lucy Kavanagh/ Nikki Timbrell/ Lee-Anne Brand/ Becky Lewis

4 Aims of Early Years in our School

- 4.1 Through our work with children in the foundation stage, we aim to:

- Provide each child with opportunities, skills and an environment that enables them to develop into active, confident and independent learners.
- Foster an effective partnership between home and school.
- Maintain a safe but challenging environment in which each child can be helped to develop to his/her full potential.
- Develop social, moral, cultural, and spiritual awareness in our children.
- Foster in our children a belief in their own worth and enable each child to become increasingly confident, independent and able to make their own considered choices and begin to understand British values.
- Ensure that each child, regardless of gender, race, culture, or ability is given an equal opportunity to develop to his/her full potential.
- Ensure that there is continuity between the Kindergarten, Pre-Prep, Reception and Year 1 classes, to develop effective liaison to support this transition with school and home.
- Develop a positive approach to the acquisition of new skills that will provide a firm foundation for future learning, health, and well-being.
- Ensure that information about our foundation stage departments is accessible – in written and spoken form.

5 Early Years Provision in our School

- We have the following Early Years provision in our school: Kindergarten (2.5 years), Pre-Prep, (3.5 years) and Reception, (4.5 years)

Learning and Development

6 Curriculum

- 6.1 We plan around the areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. When working with the youngest children, there is a strong focus on the prime areas. The prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. As children become more confident, the balance moves towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning.
- 6.2 Planning the Early Years curriculum is about weaving together the curricular areas with the needs and interests of children in a way that is appropriate for the stage of development. Learning should be planned to be both challenging and enjoyable for each child.

Prime Areas of Learning		
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Physical Development	Communication and Language
		

Specific Areas of Learning			
Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the world	Expressive Arts and Design

			
---	---	--	---

6.3 In addition to the areas of learning, we embed highly effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into our curriculum and school experience. British Values are embedded in an age-appropriate way. [See Curriculum Policy](#)

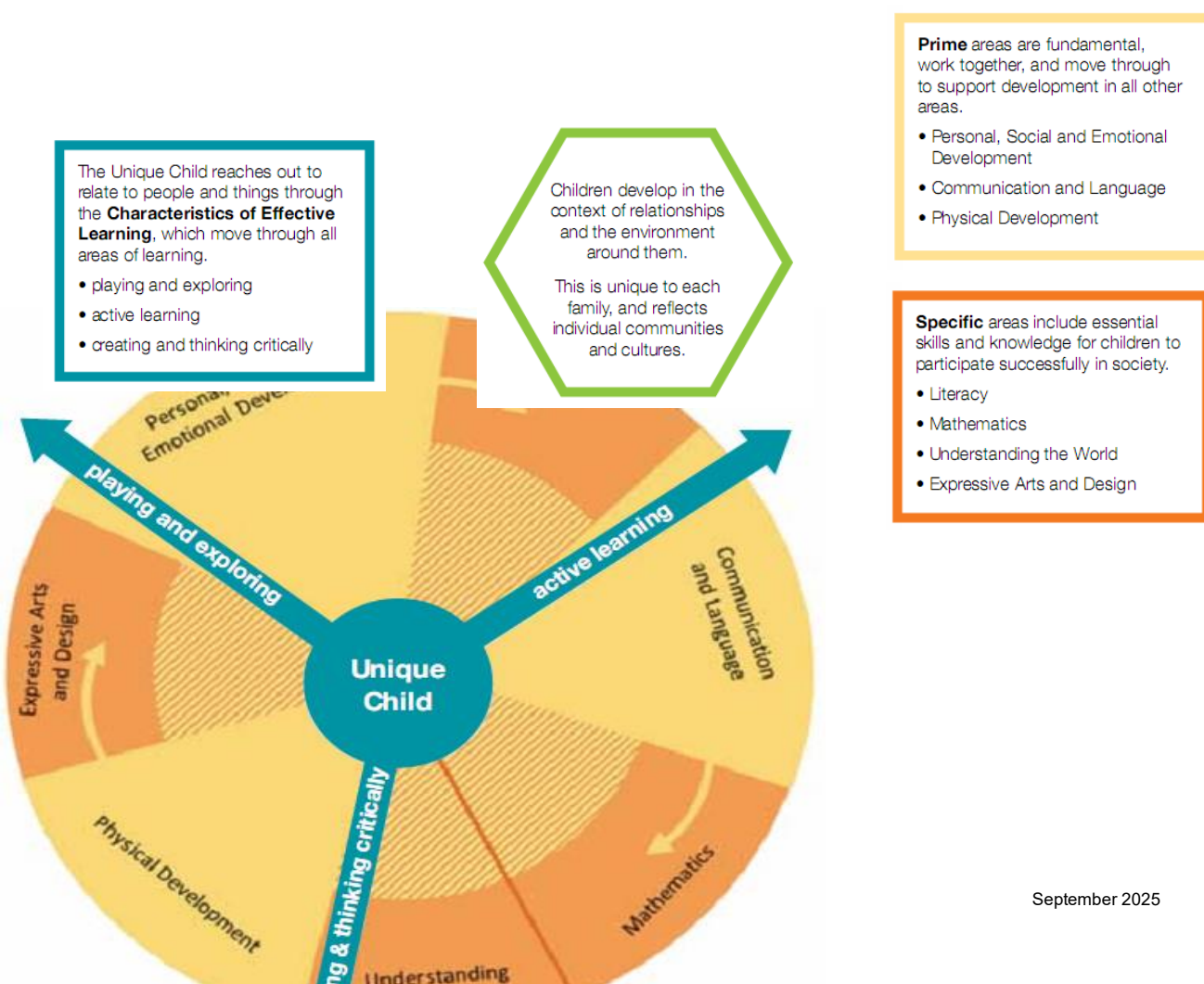
6.4 The curriculum is underpinned by three characteristics of effective learning;

