

E8. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Our mission is to develop happy, confident and successful children who are well prepared for their future.

ISSR no.	n/a
Policy Owner	Head of Pre-Prep
Reviewed by Head of Pre-Prep	20.11.25
Reviewed by Headteacher	23.11.25
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AIMS

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Pupils Policy;

Staff Code of Conduct;

Whistleblowing Policy;

Pupil Supervision Policy;

Educational Visits Policy;

First Aid Policy;

Catering and Food Hygiene Policy;

Visitor Policy;

Taking, Using and Storing Images of Children Policy;

Health and Safety Policy;

Westbrook + Policy

THE CURRICULUM

At Westbrook Hay, being an Independent School, we have opted out of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (January 2024) for the purposes of Learning and Development, but broadly follow the framework. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and

enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2017: 1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking.
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Self-care.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness.

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy – Reading and Writing;
- Mathematics – Number and Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the World – People and communities, The world and Technology;
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan the environment and activities with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- 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.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day. Although, in the Nursery, much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new

learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In Reception, as the children are ready, they will experience many more adult directed tasks, as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

PLAY

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using Topics and children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences, at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play and adult-led activities, is very important to us.

TEACHING

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class or in small groups, in accordance with their age and stage of development. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc...

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class stories during the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child has the opportunity during the week to visit and borrow books from the School Library. EYFS has a dedicated

library area in the Pre-Prep building. In Nursery, children have opportunities to share books one to one, or in a group, with an adult or peers. As children are ready, they will start to read a school reading book individually, with a member of staff, or in a group reading session.

ASSEMBLIES IN PRE-PREP ARE HELD ON:

Monday - Values Assembly- We talk about Personal, social, emotional and health aspects and the School Values.

Friday - Celebration Assembly - We celebrate achievements from both inside and outside school and present our School Value certificates for; Courage, Integrity, Independence, Reflective Learning, Responsibility, Togetherness.

Children in Nursery attend assemblies as they are ready and are supported by Nursery staff.

PLANNING

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find that topics are a great way to fire the imagination. The topics are outlined in the Reception Programme of Study and Nursery Information booklet but are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events e.g. the Olympics. Topics are usually based on the following areas of learning, 'Understanding the World', 'Literacy' and 'Communication and Language'; and range from a topic on Dinosaurs to 'In the Woods' or Traditional Tales. Each half term staff plan the next topic, and you will be informed if the themes are likely to change.

In Nursery, a weekly newsletter is sent out, outlining what will be taught the following week. In Reception, Year One and Year Two a half termly newsletter is issued.

VISITS AND VISITORS

In the Early Years, each class will go on at least one trip or special guest visit. These trips support and enrich the topic being taught and have included visits to a zoo, aquarium or farm. We have a ratio of 1 adult to three children on trips, but in Nursery for the safety of the children, we aim to have a greater ratio of adults to pupils. In Reception, the ratio for trips and external activities is one adult to four children. As children in Reception turn five, the ratio is one adult to five children. The ratio is dependent on the number of children who are already five and the ratio is reviewed and confirmed for each trip. School staff make up the large

proportion of adults attending, but on occasions, we seek parental support. For safety reasons we cannot take younger siblings on school trips. If you support on a trip, it will be necessary for a volunteer's induction to take place, prior to attending the trip. Please refer to the Educational Visits Policy for further information.

Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a dentist for example. We often ask parents if they are able to share knowledge, skills and their culture with us. Please see the Visitor Policy for more information.

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day.

The outdoor classroom is where many children choose to learn during the day. The classroom has been designed to provide play opportunities across the curriculum and encourage collaborative learning, problem solving and creativity.

Each child has their own labelled peg in the cloakroom. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes in one place. A place is allocated in each classroom in which to put book bags.

The nursery classroom is purpose built and includes a nappy changing room and a sleeping area.

We are fortunate to have extended grounds including meadowland and woodlands, in which the children can play and learn in a natural and exciting context. The grounds are an extension to our learning environment and are regularly used, to meet all areas of the children's learning. Each class has a weekly dedicated woodland session and Nursery go on a weekly welly walk. We go outside in all weathers.

ASSESSMENT, OBSERVATIONS, LEARNING JOURNEYS AND REPORTING

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of

achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual learning journey. They include a collection of children's work, photos and observations which create a rounded picture of the child.

