



EYFS Policy

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office@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk or 01543 472245

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Foreword

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. High quality, early learning provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that must be met to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

Principles for Early Years Education at The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust (TSSMAT)

TSSMAT recognises that all children learn and develop rapidly during the first five years of life. We believe that it is vital that all children are given the opportunity to experience an array of exciting and stimulating learning activities that encompass key skills, which are relevant and reflect their interests.

We recognise the four overarching principles of EYFS:

- **A Unique Child:** Every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We use positive encouragement and praise to motivate the children in our care.
- **Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling Environments:** Children learn and develop well in environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and where there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers. We observe children in order to understand their current interests and development before planning appropriate play-based activities for them.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** The EYFS framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. We tailor the experiences we offer the children in our care according to their individual needs and abilities.

We acknowledge that all children are naturally active, inquisitive and curious about the world around them. They are all individuals with different needs, skills and have had different experiences in life. We therefore believe that for our children to develop the foundation skills of learning to equip them for their future, we need to plan and present them with activities that reflect this diversity.

The EYFS Developmental Stages are used to plan learning opportunities through the '7 areas of learning.' These are:

- **Personal, Social and Emotion Development**
- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**
- Literacy
- Mathematics

- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The areas of learning highlighted in red are the 'prime' areas of learning. The other areas of learning listed are the 'specific' areas of learning. The prime areas are to be the key focus, particularly in Nursery, as this will enable the children to access the specific areas of learning when they move into Reception.

At TSSMAT we believe:

- It is essential that our learning environments in Early Years are visually stimulating, safe and secure.
- It is vital to share the Early Years principles and practises with parents. This enables them to support their child's learning outside of school hours.
- It is important to use and display characteristics of learning in the children's learning journey to summarise how each children learns through their independent play.

Our aims are...

- To value the whole child
- To value and include all children
- To acknowledge that early childhood education is vital and not just a preparation for the next stage
- To encourage children to become active, independent learners
- To allow children time to experiment, make discoveries and learn from first hand experiences
- To ensure a balance between child-initiated and adult focused activities
- To develop a broad and balanced curriculum in line with EYFS curriculum
- To ensure that the curriculum is meaningful and incorporates all aspects of learning
- To establish that all areas of the curriculum are interrelated and that learning for young children is holistic
- To educate parents with the principles and practises of the Early Years curriculum by presenting regular opportunities for parents to observe learning in school
- To support parents in continuing their child's learning at home
- To make all learning enjoyable by incorporating child interests, but also embedding the key skills required for them to develop as independent learners
- To offer valuable learning experiences to all pupils

Safeguarding

The EYFS Team will have written copies of the Trust's Safeguarding policies and procedures. These must be made accessible to all staff working within the EYFS classrooms.

All EYFS staff have received safeguarding training and understand that any concerns must be kept confidential. Any concerns are noted on special 'cause for concern' sheets which are pinned up on the notice board in the classroom. Separate incident books are kept in each EYFS classroom and staff understand that these books are to be kept as log books. All concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a child enters our settings with any marks or injuries staff must complete an 'injury on arrival' form which must be signed and filled out by the person dropping the child off at school. This form is then passed on the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In the event of a mark or injury being discovered during the school day, the form must be completed by a member of staff and passed on the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This form must be signed by the child's parent or carer.

All volunteers are required to complete DBS checks before working in a Trust school.

Please refer to Trust Safeguarding Policy for further information.

TSSMAT Safeguarding contacts:

Mr P Lovern – Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs H Bowman – Chair of Directors

Mrs M Havelock-Crozier – Safeguarding Director

Miss N Jarrett – Designated Safeguarding Lead – Richard Crosse

Mr J Wynn – Designated Safeguarding Lead – St Mary's

Miss R Mills – Designated Safeguarding Lead – The Howard

Miss L Derry – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs C Vincent – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Miss H Jennings – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Important contact details:

First Response:- 0800 1313126

Email First Response:- FirstR@staffordshire.gov.uk

Curriculum topics

In the Early Years Foundation Stage our activities are organised into themes which take place throughout the year. Each theme is planned to encompass all of the 7 areas of learning. We aim to provide multi-sensory, relevant experiences which are delivered in active ways both in the classroom and outside in our playground and forest learning environments.

It is important to state that our themes are not rigid. We aim to adapt, amend and change our themes wherever necessary. This is dependent on the interests of each cohort or current events that are taking place, e.g. important festivals or celebrations.

For Reception children, Literacy and Mathematics based adult focused sessions take place over the morning sessions with the other areas of the curriculum being taught in the afternoons. Letters and sounds are delivered in 20-30 minutes sessions during the morning. Daily assessments of activities inform our EYFS assessment which occurs at key points during the year.