Playing and exploring	Active learning	Creating and thinking critically
- Finding out and exploring - Using what they know in their play - Being willing to 'have a go'	- Being involved & concentrating - Keeping on trying - Enjoying achieving what they set out to do	- Having their own ideas - Using what they already know to learn new things - Choosing way to do things and finding new ways

7 How the Curriculum Fits Together

7.1 The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS.

7.2 The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

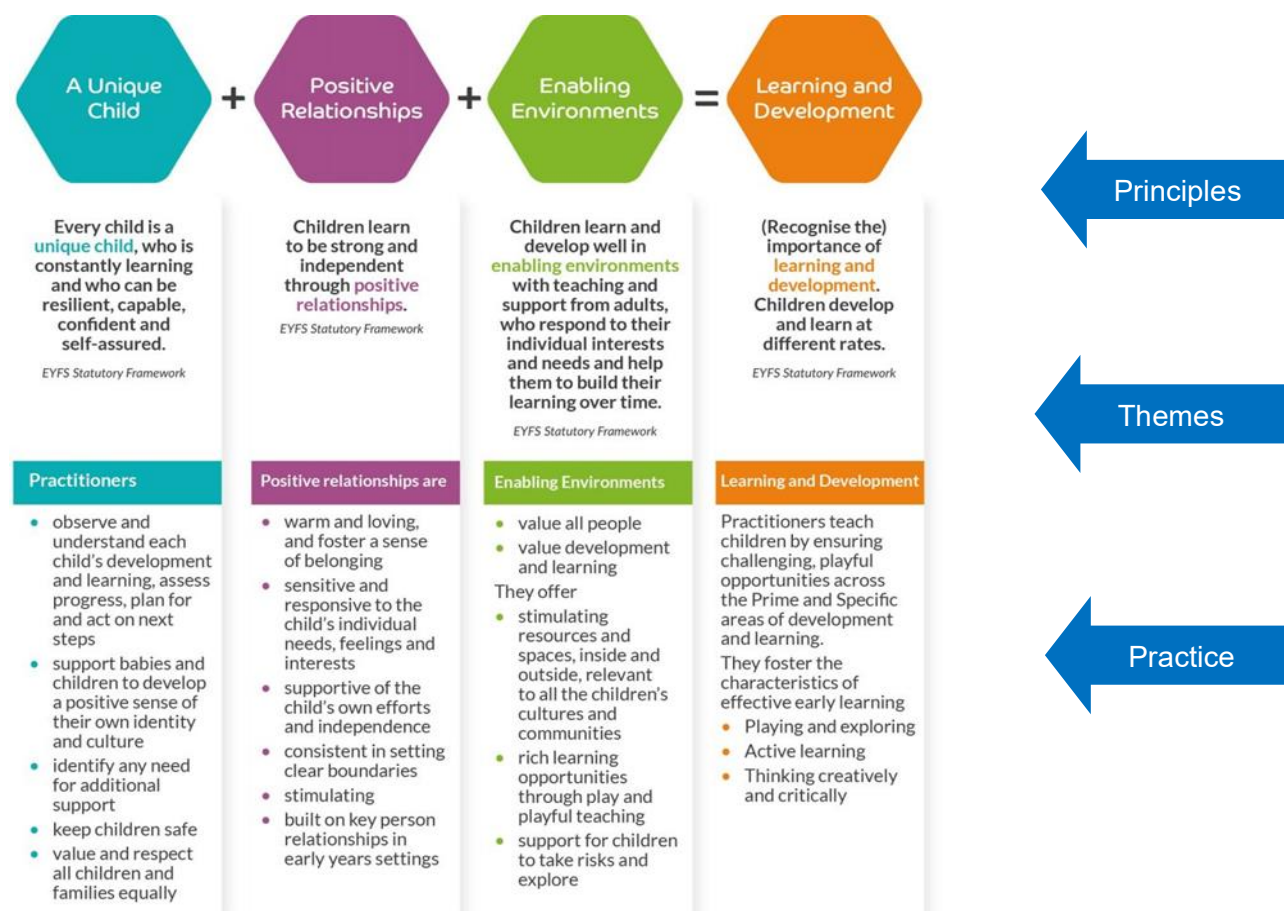


Prime Areas of Learning		
Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.	Physical development involves providing 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.	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.
Children are encouraged to: • Communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings and build up relationships with adults and each other • Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions • Answer how and why questions about their experiences and respond to stories and events • Talk, listen and be listened to • Engage through storytelling, songs, games, rhymes, poems, puppet sessions, role play and child initiated activities. • Talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next • Recall and relive past experiences • Question why things happen and give explanations	Children are encouraged to: • Improve fine manipulative and coordination skills through handling a wide range of equipment, materials and tools • Move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and coordination • Show awareness of space and others • Use a range of small and large equipment, and to improve the skills of running, jumping, balancing and climbing with increasing confidence and control • Explore the outside facilities in the setting or locality • Talk about ways to keep healthy and safe, including the importance of physical exercise and a balanced diet • Become independent with self-care, in dressing themselves and in matters of personal hygiene	Children are encouraged to: • Develop confidence and self-esteem • Express themselves verbally • Recognise and delight in their achievement and the talents of others • Learn to cope with new experiences and change • Form positive relationships with adults and peers • Develop important social skills (negotiation, cooperation, listening, self-control, consideration and respect) and attitudes of fairness and honesty • Work independently and as part of a group • Concentrate for sustained periods of time • Treat living things and property with care, respect and concern and to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others • Take turns and to share space, equipment and adult attention

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.
We encourage children to read through daily activities linked to: • Enjoy rhyming and rhythmic activities • Understand that words & pictures carry meaning • Understand that we read L-R and T-B • Recall stories both orally and through role play & predict what will happen • Enjoy books and handle them carefully • Play sound word or pattern matching games • Become confident readers We encourage children to write by: ▪ Giving them opportunities to experiment with mark making ▪ Teaching them to recognise and write their name ▪ Encouraging them to read what they have written and value it ▪ Encouraging them to write ▪ Encouraging them to link sounds & letters, naming & sounding letters of the alphabet ▪ Encouraging writing for real purposes and