The Learning Journeys are in a digital format and are available upon request. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey through the identifying school Values and parental observations. Values certificates can be completed where significant events happen at home, which will be shared at Celebration Assembly. Certificates are available on My School Portal. Parents may also email the class teacher or write a note in the School Planner to share proud moments and achievements.

To capture the social aspect of learning and development, and to provide records of class events, your child's photograph may appear in the Learning Journey of another child. If you would prefer that they did not, please make the class teacher aware.

On entry to Nursery and Reception we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher completes an end of term assessment. At the end of Reception, the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is communicated to parents and carers together with an end of year report. If your child is struggling in any area, the class teacher will talk to you during the year about how we are supporting your child's development.

RATIOS, ROLE OF STAFF AND KEY WORKER

We adhere to the statutory requirements in relation to ratios of staff to children. We ensure that staff are suitably qualified and we have a minimum of one paediatric trained first aider, in each class.

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the Reception class. In the Nursery, the key worker may be a Class Teacher or Assistant and you will be advised of the name of your child's key worker through the School Planner. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults

within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. In addition to Nursery and Reception visits we offer an information session before your child starts school and invite you to a 'Meet the Teacher' session at the beginning of the school year. We also offer parent workshops, stay and play sessions and Share With Us mornings throughout the year.

When a child gains a place at Westbrook Hay they are invited to attend a session at the school alongside children who will be in their class. The length of the session will depend upon the age of the child and for Nursery children aged three years and under, we request that their parent stays for the session. We give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer, or as they join which is used to help build up a positive relationship in the first few weeks of school. In the Autumn term, parents are invited to a parents' consultation so that settling in can be reviewed and progress discussed. If a child joins mid-year, a meeting with the parents will be arranged a couple of weeks after joining. A further consultation takes place during the Summer term and a written report is provided at the end of each term.

Teachers may be contacted via email and, on request, a meeting may be arranged. If a matter is urgent in nature, please leave a message with the school office. Teachers are available most evenings to talk and discuss more urgent matters.

An information book outlining the day to day running of the class is provided on joining and when updated.

We encourage you to share your observations about your child's development, and also their friendships, endeavours and achievements. This may be done through email, the school planner, a chat with the teacher.

SAFEGUARDING

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 the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the EYFS Statutory Guidance (2025). Please also refer to the group's Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Pupils Policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding in the Early Years is Mrs Samantha Taylor.

Members of staff should always refer to the Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy and the Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Pupils Policy.

Our recruitment process ensures that all staff recruited in the early years have been subject to the relevant checks, including a prohibition from teaching check (for teachers) and an enhanced criminal record check.

Staff Induction

All new members of staff undertake an induction that includes:

- Help in understanding roles and responsibilities, including supervision duties
- Information about emergency evacuation procedures
- Procedures, responsibilities and expectations for safeguarding and child protection
- Information on the school and group policies
- Health and Safety information

Disqualification

A provider or a practitioner may be disqualified from registration. In this event the provider would not continue as an early year's provider. Where a person is disqualified, the provider would not employ that person in connection with the early years provision.

Staff Medication

Staff must seek medical advice about medication they are taking which may affect their ability to care for children. Staff medication is always stored safely and out of reach of children.

Staff Supervision

All Early Years staff are given a thorough induction that allows them to fully understand their roles and responsibilities, this induction also includes Safeguarding and Child Protection, evacuation procedures and health and safety. Staff are provided with opportunities to attend training and relevant professional development. The supervision structure seeks to support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development to ensure that they can continually improve the quality of learning and development experiences they offer for children. Supervision is a way for staff to discuss issues and identify solutions as well as receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness, all staff records are kept confidential.

Pupil Supervision

Pupils in EYFS are supervised throughout the school day. Staffing arrangements are put in place to meet the needs of all pupils and to ensure safety. The ratio of pupils to staff and qualifications of staff in EYFS are in line with the Statutory Guidance in the Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils in EYFS will only be released at the end of the day into the care of a parent or other individual whose name has been notified to us in advance, in writing. Pupils in the EYFS will always be in sight and hearing or, sight or hearing.

Safety and suitability of premises

The Pre-Prep building was custom designed for the provision and comfort of children in the early years and meets the statutory requirements outlined in the EYFS guidance.

