Policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure: -

- That children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.
- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them 'school readiness' and a secure foundation for learning, development and good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

This policy is guided by the following principles: -

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of learning and development, with a consideration that children develop and learn at different rates.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS framework), effective from 1 September 2026, and the latest version of the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

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

3. Structure of the EYFS

At Reffley Academy, the EYFS consists of a separate nursery, a Reception Class and a mixed Reception/Y1 class. The nursery class has 50 places and offers both the universal 15 hours entitlement as well as 30 hours extended offer to those families that are eligible. Parents can purchase top up hours if they are not eligible for fully funded hours. Children are admitted in the term after their third birthday.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

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

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Underpinning and running through all of the 7 areas of learning are the Characteristics of Effective Learning, the development of which are fundamental to the way in which children learn. They are:

- Playing and exploring (engagement, exploration, being willing to 'have a go')
- Active learning (being motivated, persisting, being involved and concentrating)
- Creating and thinking critically (making links, having own ideas)

4.1 Planning

Our staff are ambitious for all children, and plan activities and experiences for the children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests and development of each child in their care, and consider whether the child needs any additional support. They use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. If a member of staff is worried about a child's progress in any prime area, they will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child.

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

In planning and guiding the children's activities, staff reflect on the different rates at which children are developing, and take these into account.

4.2 Teaching

Staff recognise that play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems.

Staff make sure that the children experience the 3 key characteristics of effective teaching and learning: playing and exploring; active learning; and creating and thinking critically.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities using both the indoor and outdoor environments. There is a greater emphasis upon adult-directed learning by the end of the reception year.

There is planned provision for daily maths, phonics, reading and writing from the outset in nursery, taking a range of forms such as group circle times, 1:1 activities and continuous and enhanced provision.

FFT Success for All Phonics is introduced in nursery, using the First Steps to Phonics programme to cover Phase 1 environmental sounds and prepare children for phonics in reception. Success for All Phonics is used from the beginning of the year in reception, recapping Phase 1 and introducing Phase 2 & 3 sounds to nurture a love of reading and writing. Reading books are carefully selected to link closely with Success for All in reception.

Maths is taught daily in nursery through adult-directed activities as part of the circle time routines, as well as songs and rhymes, the use of interactive games and mathematical resources in continuous and enhanced provision. White Rose Maths is used in reception, along with interactive games and mathematical resources in continuous and enhanced provision.

Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development and scaffolding their learning through caring, positive interactions to support, question and challenge.
As the children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more focus on teaching essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning, to help the children prepare for Key Stage 1.

5. Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their progress, development and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers and keep them up to date with the child's progress and development. Staff will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

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When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, staff will draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. Staff are not required to prove this through collection of any physical evidence. Arc Pathway is used to assess and plan next steps for all children from Nursery and Reception classes.

Starting reception

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

The RBA is a short, practical activity that each child will complete with their teacher during their first 6 weeks in reception. It looks at early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. It provides a starting point from which the school can measure how much progress pupils make across primary school. Results are compared with pupils' Key Stage 2 outcomes at the end of year 6 to give an overall progress measure for the school as a whole – not for individual children.

The RBA is not used to make judgements about early years provision, either current or retrospective, and the RBA and its data is not used for any other purpose apart from creating primary progress measures. The requirements for the RBA are set out in Annex B of EYFS statutory framework.

Staff use the Arc Pathway across the year to record children's learning and development and their levels of well-being and involvement. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. The Arc Pathway is used to record observations of children, which are then shared with parents at the end of the year. These observations are used to shape future planning. Learning is shared with parents via class dojo. Parents/carers are encouraged to upload their own photos and observations in order to share their child's learning at home with staff.

The end of EYFS

In the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age 5, and no later than 30 June in that term, staff will complete the EYFS profile for each child. Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are: -

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

The EYFS profile will reflect staff members' own knowledge and professional judgement of a child to inform discussions with parents and/or carers, and any other person whom the teacher, parent and/or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

We share the EYFS profile with the child's year 1 teacher. This helps to inform a discussion between reception and year 1 teachers about the child's stage of development and learning needs, and helps with planning activities in year 1.

The school shares the results of each child's 'progress check' and EYFS profile (but not the reception baseline assessment) with their parents and/or carers.

In exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child might stay in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they turn 5. In

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these exceptional cases, we will continue to assess the child throughout their time in EYFS provision and complete their profile at the end of the year before they move into year 1.

An EYFS profile will be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). We will make the appropriate reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with SEND.

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

6. Working with parents/carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between our staff and each child's parents and/or carers.

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

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

EYFS staff use Class Dojo to regularly communicate with parents/carers and update them on what their child has done both individually and as part of the whole class. Parents/carers use Class Dojo to upload learning and activities that have taken place outside of the academy.

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

Staff are always available to speak with parents/carers to discuss their child at the start or end of the day or at a mutually convenient time.