audiences We develop children's awareness of sounds, rhythm & rhyme in words by: ▪ Singing nursery rhymes and poems ▪ Encouraging them to think of rhyming words	Children are provided with opportunities to: • Participate in structured activities using simple apparatus and real objects to develop understanding of the counting process and increase their ability to match symbols with a group of objects and be familiar with larger numbers from their everyday life and to solve real-life problems • Become familiar with rhymes, songs, stories, counting games and activities • Compare, sort match, order, sequence, and develop one to one correspondence through everyday objects • Recognise, describe and make patterns. • Use appropriate language to describe spatial awareness • Use mathematical language to compare quantities by using suitable equipment – including sand and water • Develop the concept of scale, capacity, conservation and comparative measurement • Explore everyday materials and equipment • Share and discuss experiences using appropriate mathematical language	Children are encouraged to: • Talk about where they live, their environment, their families and past & present events in their own lives • Notice features in the setting & local environment • Look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change in things from both the natural and man-made world and people • Talk about what they observe and record their findings in writing and drawing • Ask questions about why things happen and how things work • Choose materials and equipment appropriately to develop skills such as cutting, joining, folding and building for a variety of purposes • Use technology, where appropriate, to support their learning • Meet and talk with other people about the roles they play in the community through visitors coming in to the classroom	Children are encouraged to: • Represent ideas of what they see, hear, touch and feel by drawing, painting, modelling, dancing, role-play and music making • Explore colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions • Express themselves through painting and drawings using a variety of media • Choose a widening range of materials and appropriate tools to express their ideas and to develop manipulative skills • Talk about their work • Appreciate each other's work • Explore sound in a variety of forms and to listen and respond to music, songs, poems and rhymes • Show an increasing ability to use their imagination, to listen and observe

- Clapping, stamping or beating instruments when singing or saying rhymes - Promoting use of phonic knowledge in reading and writing We aim to develop the correct formation of handwriting by: - Providing activities that encourage hand eye coordination and left, right tracking - Teaching correct pencil grip - Providing opportunities for practise - Development of gross and fine motor skills - Providing opportunities for mark making	- Use opportunities - outdoor and in - working with construction toys, to develop basic ideas such as shape, distance, position and measures - Engage in practical activities to develop awareness of number operation such as addition and subtraction - Become aware of the concept of time through appropriate experiences which utilise the pattern of the day		
---	--	--	--

7.3 Underpinning all work in the Early Years is the ‘how’ children learn. Especially with young children, this is through the way that adults interact and model interaction. Excellent Early Years educators create learning environments where children learn through exploration and discovery.



