



## EARLY YEARS POLICY

A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

*Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, September 2025*

Emmaus Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children who join the Nursery after their third birthday or Reception at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five. The EYFS continues until the end of the Reception year.

At Emmaus, we recognise the Early Years Foundation Stage as a crucial phase in a child's life. It lays a secure foundation and preparation for future learning and achievement. We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life to enable them to achieve the very best outcomes. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

Our Emmaus EYFS vision is built upon our school core values of **Love, Hope, Trust and Friendship**. Our philosophy supports and adheres to the United Nations Rights of the Child (1990) In particular: *Article 28*: All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. *Article 29*: Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

### Aims of Emmaus Early Years Foundation Stage

- To give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to foster a love of learning.
- Provide a high quality and consistent curriculum which ensures that all children make good progress.
- Provide a safe, stimulating and caring environment that is sensitive to the needs of all children.
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum with experiences created to respond to assessed individual needs.
- Support children in building relationships through personal and social development.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Provide opportunities for children to experience challenge and manage risk.
- Positively nurture the partnership between home and school, acknowledging the personal contexts of children's families, cultures and communities.

### Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child** – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- **Positive relationships** – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.

- **Enabling environments** – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- **Learning and developing** – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

In planning and guiding provision for our youngest children, practitioners use these principles to support practice.

**Characteristics of effective teaching and learning** are based around:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### **A Unique Child**

At Emmaus, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We acknowledge that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning. We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Emmaus are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

“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.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025

At Emmaus we ensure that we meet the statutory requirements for safeguarding and welfare, as set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025. The school’s Safeguarding policy provides detailed guidance and information about safeguarding procedures and responsibilities. As a whole school staff, we take part in annual Safeguarding training and ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of safeguarding and welfare policies and procedures.

It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. Children should be allowed

to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill.

At Emmaus we:

- promote the welfare of children
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Managing Behaviour**

*Also see Emmaus Behaviour Policy*

Positive behaviour strategies are employed throughout the EYFS to support children's personal development. Where specific issues become apparent, staff will discuss the concern with parents/carers and develop strategies to promote positive behaviour choices. All incidents of negative behavior are recorded on the school safeguarding system.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Emmaus Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents/Carers as Partners**

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make now and in the future. We acknowledge that children benefit most from early years education and care when parents, settings and services work together in partnership. We aim to achieve this through:

- Conducting 1:1 meetings with families prior to admission to Nursery/Reception.
- Ensuring that arrangements for settling in are flexible enough to give time for children to become secure and for practitioners, parents and carers to discuss each child's experiences, interests, skills and needs.
- Encouraging parents/carers to share information regarding the family background and culture. The knowledge and expertise of parents/carers and other family members are used to support the learning opportunities provided by the setting.
- Providing children with the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition 'stay and play' sessions.
- Supporting children's transition to school from their various pre-school settings, with the children attending for morning session and lunch during the first week. This is also to

support parents in getting to know new routines.

- Inviting all parents to a formal induction presentation/meeting during the term before their child starts Nursery and then again before their child starts in the Reception classes.
- Inviting parents to a meeting in the first half term of Reception to detail how we work with their child particularly in relation to reading and phonics
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents three times per year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Nursery and Reception year.
- Providing a variety of formal and informal opportunities for parents and carers to meet practitioners on a regular basis to ensure that they are fully informed about their child's progress e.g. Parent's Evenings, Special Books, and informal meetings.
- Encourage all parents/carers to contribute to and participate in activities in the school.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies and school visits.
- Providing parents an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by contributing to their learning journeys and 'wonder wall' which inform interest led planning and provision.
- Giving parents the opportunity to share their child's learning and to continue it at home by sending home 'learning logs'.
- Regularly updating the school's social media and website to include all relevant documents including curriculum maps, activities to promote learning at home and exciting websites to visit.
- The acknowledgement that parents/carers can always contact staff via telephone or email and speak to them at the beginning and at the end of the school day.

### **Enabling Environments**

We create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to well-resourced, organised and engaging indoor and outdoor environments, set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Emmaus Early Years environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative, messy, mindful etc. Nursery and Reception classes both have accessible outdoor learning environments and their own Forest School Area. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities, space and freedom for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can be more connected with the natural world, allowing them to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

### **Learning and Development**

At Emmaus, our EYFS curriculum is intrinsically linked to our whole school curriculum drivers: **Gospel Values; Cultural Capital; Diversity; Independence; High expectations.**

Planning and provision is informed by the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for good future progress. Practitioners consider the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that they complete the EYFS, ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply as preparation for the next stage in education.

The curriculum is planned to ensure children develop physically, linguistically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. It builds on what children already know and can do and inspires a confident disposition to learning through relevant, meaningful, imaginative, challenging and enjoyable experiences.

There are seven areas of learning and development within the EYFS. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activity.

