

# **EYFS Policy**

**Date approved:**

**Review date:**

## EYFS Policy

### Aims

***“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.”*** *The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2014.*

At Concordia Academy we want every child to be the best that they can be. We believe that this starts with a solid foundation and enjoyment of learning from the very beginning of a child’s school journey. We aim to provide the highest quality care and education for every child.

We strive to create a welcoming, safe and happy environment and an enriching curriculum which both challenges and supports pupils to achieve their potential and to become independent, confident learners.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage provides the structure for our curriculum and approach. We use the four guiding principles to shape our practice:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

### Approach

Lessons and activities are delivered in an interactive, stimulating environment, which is well equipped, organised, spacious and attractive. Staff ensure that the seven areas of the curriculum are planned for both inside and outside and that all children are able to learn through their play in a broad, cross curricular approach. Children are taught to follow the school rules by being kind, safe and responsible. All adults are committed to enabling every child to become independent, enthusiastic learners with a range of skills that they can draw upon and develop throughout their schooling. We strive to enable every child to achieve or exceed the expected level of development by the end of Reception. While this may not be possible for some children we ensure that all children make good or better progress.

## Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014 and supported by Development Matters in the EYFS. There are seven areas of learning.

Three **prime** areas, which are crucial and build children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive;

- Communication and Language**
- Physical Development**
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.**

And four **specific** areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy**
- Mathematics**
- Understanding the World**
- Expressive Arts and Design**

Staff in Reception focus on all seven areas of the curriculum, with emphasis on the development of the four specific areas, building upon the learning that has taken place in Nursery as appropriate for each child.

## Phonics

At Concordia Academy we value phonics as an essential tool for the development of pupils Literacy skills. In Early Years staff are trained to deliver systematic high quality phonics, using the RWI programme as a basis for planning and assessment. Children are taught in ability groups according to the phonics phase in which they are working. On entry to Reception, children are informally assessed to ascertain their prior learning and knowledge of phonics, they are then levelled, and put into an appropriate phonics group. Phonics assessments continue at least once per term to ensure pupils are working at the most appropriate level for their ability. Phonics homework, which is matched to the phase that the children are working in, is sent home weekly. Teachers plan all phonics sessions for all groups.

## **Planning**

The Early Years team plan together and meet regularly to contribute ideas and suggest learning focuses for the next topic. Planning is thematic and based on children's interests. Staff use Development Matters and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage to devise learning questions for each area of development that are suitably challenging and developmentally appropriate. Questions are matched to pupils' levels of development. Next steps are personalised for each pupil. In Reception, this is evident throughout the children's writing books and occasionally in their special books.

## **Reading**

At Concordia Academy we want all children to develop an enthusiasm for reading and an enjoyment of books which leads to a desire to want to read for both pleasure and for information. In Early Years we use a mixture of core books which the children become familiar with and focus books for each of our topics, where the children learn a range of skills through shared reading of the texts. Children are also taught to find information in non-fiction texts. We aim to read to the children at least once a day. Children are given levelled reading books to read. These books are sent home for the children to practise reading with their parents weekly. Each child in Reception takes part in a guided reading session at least once per week in a group size that is appropriate for their development and with learning questions that are derived from the evaluation of the previous weeks' session. Through reading corners in the classrooms, children are taught how to browse and select books that interest them and that they can borrow daily to share with their parents. In Reception Home/School Reading Diaries are used to record and discuss pupil's progress with their reading.

## **Observation and Assessment**

Observation of pupils is an essential tool in Early Years, and contributes greatly to a practitioner's knowledge of a pupil's holistic development. Observations are made of each pupil frequently and recorded in their Special Books. The information gathered in each pupil's Special Books allows staff to record and ascertain when specific milestones have been reached and enables staff to identify next steps for that pupil's development. Observations should be discreet and may not always be recorded. It is essential for pupil/practitioner dialogue to be at the forefront of every interaction and this should not be interrupted by the practitioner recording evidence. All staff should be able to confidently enter into a dialogue about their key children's progress. All progress should be recorded regularly on the schools assessment programme.

## **Inclusion**

In Early Years we personalise the learning for all pupils, and we believe that every child has the right to an education and should be supported in order to achieve their full potential. Early

intervention is crucial to children's learning and social development and we work closely with the Inclusion Manager to identify and support pupils with additional needs. We use Development Matters as a tool to enable us to provide developmentally appropriate learning for individuals and groups of pupils. We use our high ratio of staff to pupils to ensure that children have additional support where it is needed and to provide Speech and Language groups when necessary. We are developing close relationships with our feeder schools, pre-schools and Nursery's to ensure that when a pupil starts at Concordia Academy we are aware of their needs and can plan for and support them appropriately.