8 SEND (3.76)

- 8.1 If at any point, progress in one of the prime areas gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents and agree practical ways to support the child. Where any practitioner has a concern that a child has any learning delay or possible special educational need, they should refer this to the Early Years Leader, who will seek advice from the SENCO. The SENCO will guide practitioners should there be a need to engage with external agencies. For children that receive funding from the local authority, the school will have regard to the SEN Code of Practice. [See Special Educational Needs Policy](#)

9 EAL (1.14)

- 9.1 For children whose home language is not English, practitioners should encourage children to develop and use their home language in play and learning.
- 9.2 Key to learning excellent English is the need for all adults in the setting to model excellent use of language. This applies to content, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. This modelling is essential for all children, not only children who do not speak English as a home language.
- 9.3 For children whose home language is not English, practitioners should ensure that children catch up and close the gap so that English is developed to unlock other areas of learning. When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, practitioners must assess children's skills in English.
- 9.4 Where there are concerns about delay in the development of English language learning, practitioners must explore the child's skills in their home language with parents, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay. [See EAL Policy](#)

10 Play (1.16)

- 10.1 Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play. Practitioners must plan for a mix of child initiated and adult initiated activities. The balance of child and adult initiated activities will be constantly evaluated and debated by practitioners. As children move through the Early Years, the balance moves from more child initiated to more adult initiated in preparation for transition into Year 1.
- 10.2 Much learning in the Early Years takes place through skilful interaction of adults – knowing when to intervene and when to step back. As with all learning, adults need to demonstrate warm, positive interaction so that children feel entirely comfortable as young learners. Making mistakes is a healthy way for all children to learn. Mistakes should be used as learning opportunities.
- 10.3 Purposeful play forms a significant element of the learning experience for young children. Through the provision of appropriate equipment and materials, we ensure that the children encounter specific learning experiences. We aim to give opportunities for different forms of play through:
- Imaginative play – for example, role play and small world
 - Use of construction equipment
 - Games to develop early reading and mathematical concepts
 - Sand and water play
 - Playdough, cutting, sticking etc.
 - Use of technological equipment
- 10.4 Play can support development in four ways:

Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Social Development	Emotional Development
• Strong, healthy bodies • Fine and gross motor skills • Co-ordination • Physical confidence • Agility	• Scientific and mathematical thinking • Language skills • Literacy skills • Independent thinking • Research and enquiry skills • Cognitive development • Scientific and mathematical thinking • Language skills • Literacy skills • Research and enquiry skills	• Cooperation • Negotiation • Collaboration • Socialisation • Rule formation and turn taking • Conflict resolution	• Joy • Empathy • Resilience • Persistence • Self-regulation • Self-confidence • Impulse control

11 Outdoor Learning

11.1 Well planned outdoor learning is integral to high quality Early Years provision. Some of the benefits of outdoor learning are that it:

- supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, and promoting a sense of well-being;
- gives children contact with the natural world and offers them experiences that are unique to outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and the seasons;
- helps children to understand and respect nature, the environment and the interdependence of humans, animals, plants, and lifecycles;
- supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, as well as providing rich opportunities for their developing imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness;
- provides sensory and physical experiences which supports brain development and the creation of neural networks; and
- teaches children to assess risk and develop the skills to manage new situations

11.2 Outdoor learning is integral to high quality Early Years education. We plan for easy access to the outdoor learning space.

12 Key Person (3.41)

12.1 Each child must have a named key person. Parents should know the name of the key person for their child.

12.2 The key person will:

- Ensure that learning and care is tailored to individual needs
- Help the child become familiar with the setting
- Offer a settled relationship for the child
- Engage and support parents in guiding their child's development at home

Assessment

13 Attainment on Entry/Baseline

- 13.1 We assess the attainment on entry of all children. This helps us plan for next steps in learning and also evidence progress throughout the Early Years.