These three areas are known as the **prime areas**:

**Communication and Language** (Listening, Attention and Understanding; Speaking)

**Physical Development** (Gross Motor Skills; Fine Motor Skills)

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development** (Self-Regulation; Managing Self; Building Relationships)

These areas are a focus in both Nursery and Reception but have a particular emphasis for the youngest children as they form the basis for successful learning in the specific areas and are reported on by the end of Nursery and then Reception. The balance shifts towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the prime areas.

The four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied, are:

**Literacy** (Comprehension; Word Reading; Writing)

**Mathematics** (Number; Numerical Patterns)

**Understanding the World** (Past and Present; People, Culture and Communities; The Natural World)

**Expressive Arts and Design** (Being Imaginative and Expressive; Creating with Materials).

All areas of learning are reported on at the end of Reception using the EYFS Profile.

## **Play**

Play is essential for children's development. We recognise that effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and may follow children's interests. Play-based learning is paramount and children are encouraged and empowered to direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- Enjoy learning
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills

- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- Be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
- Take risks and make mistakes
- Think creatively and imaginatively
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problem
- Express fears or relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

The role of the practitioner is crucial in:

- Supporting children's learning through planned play activity
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Developing children's language and communication in their play.
- Observing children and adapting provision
- Providing warm, positive interaction.

There is an expectation at Emmaus that children will have access to outdoor play every day – all year round. It is therefore an expectation that children attend school in clothing appropriate for the weather conditions. Children have access to suitable waterproof outdoor suits and wellington boots during wet weather to ensure they are able to explore the outdoor environment whatever the weather.

### **Assessment**

Our assessment system is the cornerstone for ensuring the provision in the EYFS is of high quality and appropriate for all children (*see EYFS Assessment Policy*).

Practitioners observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles and then shape learning experiences in light of the observations.

Entry assessments are undertaken when children enter the Nursery. Baseline assessment is carried out in Reception to determine each child's developmental starting point.

To ensure that we have evidence of a child's progress and can effectively plan next steps, Emmaus staff use a range of strategies and tools including anecdotal notes, photographs and observations to build a complete picture of achievement.

Attainment and progress is measured against the criteria in Development Matters is shared with parents/carers at least termly.

### **Assessment at the end of EYFS**

The EYFS profile (EYFSP) is completed for each child by the end of June in the Reception year. This provides information about each child's knowledge, understanding, abilities against expected levels and readiness for Year 1. EYFS Profiles are completed for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities with reasonable adjustments made as necessary.

Reception practitioners assess whether a child is working at the expected standard or not. These are shared with parents/carers who are provided with an opportunity to discuss the outcomes. Profiles and additional commentary on suggested interventions are shared with Year 1 teachers to inform planning and preparation for entry to KS1.

Outcomes from the EYFS profile are collated and reported to the local authority.

## **Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEND)**

*Also see Emmaus SEND and Inclusion Policy*

All children and their families are valued and respected at Emmaus Primary School. Parents/carers are key partners in planning provision and supporting their child.

Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity.

Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools SENCO is consulted for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEND.

If a child enters the setting with an already identified/diagnosed SEND need, arrangements will be made as soon as possible, often before admission, to ensure continuity of support and a smooth transition.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

## **Equal Opportunities**

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

## **Child Protection**

All EYFS practitioners are alert to signs of possible abuse and neglect. Practitioners are trained to understand the school's Safeguarding policy and receive annual training to ensure they are informed

of procedure and practice. All practitioners are required to read and understand at least Part 1 of the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document.

All practitioners and volunteers who work in the EYFS have been subject to the relevant checks before working in the setting.

Staff sign the schools' Acceptable Use Agreement which includes: I will not use personal digital cameras or camera phones for taking and transferring images of pupils or staff without permission and will not store images at home without permission.

Emmaus EYFS practitioners use school registered digital devices to record evidence of children's learning. Many of these are used in children's special books and profiles, class displays and on the school's social media/website.

All parents/carers are asked for permission to take and use pupil images on admission to school.

Children will only be released from school into the care of adults for whom parental consent is given. Both Nursery and Reception operate a password procedure.

Parents/carers are asked to inform the school office of these adults and update as necessary.

### **Health**

The EYFS team promotes the good health of children by encouraging healthy practices in everyday life. Our policy on '*Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions*' should be read alongside this policy as it provides a detailed description of procedures which are followed in event of required medical support for individual pupils.

Emmaus is a 'nut-free' and allergy-aware school. Healthy eating is promoted as part of the curriculum. Drinking water is available to the children at all times and fruit is available daily in Nursery and Reception classes. Parents/carers are asked to inform school about children's dietary needs and any food intolerances or allergies. Children are involved in selecting and preparing healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks and drinks. In Reception, children bring in a snack of fruit or vegetables from home. In Nursery, snacks are prepared in suitable and hygienic facilities and selected with regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025).

