



**Excalibur Academies Trust**  
Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

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### 1. Philosophy

Excalibur Academies Trust believes 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 aim to provide welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environments for all our children, where they are able to enjoy learning through play, to grow in confidence and to fulfil their potential.

### 2. Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe and healthy, enjoying and achieving. In Excalibur Academies, the following four guiding principles shape our EYFS practice:

- Every child is a unique child, a person who is constantly learning, a person who 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, where their experiences meet their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between staff and parents or carers
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We provide for children with special educational needs and disabilities.



- Children are supported in acquiring coherent speech and language for effective communication.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal has the overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is implemented and overseeing all issues relating the Early Years.

The Class teacher and Early Years Practitioners have the responsibility of keeping abreast of current national and local initiatives and leading the school in this curriculum area and implementing high quality teaching and learning.

The Governors have the responsibility for monitoring, supporting and challenging the work of the school, including the EYFS provision and this policy.

The Principal, the Local Governing Body (LGB) and the Excalibur CEO are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the provision as well as the progress and attainment of the children in the Reception year.

### 4. Learning and Development

We believe children learn best through real experiences and active learning. We provide opportunities for teacher directed, teacher initiated and child initiated learning opportunities. In doing so we ensure children have opportunities to engage and thrive in all aspects and areas of learning and development.

We follow the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* document (Department for Education 2021) which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. This is updated as new documentation becomes available from the DFE.

The statutory framework identifies seven areas of learning and development which are split into Prime Areas and Specific Areas:

#### 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



### Specific Areas

- Literacy
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- Mathematics
  - Number
  - Numerical patterns
- Understanding of the World
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world
- Expressive Arts and Design
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive

Within the above areas of learning, our teaching and planning supports the different ways that children learn. Practitioners focus on the three characteristics of effective learning are:

- playing and exploring,
- active learning,
- creating and thinking critically.

## 5. Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand their current interests, development and learning.

When planning, we are mindful of *Development Matters* (DFE, 2021) or *Birth to Five* (Early Years Coalition by Early Education 2021) which is guidance material, supporting practitioners in implementing the statutory EYFS requirements.

## 6. Learning Environment

In each Academy, we aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment where we encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, able to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; the outside is used as often as is practical. Every day children have sessions where they select focussed play activities.



## 7. Assessment and recording

Assessment is the responsibility of the class teacher. All staff who work with the children contribute towards the assessment process, along with parents and carers and to a degree, the children.

Assessment is undertaken regularly:

### a) Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Over the year, the practitioner's own knowledge of the children will provide the prime evidence which can be used for assessment.

### b) Summative assessment

During the year, attainment and progress is periodically monitored by each Academy and the Trust. Governors are kept informed so they are able to challenge and support, as appropriate.

Each Academy will follow the statutory processes for summative assessment at the end of the year.

Moderation of assessments takes the following form: internal moderation throughout the year. All Academies are mindful of good practice; the teachers will attend where possible, cross-school moderation sessions and moderation training each year.

### Progress Check at Age 2 (Nurseries):

When a child is aged between two and three, progress is reviewed, and parents / carers will receive a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. The summary will include:

- The staff's strengths
- Areas of concern

If there are areas of concern where the child may have developmental delay, the practitioner will share activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt and support to address the issues of concern. This assessment is statutory.

### Baseline on entry to Reception:

The reception baseline assessment is a short assessment taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. This is focussed on Language, Communication, Literacy and Mathematics. This is a statutory assessment.



## 8. Reporting

During the year there are formal, planned opportunities for parents to meet with the EYFS practitioner to discuss progress. These are scheduled throughout the year. Should there be concerns about a child's learning, behaviour or progress, other meetings can be arranged by the teacher or by parents and carers.

Formal reporting to parents, carers and receiving teachers is followed in line with the Standards and Testing Agency's *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile*, which is updated annually. This can be accessed using the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

## 9. Admission to Reception

The Academy admissions arrangements are in line with our admissions policy which can be found on our website. Guidance for parents and carers who have children who are starting school in Reception can be found on each Academy's website or provided at the point of transition. All Academies operate a transition programme designed to support the child joining the school and their family.

## 10. Home/School Links (academy specific)

We recognise the huge contribution parents and carers make to their child's learning and we work hard to develop and sustain links with parents and carers so that we work together.

We encourage parents and carers to speak to their child's teacher or early years practitioner to share any celebrations, concerns or worries. Each academy will have mechanisms in place for parents to keep in touch with their children's setting e.g. Reading Record book / online records, communication log, informal conversations which are part of the daily routine. Other events such as open evenings, parent workshops, stay and play sessions are arranged by each academy.

## 11. SEND

We provide for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – see SEN Policy. As Excalibur Academies we believe that early identification and support for these children is important and we work with parents and carers to achieve this.



## 12. Safeguarding, Health and Safety

The welfare of all our children is a priority.

Safeguarding, child welfare and health and safety procedures for are following in line with section 3 of the DFE's *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (2021). This includes specific requirements with regards to staffing and pupil ratios.

The class teacher acts as the 'key worker' for the children in Reception. We ensure the requisite number of staff are paediatric first aid trained. Safeguarding, welfare, health and safety procedures and policies are reviewed regularly.

## 13. Relevant Documents

### Academy:

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

### National:

- Department for Education's *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (2021)
- DFE's *Development Matters* (2021)
- DFE's *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook EYFS Handbook*
- Birth to Five Matters: non-statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)

## 14. Policy change record

Policy agreed by LGBs	2013	LGBs
Policy review	2016	Wendy Chadwick, Anne Normington and Sarah Montague-Smith
Policy review	2020	Policy reviewed by Julie McKay (Lead Practitioner EYFS), Anne Normington (Head of Primary), all Principals Policy approved by Education Scrutiny Committee
Policy review	2022	Policy reviewed by all Principals and Head of Primary Education. Approved by Education Scrutiny Committee