



Gosfield School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.” (*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), applicable from 1 September 2026.*)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A UNIQUE CHILD

“Knowing Every Child. Nurturing Potential.”

At Gosfield School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing circle times, house merits, reward stickers and star of the week awards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children at Gosfield School are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In the EYFS we believe that all children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning, continually providing an enriching and engaging environment

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. Advice and support are given by the Prep SENDCO as necessary. It is important to us that all children in the Foundation Stage are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. This is very apparent during our Forest School sessions

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Policy).

Welfare

"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." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2026)

At Gosfield School, we comply with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework applicable from 1 September 2026. We are committed to ensuring all children are safe, healthy, happy and able to thrive in a nurturing environment.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and wellbeing of all children.
- Promote good health, including supporting healthy lifestyles and preventing the spread of infection.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate to children's age, stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who care for children or have access to them are suitable to do so.
- Maintain effective safeguarding arrangements and ensure all staff understand their responsibilities to protect children from harm.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure children receive enjoyable, ambitious and challenging learning experiences tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting.
- Work in partnership with parents and external agencies to support children's wellbeing, learning and development.
- Follow statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, safer recruitment, safer sleep and children's screen use.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The safety and welfare of children is paramount at Gosfield School. Staff work together to create a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, all staff:

- Are trained to identify and respond appropriately to concerns about a child's welfare.
- Understand the procedures for reporting concerns, disclosures and allegations.
- Receive safeguarding training and regular updates.
- Understand the school's whistleblowing procedures.
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs.
- Promote children's wellbeing through positive relationships and vigilant supervision.
- Monitor attendance and follow up unexplained or prolonged absences where appropriate.
-

Any allegation of harm made against a person living, working or caring for children on the premises will be dealt with promptly and reported in accordance with statutory requirements and local safeguarding procedures.

Recruitment, Suitability and Staff Qualifications

Gosfield School follows robust safer recruitment procedures and ensures that all adults working with children are suitable to do so.

We ensure that:

- Appropriate references are obtained before appointment.
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and other suitability checks are completed before staff commence employment where required.
- Staff, volunteers, students and apprentices understand their responsibility to disclose information that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- Staff suitability is reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- Volunteers are appropriately supervised and subject to relevant safeguarding checks.
- All staff receive induction, safeguarding training and ongoing professional development.

The school maintains accurate records of recruitment and vetting checks in accordance with statutory requirements.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At Gosfield School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child joins the Nursery or Reception class
- Giving children the opportunity to spend time in the setting prior to starting in the Nursery, in the form of 'Settling Sessions'
- Giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher prior to starting at our school, in the form of 'Reception Transition Sessions'
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through daily dialogue with parents, communication through home link books, parent's consultation evenings and the Tapestry online learning journal

- Having an 'open doors' understanding where parents are encouraged to talk to their child's teachers about any concerns they may have
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, keyworker and parent. For example, learning workshops, special assemblies, nativity plays, new parent information sessions with an opportunity to meet the Reception staff, Adult Child Evaluation (ACE) sessions and craft activities
- In the Reception class, having two parent consultations per year (Autumn and Spring terms) at which time the teacher and parents discuss the child's progress and development, talking through successes and development in all seven areas of the framework, sharing next steps/observations for school and home support
- Writing a full report at the end of each Nursery year, commenting on the seven areas of learning
- Writing a full report at the end of the Reception year, commenting on the 17 Early learning Goals
- A school calendar which is available on the school website to inform parents of recent and forthcoming events, date reminders and any relevant issues
- Providing all children within the EYFS with a home link book which serves as a means of communication between school and home.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. In Reception, the class teacher is the main key person for all the children with the learning support assistant acting as deputy key person. We work together to share information and build relationships with all the children. (See Key Person and Settling-In Policy)

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

At Gosfield we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS is based upon the understanding that play is an integral part of learning. The long-term plan outlines the skills taught within the Nursery and Reception curriculums. The medium-term plans cover each half term topic and show the learning focus for each area of learning, with a brief outline of possible activities. Weekly plans describe adult-focused activities with learning objectives, new vocabulary, lines of questioning and differentiation in the form of support and extension activities. Enhancements within the continuous provision encourage the children to lead their own learning. Planning is often adapted to follow the children's interests, thereby ensuring greater engagement with learning.

"Assessment should not involve long breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork." (*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), applicable from 1 September 2026*)

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS is primarily through observations of child-initiated and adult-focused activities. Progress is shared with parents via the child's online Tapestry learning journal; it is also reported on throughout the year and at the end of the Foundation Stage to parents and Year One teachers. Additionally, baseline, termly and end of year assessments are carried out to monitor the progress of every child.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can choose to be active or be quiet and rest. The environments are set up in learning areas, where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS have well equipped outdoor areas and supervised access to the school woods, playing fields, and a wealth of natural environmental features. This has a positive effect on the children's development.

Rest, Sleep and Relaxation

Where children rest or sleep during the school day, Gosfield School follows current safer sleep guidance and ensures children are appropriately supervised at all times. Staff are aware of safer sleep procedures and work in partnership with parents to meet children's individual care needs whilst promoting their safety and wellbeing.

Outdoor Learning

Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access within the outdoor classroom and the gate between areas promotes collaborative play between Reception and Nursery, building relationships across the department.

Digital Technology and Screen Use

Technology is used thoughtfully and purposefully within the EYFS to support children's learning and development. In accordance with government guidance, staff ensure that screen use is developmentally appropriate, carefully monitored and enhances rather than replaces high-quality adult interaction, active learning, outdoor play and hands-on experiences.

Children are provided with a balanced range of learning opportunities and are encouraged to engage in real-life experiences, creative play, physical activity and social interaction as the primary means of learning.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

At Gosfield we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that staff have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management

- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents

Play

“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. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults.” (*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025*)

Play forms the basis of the pedagogy in the EYFS department of Gosfield School. Through play, children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children, as well as by themselves. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Learners for Life: Characteristics of Effective Learning

“Education for children’s futures requires supporting children’s ability to learn and think for themselves. We cannot predict what challenges children will face in their unknown futures in a complex and rapidly changing world. The best preparation we can give them in their early years is to promote positive dispositions by providing living experiences of making choices, innovating, taking responsibility, facing challenge, thinking flexibly and critically, and learning how to learn so that they will be able to respond to their unfolding futures.” (*Birth to 5 Matters 2020*)

Supporting children in the Characteristics of Effective Learning, a statutory element of the EYFS, is central to our ethos at Gosfield School. Adults foster this process with enabling environments and open-ended questioning; children are encouraged to investigate, think critically and make connections. Children access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the setting to extend their learning.

AREAS OF LEARNING

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Art and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

NOTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND CHANGES

Gosfield School will notify the relevant regulatory bodies of significant events and changes affecting the Early Years provision in accordance with statutory requirements. This includes matters relating to safeguarding, suitability, leadership, premises and any other notifiable event identified within the EYFS Statutory Framework.

- Any change of address of the premises

- Any change in the space available to the children
- Any change in the name or address of the provider or the provider's other contact information
- Any change in the person who is managing the early years provision
- Wherever possible this should be done in advance, but in other cases always within 14 days
- Any proposal to change the hours during which childcare is provided
- Any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the early years provider or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with the children
- Any change in the name or registration number of the charity

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if changes are made to statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or the EYFS Framework. The policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Health and Safety Policy and other related school procedures.

Ratified by the Governing Council of Gosfield School

Signed K. Makarov Date 14.9.26
Chair of Governors

Principal's Signature:  Date: 14/9/26

Date of next review: September 2027