Parents/carers in the first instance are recommended school dinners as a healthy lunch option for their child. If selecting a packed lunch, parent/carers are informed about what constitutes a healthy packed lunch i.e. wholegrain sandwiches fruit, cheese and vegetables; sweets, sugary drinks, chocolates and crisps are strongly discouraged.

### **Protecting Children from the Sun**

Parents/carers are strongly encouraged to provide children with sun hats and sun screen (applied before school) and protective clothing during the summer months. Areas of shade are provided and children are encouraged to play in them to prevent sun burn or sun stroke.

### **Accident or Injury**

First Aid equipment is accessible at all times. Six members of the EYFSs team have a Paediatric First

Aid certificate and are able to accompany outings and trips offsite. A record is kept of accidents and injuries/inhalers and the first aid treatment applied. Parents/carers are notified about accidents or injuries on the same day as of any first aid treatment given.

### **Intimate Care**

Please also see: *Emmaus Intimate Care Policy*

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that home and school work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child.

It is expected that the vast majority of children are able to independently use a toilet by the time they enter the Nursery. The school is always willing to support children and families who are yet to reach this stage of development.

Parents/carers should inform the school of children likely to require intimate care and agree a protocol with the school about how this care will be managed. The same procedure will be followed if staff identify a need of this nature.

### **Transition**

We acknowledge that supportive transition is critical in ensuring that children are happy, secure and settled. At Emmaus, we ensure that there is a smooth transition for children from home to Nursery, Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year One.

Smooth transitions are supported by:

- Effective communication between teachers on each side of the transition
- Transition meetings between relevant staff take place in the Summer Term to share information about each child's learning and development.
- Comprehensive Induction and welcome packs sent to all parents to inform them about Emmaus EYFS and provide the key information they need to know to support their child.
- Open days and information meetings to invite parents into Emmaus to meet the Nursery or Reception staff and address any questions or worries they may have.
- Consultations with parents/carers about the best way to settle their child into a new environment.

### **Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment**

Emmaus EYFS provides a range of furniture, equipment and materials that will meet the varying needs of children. EYFS staff continuously review and develop the resources available, with consideration of the principles of the EYFS.

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure staff and children are not exposed to risks and those which may present are effectively managed. Risk assessments ensure that:

- The EYFS premises are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of the children attending the setting.
- Emergency procedures are in place, in line with the schools' Health and Safety policy.

- The building and grounds are kept secure at all times.
- Smoking is not permitted on the schools' premises.
- Health and Safety checks are carried out daily, indoors and outdoors, to ensure the premises are maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration.
- Toys and equipment comply with safety standards and are routinely cleaned and checked for damage before and after use.
- Fixed apparatus, large equipment and wheeled toys are checked and maintained regularly.
- Practitioners regularly review, through risk assessments, the resources available to assess their value and develop the quality of activities and materials available.
- The variety of equipment, books and resources promotes positive images of all children and families using the school and the local community.
- Children have sufficient choice and quantity of equipment to allow them to develop their own ideas.
- Suitable storage facilities are provided so equipment can be accessed by children and tidied away after use.

### **Educational visits**

Educational visits and off-site outings are a valuable resource to support learning and enrich the curriculum. At Emmaus, we adhere to the on-site ratios as directed in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025) though these are not explicitly extended to off-site visits.

All EYFS visits are planned and risk assessments are completed prior to each visit. Parental support is requested on all Nursery visits to allow a 1:1 ratio and in Reception, a 1:5 ratio is maintained.

### **Information and Records**

EYFS staff keep records on children to:

- Ensure identification, contact details, parental responsibility information is accurate.
- Find out about children as individuals leading to a deeper understanding of different learning styles, interests and developmental levels.
- Share children's learning with their parents/carers and enable parents/carers to contribute to the assessment process.
- Allow children to be involved in their own assessments.
- Monitor progress.
- Inform curriculum planning.
- Enable staff to evaluate and adapt provision.
- Provide a focus for communication with other agencies.
- Records are stored securely so that children's personal data is protected. Staff are highly sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

### **Policies and documents which work alongside the Emmaus Early Years Policy:**

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025)

Development Matters Guidance (2023)

Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance (2025)

Emmaus Documents:

EYFS Assessment Document

EYFS Teaching & Learning Document  
EYFS LT Planning  
EYFS Curriculum Maps  
EYFS Vision Document  
Intimate Care Policy  
Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy Safeguarding in Schools  
Policy  
Accessibility Plan  
Equality Policy and Action Plan SEND and  
Inclusion Policy  
Behaviour Policy  
Marking Policy  
Online Safety policy  
Acceptable Use Agreement Health and  
Safety Policy Educational Visits Policy  
Complaints Procedure

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