Regular evacuation drills are undertaken in line with our whole school policy, to ensure that the procedure is second nature and that the children are not distressed by the procedure or alarm

For the safety of the children there are key code entry into the Nursery and Reception classrooms, and all visitors are required to sign in at the School Office and wear a visitor's lanyard, whilst on the premises. All Members of Staff at Westbrook Hay wear Lanyards, detailing their role in the school.

We take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in our care are not exposed to hazards or risks and take immediate action to eliminate or minimise risk.

Smoking or vaping is not allowed in or on school premises.

MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS IN EYFS

Members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs and videos with their personal devices. This is in line with the group's Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Pupils Policy.. Members of staff use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's Learning Journeys, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs. Please see the Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children Policy.

FOOD AND DRINK

All food is prepared in our kitchen on site. The snacks and meals which we provide are healthy, balanced and nutritious and children bring in their own water bottles. Water is freely available throughout the day for those who require a top up, or have forgotten their water bottle. Our staff model good eating habits by eating alongside the children. All children eat a school lunch and are encouraged to try new foods. The menu can be viewed on the school website. Children who attend Westbrook+ are provided with a light tea. Up to date records are kept regarding individual dietary needs, a list is distributed to class teachers and the kitchen staff.

Meals are taken in the Rosebud dining room and served by the catering team or Pre-Prep staff. All members of the Early Years team are trained in food hygiene and there are hygienic preparation areas in each classroom and the Rosebud dining room. Breakfast is prepared by the school catering team and is served in the Rosebud dining room for Reception aged children and in Nursery for Nursery aged children.

Staff Positioning During Meals

All staff members are required to sit facing pupils whilst eating, ensuring continuous visual supervision and the ability to respond immediately to any situation that may arise, particularly choking incidents.

First Aid Requirements

When Early Years children are eating, a member of staff holding a current Full Paediatric First Aid qualification is present. This essential safety requirement applies to all meal and snack times without exception, ensuring that should any emergency arise, particularly choking incidents which can occur silently and require immediate intervention, appropriately trained staff are immediately available to respond.

In line with our school Catering and Food Hygiene Policy, no food or drink may be brought into school. This includes cakes, sweets and food treats for birthdays and special celebrations.

Health and Medicines

We take all accidents seriously, members of staff are trained in paediatric first aid and are available at all times during the day, to administer first aid. We log all incidents and email home, after dealing with an accident. We also phone home immediately if a child has bumped their head. We have cold compresses stored in the Pre-Prep fridge, situated in the Pre-prep staffroom and Pre-prep Office. There are first aid kits in each classroom, in Westbrook+ and the woodland area. A first aid kit is carried if children are walking in the grounds, or on a school trip. Emergency personal medication for individual children is carried by a member of staff wherever they go. Training is given to staff for administration of medicines. Prescription medicines must not be administered unless prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Please see the First Aid Policy.

INTIMATE CARE

On some occasions it may be necessary for EYFS staff to give intimate care to pupils. These are defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene.

- EYFS staff will inform another member of staff when they are giving intimate care. Sometimes this may result in having a colleague in an adjacent room with the door ajar
- Pupils will be treated with respect; each stage of the procedure will be carefully explained and will only proceed with the pupils' consent. Should the pupil become uncomfortable, distressed, or withdraw consent the procedure should be halted until they are comfortable and willing to continue
- Communication about the wetting or soiling incident will be handled sensitively and discreetly between members of staff and to the parents of the child

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to provide a spare change of clothes for their child. Please see the Intimate care policy for further information.

BEHAVIOUR

The Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy applies to the EYFS. Please see the policy for more details.

WESTBROOK+

We make provision for breakfast and after school care and activities which can be booked through Westbrook+ on the School Portal. The after-school care is provided by members of the Pre-Prep team and in the morning, Nursery go straight into their classroom to allow the children to begin their day. Please see Westbrook + Policy.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints procedures are explained in the Handling of Concerns and Complaints received from Parents Policy which is available for parents to view on the school website by following the link to the Mill Hill Education Group website.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

The EYFS Policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Prep-Prep and the Headteacher. Its implementation is monitored through discussion at leadership via the Pastoral and Academic Teams.