7. Staff

7.1 Staff training

We will:

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

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Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will:

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

7.2 Safer recruitment

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

- Obtaining at least 1 written reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited.
- Carrying out the necessary checks, including the appropriate level of DBS check.
- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references.

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

7.3 Whistleblowing

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

In the event that an individual feels that they need to blow the whistle on misconduct, they should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the CEO.

See our whistle-blowing policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures and more detail on our procedures for handling whistle-blowing. The policy is available on our website or via the academy office.

7.3.1 Malicious or vexatious allegations

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

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

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure; when their individual needs are met; and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

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All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives at home or elsewhere.
See our Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection policy (available on our website) for more information.

8.1 Reporting allegations or concerns

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

If a concern or allegation is about: -

- A member of staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors) posing a risk of harm to children, we will report it to the headteacher as soon as possible.
- The headteacher, we will report it to the CEO.

Where we believe there's a conflict of interest in reporting to the headteacher or CEO, we will report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will then follow the procedures set out in our Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection policy (available on the academy website) for managing the allegation.

If an allegation of harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises is made (whether the alleged harm or abuse happened on the premises or elsewhere), we will inform Ofsted as soon as it is reasonably practicable and within 14 days of the allegation being made. We will also inform Ofsted about the action we have taken in response to the allegation(s).

8.2 Staffing ratios

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff:child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. We will inform parents and/or carers about how staff are organised, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.

- For children aged 3 and over:
    - Where a person with qualified teacher status, early years professional status, or early years teacher status is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children. At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status
    - Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children. At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status. At least half of all other staff hold an approved level 2 qualification.
    - Where there is a person with qualified teacher status, early years professional status, or early years teacher status, an instructor or another suitably-qualified, overseas-trained teacher: -
        - For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 30 children.
        - For all other classes, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children.

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        - At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status.
    - Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children: -
        - At least 1 member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status.
        - At least half of all other staff hold an approved level 2 qualification.
- We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils.
- We determine ratios guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of the children within the group while complying with the statutory requirements relating to the education of children of compulsory school age and infant class sizes

These staff:child ratios apply to the total number of staff working directly with children across our whole provision, not just within each room.

8.3 Peadiatric first aid (PFA)
We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. The PFA certificate is for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the EYFS framework. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

We display or make available to parents and/or carers PFA certificates or a list of staff who have a current PFA certificate.

8.4 The Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL)
We also have a DSL who has lead responsibility for safeguarding children. They are also responsible for:

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

8.5 Absence
We're required to promptly follow up on absences.

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

We will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use our professional judgement when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged.

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Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

See our Attendance policy (available on our academy website) for more on this, including our expectations of parents/carers to report child absences.

8.6 Oral health and tooth brushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about: -

- The effects of eating too many sweet things;
- The importance of brushing your teeth.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our child protection and safeguarding policy, which can be found on our academy website.

8.7 Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating, and seated safely in an appropriate chair or highchair and, where possible, in a designated eating space.

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

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

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

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

We will consult with parents/carers to: -

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate: -
    - We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff;
- Discuss their child's progress with solid foods and the textures the child is familiar with and work with them to move on to the next stage at a pace that's right for their child.

We will prepare food in a way that: -

- Prevents choking;

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- Meets each child's individual developmental needs;
- Is in line with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance. All meals, snacks and drinks we provide are healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to children.

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

We will notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting 2 or more children as soon as is reasonably practicable, but, in any event, within 14 days of the incident.

8.8 Accident or injury

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

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

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

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

We will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of any child while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable, but in any event, within 14 days of incident occurring.

8.9 Safety of premises

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

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

We take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff, and others on our premises in the case of fire or any other emergency. We have: -

- An emergency evacuation procedure.
- Appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers) which is in working order.
- Clearly identifiable fire exits and fire doors free of obstruction and easily opened from the inside.

We do not keep, and do not allow to be present on our premises at any time, any dog of a type banned under section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

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We do not allow smoking in or on our premises when children are present or are about to be present, and we make sure that staff do not smoke, vape or use e-cigarettes when children are present, or about to be present.

8.10 Toileting and privacy

We make sure that there are: -

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children.
- Suitable and hygienic nappy changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies.
- An adequate supply of necessary items such as clean bedding, towels, spare clothes and any other necessary items.
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

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

8.11 Screen use

We have regard to the DfE's help for early years providers: screen use guidance when making decisions about how and when children use screens in our setting.

8.12 Organising premises for confidentiality and safeguarding

We make sure that: -

- There is an area where staff may talk to parents and/or carers confidentially.
- There is an area for staff to take breaks away from areas being used by children.
- Children are only released into the care of individuals of whom the parent and/or carer has explicitly notified us.
- Children do not leave our premises unsupervised.

We take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering our premises and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed, and approved by Helen Fendley (Headteacher) every year. It will be monitored by the CEO and Academy Committee.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the Academy Committee.

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Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This isn't an exhaustive list of policies and only includes policies specific to the EYFS. For a full list of our policies, see the academy website.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	Child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	Health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	Health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	Child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	Complaints policy

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