All children will be given equal access to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum regardless of race, gender or ability.

Nursery

Nursery sessions run from 8.30 to 3.30 depending on hours requested. Children are provided with an array of child initiated and adult-led activities which are all linked to the EYFS curriculum. Our EYFS team recognise the importance of the facilitator during learning opportunities and once activities are completed with our children, the adults will support the learning taking place in the continuous provision. It is important note the during the Autumn Term of Nursery, throughout the course of the day one adult will take on the role of the facilitator of learning to support our settling in period.

Children follow phase 1, letters and sounds and are introduced to 26 letter sounds through the Jolly Phonics Scheme. Activities are planned with the development matters age band in mind and ongoing assessment in forms the next steps of learning for the children.

All planning is collated in planning folders which are kept in each classroom. These plans are regularly annotated with explanations about how an activity has transpired and any issues or next steps that need addressing in the future.

The children's attainment is tracked in assessment summaries, booklets and throughout their learning journeys. This is done through the use of an electronic tracking program, children work, observations of learning and photographs.

Use of Technology

Staff mobile phones are to be stored safely and away from the reach of children. Staff are not permitted to use their mobile phones in the presence of children. Trust cameras and ipads are to be used to take photographs of children for assessment purposes only and must be printed on school sites. Trust and ipads are to remain on Trust premises and should be locked away each night. The use of personal cameras and mobile phones is strictly prohibited. Photographs of children can be added to Trust websites but only with consent from parents. Consent is sought from parents annually. Please see the Use of Photographs & Images Policy.

Planning

Weekly planning – A continuous professional dialogue between our EYFS staff takes place, throughout the week to ensure that all of our children's needs are being met and that staff fully understand their expectations. During the week team meetings teachers and classroom assistants will take place discuss further ideas that could be incorporated into the following week's planning. The children are also asked if there is anything that wish to learn about or any child-initiated activities that they would like to have out during the following week. The Teachers then proceed with creating the year group's lesson plans.

Medium Term planning - The EYFS team plan their topics every half term in team meetings with teaching staff. We evaluate the previous topic, discussing learning, keys skills and next steps for our children. These ideas are then included in the next half term's medium term plan. The children's successes are celebrated and improvements and alterations to topics are discussed. Medium term plans are available on the classroom planning boards and are accessed by all members of the EYFS team.

Planning is stored on our TSSMAT share point and can be accessed by any member of staff working within the Trust.

Induction procedures

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy at TSSMAT and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents/carers to have confidence in both their children's well being and their role as active partners in their child's learning. Therefore we take settling in and Induction procedures very seriously.

Once parents have received confirmation of their child's place at a Trust school, they will receive a welcome pack through the post, and an invitation to a meeting early in Summer Term. The welcome pack outlines the aims and objectives of the setting, details of the curriculum, daily routines and other vital information required for a smooth transition into school.

The meeting is an opportunity for parents and members of staff to discuss the children and any particular needs they might have as well as introducing them to the Foundation Stage environment. The EYFS team explain the curriculum and other important aspects of school life. This also provides parents with the opportunity to ask questions about their child's forthcoming year.

The Nursery team carry out home visits to each family to establish positive relationships and children. These will take place during the end of the summer term. This helps the team to develop positive relationships with parents and children in a familiar environment.

In the summer term a transition program is devised and delivered for both parents and children to attend. This helps to cement those previously established relationships between staff and pupils but also helps to build up relationships with parents. The program enables children to explore their new classroom environments, acquire first experiences of school dinners and other important aspects of the school day, with their parents. It also allows parents the opportunity to find out key pieces of information about their child's time in school.

We aim to make the EYFS classes as a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

Some of our induction activities may include:

- A carousel of activities in the reception classrooms
- A PE session in the hall
- A visit to the Library
- A formal open afternoon to inform parents about life in reception, daily routines, attendance, snacks, school dinners
- Two mornings in their new class
- The opportunity to have a hot dinner in school with their parents

All staff welcome and look after the child and their parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.

We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with staff; for example the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.

When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.

We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left, so we expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for the appropriate settling sessions.

We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from early years.

Within the first four to six weeks of term starting we meet to discuss the child's settling in and to share the child's achievements.

Special Needs

Early intervention is essential to supporting the needs of all children. It is therefore important that children who are identified as having particular needs are monitored. The EYFS team will discuss any issues or concerns, initially with parents but when necessary will seek advice and guidance from our Trust SENCO or if applicable our School Nurse.

Individual targets and support strategies will be developed and incorporated into a children's learning wherever required. Regular professional discussions will occur with team members, targets will be monitored and discussions with parents will happen frequently.