14 Progress Check at Age 2 (2.6)

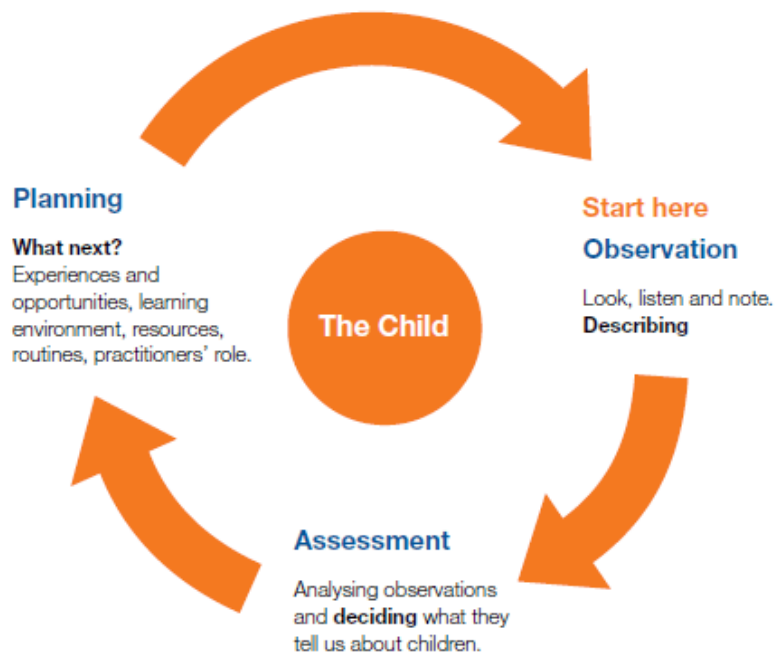
- 14.1 When a child turns 2 or is as close as possible to being 2, the key person, in conjunction with the Health Visitor, will review progress and provide a short-written report for parents with a summary of development in the prime areas. This check will identify strengths and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. The summary must highlight:
- Areas in which the child is progressing well
 - Areas in which some additional support might be needed
 - Any areas of concern, especially if there are concerns of developmental delay
 - How the setting will address any issues or concerns
- 14.2 Practitioners will discuss the progress check with parents and ensure that parents know when the summary will be provided. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the Nursery of the date of their child's 2-year-old progress check.
- 14.3 Any emerging concerns with this must be discussed with the Head of Early Years who will liaise with the SENCO for further support and guidance. [See Special Educational Needs Policy](#)

15 Assessment: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2.1/2/3/4/5)

- 15.1 In the final term of the Early Years Foundation Stage (summer term), i.e. the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 29th June in that term, the school will complete the EYFS Profile for each child.
- 15.2 The EYFS Profile assesses each child against the Early Learning Goals (ELG). For each ELG, practitioners will judge whether the child is working at: expected level, not yet reaching expected level or exceeding expected level.
- 15.3 The outcomes of the EYFS Profile are shared with parents at the end of the Reception year. Parents are always given an opportunity to discuss the profile with the class teacher. Outcomes from the EYFS Profile are shared with the local authority, when requested. The school always fully collaborates with the local authority for purposes of moderation of Early Years provision and judgements.
- 16 Transition into Year 1 (2.13-2.21)
- 16.1 Outcomes from the EYFS Profile are shared with the receiving Year 1 teacher. In addition, Reception teachers share a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. Year 1 teachers use this information to ensure that they appropriately plan for learning as children move into Year 1.

17 Ongoing Assessment

- 17.1 Assessment is integral to the process of planning for rich learning in the Early Years.
- 17.2 The cycle below outlines the key elements of this ongoing process. Everything starts with skilled practitioners observing and noticing the learning. Practitioners can use assessment criteria to help understand where children may need to go next and plan for future learning.



Safeguarding and Welfare

18 Safeguarding and Child Protection (3.1)

- 18.1 Providing a safe and secure learning environment for our children is always our number one priority. All staff take a key role in ensuring that our children are safe and that we take immediate action when there are any concerns about a child's safety or welfare. We have clear procedures for this, which every adult in the setting must follow.
- 18.2 The whole school **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** applies to children in the Early Years. Every member of staff is required to read this and sign an annual declaration to state that they have read and understand how to implement the requirements. Our policy is aligned with the requirements of our local Safeguarding Partners. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy also outlines clear steps to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The key points from our policy are outlined below:



- 18.3 Within our setting, we have designated staff who lead on all aspects of safeguarding – see page 2 for these details. These staff are trained in line with expectations set by our local Safeguarding Partners. Our school will always work in partnership with external agencies linked to safeguarding children, following government guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. We will always notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay.

19 Safeguarding and Child Protection Training (3.30)

19.1 All staff in the Early Years setting are trained in safeguarding and child protection, linked to our own policy and procedures. This training includes how to spot signs of abuse and neglect. Some of the signs that might indicate abuse and neglect are:

- significant changes in children's behaviour;
- deterioration in children's general well-being;
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- children's comments which give cause for concern;
- any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home; and/or
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

20 Mobile Phones, Cameras and Devices (3.6)

20.1 We have clear expectations for all adults in the Early Years setting regarding the use of mobile phones, cameras and devices. Personal mobile devices may not be used in the school when children are present. These expectations must be adhered to all times.

21 Code of Conduct

21.1 Every member of the Early Years team is expected to follow the expectations outlined in the **Cognita Code of Conduct**.

