



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools COVID-19 Policy. Due to the ongoing pandemic there may be some aspects of this policy which may suddenly change or be placed on hold.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself. For young children there is no distinction between work and play.

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through well planned activities, focused teaching time, self-initiated play and opportunities for communication and interaction.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In EYFS we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential. We aim to support each child’s welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates (physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally).
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
- Fostering and nurturing children’s self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children’s independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children’s understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children’s learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children’s personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children’s existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2017). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.'

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Communication and Language
3. Physical Development

In addition, providers must also support activities through four specific areas:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning.

Active Learning through Play

We organise the day, taking into account the children's interests, to provide a balance between the following:-

- Child-initiated activities - children make choices from within the learning environment.
- Adult-directed activities – Children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes

At Annemount we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS classroom has an ethos of learning through play within the indoor and outdoor environment. Children have access to the outdoor environment everyday regardless of the weather conditions outside. Children are supported to dress appropriately for the weather conditions.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework.

Assessment and Record Keeping

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult-led activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis. Practitioners make time to carry out observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children in filling in gaps in their learning as well as to plan optimum next steps to help them to progress. Observations are also made by other members of staff around school. Parents are encouraged to share observations that they have seen of their children at home.

Learning Journeys are recorded online on Target Tracker. We record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Photographic evidence, observations and teacher judgements make up each Learning Journey. There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2017). Termly analysis of the data is done and shared with all staff working in the EYFS. Class Provisions Maps are drawn up and worked through during the next term to narrow gaps, address key areas of focus and improve provision for all children. At the end of the year the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

In the first few weeks, baseline assessments are carried out from which progress can be measured.

Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Plans are made around a termly topic and theme to capture children's interests e.g. 'In the Garden', 'Toys'.

Medium-term planning is created and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

Weekly planning sessions take into account the children's previous learning, development and skills as well as their current interests and needs.

All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access within the classroom. Daily phonic sessions and reading sessions are also planned based on the children's current understanding and skills. Planning is shared with all EYFS practitioners and is a flexible working document.

Parents as Partners

At Annemount we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. We encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes) through conversation and observations. This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through weekly newsletters, reading records, a communication book as well as email with the school and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day.

Suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home are offered; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings for general information as well as parent education during the course of the academic year.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may also be invited into the setting on other occasions such as assemblies as well as special events for Mother's and Father's Days.

Reception and Pre-Reception have a friendly, open-door ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

Progress Check for Children Aged 2-3yrs old

For children in the Pre-Reception class aged between 2-3 years, teachers will review their progress and provide parents with a short written summary of their child's development. This is usually done in the format of a termly focus meeting. This process will identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected.

Admissions and Induction

Annemount School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Before they start in the setting, all children are welcomed to the school for a morning to meet the teacher and their peers. Practitioners will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings as well as home visits where appropriate. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Annemount as smooth as possible. Older pupils write welcome letters to incoming pupils.

The Parent Handbook is distributed to parents prior to the child starting, detailing school routines and expectations.

Monitoring and review

The Head teacher and EYFS coordinator will carry out regular monitoring of the EYFS.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

This policy should be read in line with other key policies such as Safeguarding, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying, Fire Safety, First Aid, Health and Safety, Risk Assessment, Online Safety, Safer Recruitment, Visitors and Volunteers, Whistleblowing as well as the Handbook and Code of Conduct for Teachers, Assistants, Administrators and Peripatetic Staff.

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