Classroom and learning environments

The Early Years Foundation class comprises of Nursery and Reception and are in the main school buildings that also have contained outdoor areas. Both Nursery and Reception children have a free-flow access system between the indoor and outdoor classroom. The EYFS Team will ensure that a member staff is outside at all times when the children are accessing free-flow. This is to ensure the safety and security of our pupils in the outdoor area.

The indoor and outdoor areas are checked for hazards on a daily basis as resources and activities are prepared for the day ahead. Any issues, hazards and faults are either rectified immediately or recorded in the maintenance log book which are located in the main school offices. A daily risk assessment is completed by the EYFS team. All staff are to be made aware of any hazards or risks that may occur during an activity or when using certain equipment. Any serious risks are reported immediately to the Health and Safety Co-Ordinator. The EYFS team take all reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children both inside the classroom and in the outdoor environment are kept to a minimum.

At one of our trust schools we are very fortunate to have 'forest school's' running. The Nursery and Reception children have weekly access to a natural area known as the 'forest'. The children are given the opportunity to develop their independence and explore the natural environment in a safe and secure space. The children are continuously supervised when accessing this environment and special rules and expectations are established from the onset.

Resources

All of the resources that form part of our EYFS provision are shared between our Trust schools. Our resources and materials are clearly labelled and the children are encouraged to develop their independence by accessing them without adult support. The resources help to develop the children learning in relation to the 7 areas of our curriculum.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

On entry to the Trust, all children are assessed through on-going observations conducted by all members of staff. These observations occur from observing the children undertaking child-initiated activities and adult led activities. The information collected by staff forms a baseline judgment which determines which development band the children are working in for each area of our curriculum. These assessments help determine the needs of individuals and provide staff with a foundation to develop and build on existing learning.

During their time in EYFS, the children will be observed and assessed against the EYFS Development Matters bands, across the 7 areas of learning. Staff will collect observations, take photographs of the children engaging in activities, collect samples of work that give a snapshot of the children's skills and learning. These pieces of information will be collated into individual learning journeys. These journeys will be shared on regular occasions with the children and parents.

The EYFS team will use the end of year attainment data collected in Nursery to act as a starting point for September baseline assessments. The Reception teachers will complete assessments of the children during the first few weeks of school, observing them in child-initiated activities and completing adult focused activities linked to key skills including phonics, reading and writing.

During the Reception year staff will gather evidence to show the children's development and progress through the EYFS development matter bands. They will be assessed against their age-related expectations.

Over the course of the year the children individual progress will be monitored and next steps will be planned as part of our planning process.

At the end of the year (June) the children are formally assessed against the end of EYFS early learning goals for all areas of the curriculum. The children will be given an emerging, expected or exceeding level which is shared with Year 1 during transition meetings.

Parent Partnership

The EYFS Team welcome parental involvement in learning and parents are regularly welcomed into school on an informal basis. We have workshops, every half term where we showcase some of the exciting and valuable learning activities that the children have completed during a topic. Each workshop is themed so that every area of our curriculum is covered. These workshops beginning during the children's Nursery year and continue throughout Reception.

We hold week library sessions where our parents are invited into the classroom environments to share a story with their child and to choose a special library book to take home to read over the course of the week.

In the autumn and spring Terms of school parental consultation evenings are held. These are essential opportunities to discuss each child's development and progress within the EYFS. In July the children take home personalised reports. Our Reception reports are based around the characteristics of learning. Staff must ensure that there is a safe area where they can talk to parents or carers confidentially.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning through completing suggested activities which are detailed on our weekly newsletters. Reading diaries are also issued from the onset of Reception and act as a communication tool between staff and parents.

On entering EYFS, the following information is required from parents and carers:

- Emergency contact numbers
- Data collection information
- Special dietary requirements – food allergies
- Special health requirement
- Information about who has legal contact with the child and who has parental responsibility
- Child's birth certificate

This information is provided through the School's Admission Form, the data collection sheets and consent forms. Parents will be required to submit this data at the time of their child's admission.

Parents are entitled to request to see their child's development records and are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning at any time during the academic year.

Parents consultation evenings take place twice during the year and parents are also invited to attend learning workshops during the year.

The EYFS team understand the importance and confidentiality of personal files related to the children and will take into account Data Protection Act whilst in school and outside the school grounds.

Security

The EYFS team will only release children into the care of individuals who are named on the school data collection sheets. The EYFS team are required to ask individuals named on the data collection sheet for passwords. Children will not leave the premises unsupervised and will not be permitted to leave the school grounds with any individual whose name is not included on the data collection sheet.