22 Suitability of Adults in our Early Years Team (3.13 -3.26)

22.1 Background checks and Social Media Checks: We ensure that all adults in our Early Years setting are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their specific roles. As a school, we have effective systems in place to ensure that any adults with regular access to children are suitable. Specific details about the background and vetting checks, as well as social media checks are undertaken on every adult in our setting is contained in the **Safer Recruitment Policy**. An Enhanced DBS Disclosure with barred list check is obtained for every adult who:

- works directly with children;
- lives on the premises on which the childcare is provided; and/or
- works on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless they do not work on the part of the premises where the childcare takes place, or do not work there at times when children are present).

22.2 Adults without the necessary suitability checks will never be allowed to have unsupervised contact with children. Should any employee be dismissed or would have been dismissed if they had not left the setting first, because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk or harm, they will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

22.3 All background checks on every adult are recorded on the school's Single Central Record.

22.4 Disclosure: Every member of the Early Years team is required to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting).

22.5 Where the school becomes aware of relevant information which may lead to disqualification of an employee, the school will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children. In the event of disqualification of a person employed to work in or manage Early Years, that person will not continue their employment.

22.6 The school will always notify Ofsted within 14 days of any significant event which is likely to effect the suitability of any person, including when an allegation has been made against a staff member. The school will give Ofsted the following information about themselves or an employee when relevant:

- details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006;
- the date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other grounds for disqualification arose;
- the body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed; and
- a certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction).
- Details of any allegation made against a staff member

23 Staff taking Medication and Other Substances (3.27)

23.1 Staff may never work under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If practitioners are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, those practitioners should seek medical advice and inform the Nicola Ridgway or Headteacher. The Headteacher will ensure that staff only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly. If staff need to bring medication onto the school premises, this must be stored securely and out of reach of children at all times.

24 Staff Induction

24.1 All staff receive induction training from a leader within the school. This ensures that new colleagues understand their role and responsibilities. As a minimum, induction will include:

- Discussion about role and job description
- Basic information about the school and setting
- Familiarisation with rooms, equipment, resources and timetable
- Details of daily routines
- Details about professional development
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education** – most recent version, as updated
- **Code of Conduct**
- **Safeguarding: Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy**
- **'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – advice for practitioners'** (2015)
- **Whistleblowing Policy** (in Employee Handbook and reference in Safeguarding Policy)
- Outlines of role of the DSL and EYDSL
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- **Equality Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**

24.2 At induction (and annually thereafter, as minimum) staff are trained on:

- identifying signs of abuse;
- knowing what to do to raise concerns;
- knowing how to make a referral (including if the DSL is not available); and
- recognising the need for early help.

24.3 Ongoing training is planned to help all staff be as successful as possible in their roles.

25 Supervision (3.34)

25.1 Supervision of staff is undertaken by the leaders in the setting. All staff should feel able to approach any leader if they have concerns or require advice and/or support. Supervision provides an opportunity for staff to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being;
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

26 Staff Qualifications and Ratios (3.42)

26.1 Whilst we choose to exceed the qualification and ratio requirements in many areas, this chart outlines the statutory minimum expectations. Responsibility for ratios ultimately rests with the Headteacher; responsibility for this is delegated to the Head of Early Years for day-to-day control. The Head of Early Years informs parents about staff deployment and key people in the setting. Children must usually be within sight *and* hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing.

In Reception Classes	1:30 provided QTS, EY Professional Status, EY Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification
Other EY Classes for children aged 3 or above	For children aged three and over in independent schools, where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification, an instructor, or another suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, is working directly with the children: • for classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, there must be at least one member of staff for every 30 children; • for all other classes there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children; and • at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification. For children aged three and over in independent schools, where there is no person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification, no instructor, and no suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, working directly with the children: • there must be at least one member of staff for every eight children; • at least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification; and • at least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.
'Rising threes'	See ratio for two-year olds
Two-year olds	• ratio of 1 adult: 5 children (min) • one member of staff will be qualified at level 3 • at least half of all other staff must be qualified at level 2
Under twos	• ratio of 1 adult:3 children (min) • at least one member of staff being qualified at level 3 and have suitable experience of working with under 2s • at least half of all other staff will be qualified at level 2

	- at least half of all staff will have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies - where there is an under-twos room, the member of staff in charge will have suitable experience of working with under twos
Supervisors and managers	Must be qualified at least to level 3 (and at least half of all other staff must be qualified at level 2). Manager should have at least two years' experience of working in an early years setting, or have at least two years' other suitable experience. Must be named Deputy capable and qualified to take charge in the manager's absence.

26.2 At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate will be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings. Paediatric first aid training must be relevant for workers caring for young children and, where relevant, babies. The training must cover the course content as for St John Ambulance or Red Cross paediatric first aid training and be renewed every three years.

26.3 All staff will have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care.

27 Before and After School Care and Holiday Provision (3.57)

27.1 Where provision is solely before/after school care or holiday provision for children who normally attend Reception class (or older) during the school day, there must be sufficient staff as for a class of 30 children.

27.2 The Headteacher will determine how many staff are needed to ensure the safety and welfare of children, bearing in mind the type(s) of activity and the age and needs of the children. It is also for the Head to determine what qualifications, if any, the manager and/or staff should have.

27.3 Any adults working with children under age 8 in before/after school care or who directly manage the setting are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting).

27.4 Staff have a duty to disclose to the provider to the best of their knowledge whether anyone who lives and works in their household has unspent relevant convictions, cautions, court orders etc. as above. All background checks will be recorded as detailed above.

Health

28 Medicines (3.58)

28.1 We actively promote good health for all children in our setting. We have clear policies and procedures in place to support in this area.

See [First Aid Policy](#)

See [Pupil Health & Wellbeing Policy](#)

28.2 The policies include:

- guidance on administering medication
- guidance on the storage of medication
- the need for written permission from parents
- the need for record keeping

29 Food and Drink (3.62)

- 29.1 As a school, we promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. All meals, snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before admitting a child, we obtain information about special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- 29.2 We have a designated area for preparation of food and snacks. All staff are trained in the handling of food to Level Two.

30 Accident or Injury (3.77)

- 30.1 We have clear guidance in place for the administration of first aid. [See First Aid Policy](#)
- 30.2 The first aid box is accessible at all times with appropriate content for children. We keep clear written records of all first aid administered and upload information to the Medical Tracker system.
- 30.3 Parents and carers are informed of any accident or injury sustained by a child on the same day and of any treatment given.
- 30.4 The school will notify local child protection agencies of any serious incident or accident to, or death of, any child while in their care and will act on any advice from those agencies.
[See Health and Safety Policy](#)
[See Guidance on Serious Incident Reporting to Cognita](#)

31 Hygiene

- The school and staff promote good hygiene practices throughout the school day and provide an environment which is safe and hygienic at all times to reduce the risk of infections and viruses.
[See Prevention and Control of infection and Communicable Diseases Procedure](#)

32 Managing Behaviour (3.73)

- 32.1 Staff are responsible for managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way. This will always be based on positive reinforcement and praise, with reminders where behaviour falls short of expectations. The school [Behaviour Policy](#) provides clear guidance on our whole school expectations and procedures.
- 32.2 Corporal punishment, or the threat of such punishment, is illegal. Any adult that uses or threatens to use corporal punishment will be suspended immediately and will be subject to the school's Disciplinary Policy. The use of, or threat of, corporal punishment will be deemed gross misconduct and result in dismissal.
- 32.3 An employee will not be deemed to have used corporal punishment (and therefore will not have committed an offence), where physical intervention¹ was taken for the purposes of averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behaviour if absolutely necessary.
- 32.4 A written record will always be kept when physical intervention is used, and parents and/or carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable. Any use of physical intervention must be reported to the Head of Early Years Leader.

Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

¹ Physical intervention is where practitioners use reasonable force to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damaging property.

33 Safety (3.79)

- 33.1 The Proprietor will always comply with requirements of Health and Safety legislation and do everything possible to ensure the maximum safety for children and staff. Headteachers, with the Early Years Leader, will ensure that the premises, including overall floor space and outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided on the premises.
- 33.2 All staff must follow the agreed **Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Procedure**.
- 33.3 Staff should be aware of how to use the emergency alarm in the event of a fire. Staff must be aware of all emergency exits and escape routes in case of evacuation. All exits and escape routes should be free from obstruction. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that this happens.
- 33.4 The Early Years Leader will share with all team members the requirements to ensure that the setting (indoors and outdoors) is safe for children on a daily basis. Any staff member can be required to undertake **Daily Health and Safety Checks** using the agreed checklist.
- 33.5 All staff are required to read, understand and sign appropriate **Risk Assessments**.

34 Smoking & Vaping (3.28)

- 34.1 Smoking (including vaping) is not allowed in or on the school premises at any time.

35 Premises (3.79)

- 35.1 The Proprietor will follow their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

36 Sleeping Children (3.84)

- 36.1 Sleeping children must be frequently checked and supervised.

37 Toilets and Hand Basins (3.86)

- 37.1 The Proprietor follows the regulations to ensure that appropriate facilities are in place. Adults must never use bathroom areas designed for children

38 Changing Area (3.86)

- 38.1 We have designated changing areas for changing nappies.
See Intimate Care and Toileting Policy

39 Staff Facilities (3.87)

- 39.1 Staff can use separate facilities when taking a break. If staff need to have a confidential conversation with a parent, they should use the Head of Early Years office where possible and free.

40 Safety at the End of a Session/Day

- 40.1 We have clear procedures in place to ensure that children are only released into the care of individuals who have been notified to the school by the parent. We ensure that no child ever leaves the premises unsupervised.

41 Policy on Non-Collection of Children in EYFS

- 41.1 See the section in our Safeguarding/School policy document.