Key Workers

The class teacher is the main key worker for the children in the class and are therefore responsible for the planning, assessment, report writing, parent's consultations and monitoring the progression of the children in their class. However, where there is more than 1 adult in the class both adults work very closely together and will report daily on the needs, attainment and next steps of the children in their care.

Ratios

Statutory guidance states that in the classroom environment where there is an adult present who has either QTS, EYPS or EYTS – a level 6 qualification, where the majority of children reach the age of 5 or older in the school year, there must be one member of staff for 30 children. For all other classes there must be one member of staff for 13 children. In a classroom when no person has QTS, EYPS or EYTS – a level 6 qualification, there must be one member of staff for every 8 children,

Outings

Children must be kept safe while on outings. The EYFS team members must assess the risks or hazards which may arise for the children and must identify the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage those risks and hazards. The assessment must include consideration of adult to child ratios.

For more information see Health and Safety Policy.

Equality of Opportunities

See Special Educational Needs Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy.

Medical Issues

Medicines are not to be administered by any member of the EYFS team. However office staff are permitted to administer prescription medication that needs to be taken at least 4 times a day. Any prescribed medication for 3 times a day can be taken in the morning, at the end of the school day and before the child goes to bed. Further details of this are explained in our TSSMAT 'Administering Medication Policy'.

Staff are only permitted to support the administration of inhalers for asthma and epi-pen allergies. If a child has either of these medical issues parents are required to complete a health care plan. Staff must complete a form detailing when the medication was given and must have a witness signature.

Parents and carers are permitted to come into school to administer any other medication. Inhalers are kept in a safe place away from the children in a locked medical box. Staff medication should also be kept in this medical box.

Please see the Administering Medication Policy for more information.

Accident or Injury

All of the TSSMAT EYFS team are Paediatric First Aiders. All certificates are kept in school.

First Aid Boxes are kept in the EYFS classrooms at all times. Any incidents that take place during the school day are reported in the First Aid Book and injuries are dealt with accordingly. Parents and carers are informed of any injury sustained by their child on the same day. In the case of a head injury, parents are always informed by text or by phone call.

Food and Drink

All EYFS members of staff hold a Food Hygiene Certificate, which they are required to complete as part of their Induction. If a member of the EYFS team has had Food Hygiene training at a previous establishment; they are required to be present their certificate to the Trust on appointment.

All children have their own personal water bottle and is readily available in the classroom for them to have at any time. The children have two healthy snack sessions a day. Members of staff make sure that all table surfaces are cleaned with disinfectant before and after snack time.

Behaviour Management

Positive behaviour is always encouraged and staff have high expectations of behaviour. Each class has a super star chart. All super stars are celebrated and receive a sticker at the end of the day and a dojo point.

For more information, please see the Behaviour Policy.

Care Club

In partnership with the EYFS class teacher, the designated coordinator at the Club is responsible for:

- Identifying EYFS children when they join the Club, and informing the other staff
- Determining the primary EYFS provider (typically, the Trust) for each child
- Assigning a key person for each EYFS child
- Implementing a communication book, so that the parents, Club and the primary EYFS provider can easily exchange information
- Agreeing information sharing policies with the primary EYFS provider and gaining parental consent for this where necessary
- Liaising with the primary EYFS provider to discuss what support the Club offers to EYFS children

The Club provides a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The Club always follows play principles, allowing children to choose how they occupy their time, and never forces them to participate in a given activity.

Admissions

Admissions to nursery and reception must follow the published Admissions Policy. Parents are required to provide certain pieces of information about their child before starting nursery or reception. All completed forms are kept in the main school offices.

Complaints Procedure

EYFS welcome feedback from parents and have a written procedure in dealing with concerns and complaints from parents. A written record of complaints must be kept along with the outcome. For more information, please see the Complaints Policy.

- Step one - parents discuss any concerns or complaints with class teacher – these must be logged
- Step two - if unresolved parents to make appointment to see the Headteacher.
- Step three - if unresolved parents to make appointment to see the CEO
- Step four - if parents are still not happy they can write to the Directors

Conclusion

Our aim at TSSMAT is to make the Foundation Stage an exciting and interesting place to attend and develop as learners. Our members of staff show high levels of dedication and are committed to the ideals of learning

through structured and well planned activities. Every aspect of our Foundation stage provision addresses and supports the needs of children between the ages of 3-5.

Our learning environments are bright and highly stimulating for all pupils. They reflect the topic being covered and are used as spaces to showcase and celebrate the abilities and talents of our children. We are constantly striving to improve our practise as teaching professionals and the provision we provide in order to support and get the best out of pupils so that they progress through their academic career as confident, independent learners.