42 Entry to the Premises

- 42.1 We have a clear system for visitor management. All visitors are required to sign in at the school office. No visitor will ever have unsupervised access to children unless the appropriate background checks are in place and verified. All visitors are expected to wear a visitor lanyard for purposes of identification.

43 Insurance (3.88)

- 43.1 The Proprietor ensures that the school has appropriate insurance in place, including public liability insurance. When being transported, the vehicle and the driver will be adequately insured.

44 Off-Site Learning (3.89)

- 44.1 We have clear procedures in place for learning off-site, these are outlined in our **Educational Visits Policy**. Before taking any children off site, the group leader must risk assess the opportunity, gain approval for the visit and ensure that all adults accompanying the children understand the risk assessment and requirements placed on them.

Information Sharing

45 Information and Records (3.92)

- 45.1 We work in the best interests of every child and always seek an open and productive relationship with parents. This means that we routinely share information with parents to build a trusting and respectful relationship that is driven by the desire to get the best for their child. We share assessment information with parents so that they can support their child's learning and development at home. We actively encourage parents to share information with us so that we can understand the context of their child. Where we receive requests from parents, we incorporate their comments into children's records.
- 45.2 We will always share information with external agencies and other professionals, including social care, police and inspectorates, to ensure the safe and efficient management of our school and Early Years setting. Unless it is felt that the child is in immediate danger, permission will always be sought from parents to share information.

46 Record Keeping (3.92)

- 46.1 Each child has a confidential school record and these are available only to those with a right or professional need to see them. The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to govern this. Where there are Safeguarding or Child Protection concerns, all relevant details will be kept in a separate confidential record accessed only by the Headteacher and DSL. At the point of transfer to another setting or school, safeguarding records are transferred under separate confidential cover.
- 46.2 The school will always comply with its responsibilities under data protection legislation, namely, the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (as amended, extended or re-enacted from time to time).
- 46.3 The school stores information about each child on its management information system. As a minimum, we keep the following information: full name, date of birth, name and address of every parent and/or carer known to the school, information about any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, details of which parent(s) the child normally lives with, emergency contact details for parents and/or carers.

47 Privacy and Confidentiality

- 47.1 All staff working in our setting must understand the privileged position they work in. By the nature of the role, staff come across confidential information about children and families. This information must never be shared with others outside the school setting unless in relation to reporting a safeguarding concern or reporting a crime to the police.
- 47.2 All staff are expected to respect confidentiality in the following ways:
- parents will have ready access to the files and record of their own children's development but will not have access to the information about any other child
 - Staff will not discuss individual children, other than for the purposes of curriculum planning, teaching and learning and group management, with people other than the parent of that child
 - Sensitive information given by parents to the school will not be passed onto other adults without permission (excluding in the case of reporting a safeguarding concern)

48 Information for Parents (3.97)

- 48.1 We provide information for parents in a range of ways: As a minimum, we always provide parents with the following information:
- how the EYFS is being delivered in the setting, and how parents and/or carers can access more information;
 - the range and type of activities and experiences provided for children, the daily routines of the setting, and how parents and carers can share learning at home;
 - how the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities;
 - food and drinks provided for children;
 - details of the provider's policies and procedures, including the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent and/or carer failing to collect a child at the appointed time, or in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting; and
 - staffing in the setting; the name of their child's key person and their role; and a telephone number for parents and/or carers to contact in an emergency.

49 Complaints (3.98)

- 49.1 We have a clear **Complaints Procedure** in place which is made available to all parents on the school website. The Headteacher maintains a written record of all formal complaints.
- 49.2 Where complaints relate to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, they will be investigated, and the outcome of the investigation will be shared with Ofsted within 28 days of having received the complaint.

50 Inspection (3.100)

- 50.1 Once notified of an inspection, we inform all parents of children in the setting. Following an inspection, we make the report available to all parents.

51 Maintaining Information (3.101)

- 51.1 We hold the following information:
- name, home address and telephone number of the provider and any other person living or employed on the premises;
 - name, home address and telephone number of anyone else who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children attending the Early Years provision; and
 - a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises, their hours of attendance and the names of each child's key person

Ownership and consultation	
Document sponsor (role)	Group Director of Education
Document author (name)	Director of Education with responsibility for early years
Consultation – May 2019	Consultation with the following schools: Breaside Prep School, Charterhouse Square School, Downsend Epsom Pre-Prep, Duncombe Prep School, Huddersfield Grammar School, King's School. Education Team representatives: Karen Nicholson

Audience	
Audience	Early Years Leaders and Early Years teams All school leaders

Document application and publication	
England	Yes
Wales	No
Spain	No

Version control	
Implementation date	September 2025
Review date	Review and update for implementation in September 2026

Related documentation	
Related documentation	Early Years Regulations ISSR All policies referred to in the body of the Handbook