### **Safeguarding and 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 2014

At Concordia Academy, the health, safety and well-being of the children in our care is paramount. We teach children to be safe, follow rules and respect boundaries. Through our curriculum and activities, children learn to make safe choices.

All staff have Child Protection training on an annual basis, they know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is and will refer to this person when it is appropriate to. Staff regularly take part in First Aid Training, and at least the minimum number of staff are trained in Paediatric First Aid and accompany all EYFS children on trips. Staff conduct risk assessments of the inside and outside areas on a daily basis and throughout the day. If and when an accident does occur, procedures are followed to ensure that children are well looked after, their injuries or ailments are treated and their parents are informed, in writing or by telephone call as necessary. All accidents are recorded and the accident book is reviewed to identify any recurring problems.

In Reception there is 1 teacher per 30 pupils as per infant class size regulations. In addition to this Reception classes have the support of a nursery nurse each.

### **Keyworkers**

As required in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014, every pupil in Early Years has a keyworker. The keyworkers are the nursery nurses or teachers that work in Early Years.

The keyworker will:

- support their children with some activities
- monitor and record the children's progress in those activities
- deliver specific activities that will help those children develop and learn

- be able to discuss the child's learning needs and progress made with their parents and contribute to, or write, their report

## **Homework**

In Early Years we believe that homework provides a link between the learning that takes place in school and that which takes place in children's homes. Every child takes home a book to share with their families on a daily basis. In Reception, in addition to this, we send home levelled reading books for the children to read to their parents. We provide one piece each of phonics and maths homework per child per week, with additional topic homework sent home occasionally. Homework is differentiated for specific groups of pupils and is designed to enable parents to decide how much work is appropriate for their child. Spellings are sent home as part of the phonics homework when it is developmentally appropriate.

## **Home School Partnership**

At Concordia Academy we value the contribution that parents/carers make to their child's education. Parents are a child's first educators and thus the impact of a parents influence on learning is significant. In Early Years we embrace parents as partners in their child's learning. We have an open door policy in Early Years and at the start and end of each session, parents are welcome to come into the Nursery or classrooms to settle their children. We positively welcome parents' contributions and value their input. We invite parents to meet with us termly to formally discuss their child's progress and we are available to meet with parents at other times as needed. We endeavour to arrange informal opportunities for parents to see what their child has been learning, such as shows and events. We also invite parents to Stay and Play on a monthly basis, this is an excellent opportunity for parents to get involved in and observe their child's learning and play.

## **Transition**

Smooth transitions are essential for pupils to feel settled, secure and ready to learn.

On entry to Reception, children may be visited in their pre-school setting where staff are able to have a dialogue with the child as well as their keyworker to ascertain the pupils' needs, likes and interests. Pupils and their families are invited to a play visit to their new class and teacher in July before they start school in September. Staff also read and make effective use of the reports and information received from other settings. Prior to entry to school, parents are formally invited to attend a meeting to find out about school, meet the head teacher and class teachers, and to have a tour of the environment. At this meeting, parents are informed about uniform, procedures, routines and expectations. We understand that children settle differently, therefore we are flexible and personalise our approach during the settling in periods for Nursery and Reception.

When the children start school they are all given a name and class badge to ensure that every adult in school can support that pupil. Children start in a staggered entry system that can be personalised to each individual's needs. Pupils are taught the rules, boundaries and expectations of the setting and staff spend time with each child to build relationships and get to know each other. Parents are an essential part of the settling in process and it is crucial that they discuss the needs of their child with their class teacher or keyworker. For the health and safety of the pupils, it is essential that the medical and dietary needs of the children are made known to the school.

In the summer term of Reception, in readiness for Year 1, children spend their lunchtimes in the KS1 playground. They visit their new class and teacher two or three times and begin to attend some assemblies. In addition to this, the teacher comes to Reception to observe the children, discuss their progress and teach them for a session. Reception and Year 1 staff meet to discuss pupils' needs and attainment and individual pupil information and assessments are shared. In the moderation process of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Year 1 teachers are involved to agree the levels the children have achieved, particularly in the case of those exceeding the expected level of development. In the autumn term, Reception and Year 1 teachers should continue to work collaboratively for the best interests of the pupils as they make the transition into Year 1.

There is a transition booklet for all staff to ensure that teachers plan and teach effectively taking into account the developmental needs of the pupils. Teaching in Year 1 is multi-sensory and staff make effective use of the shared and outside areas as purposeful learning environments.

### **The wider community**

Children learn through hands-on experiences and we enrich the curriculum by taking part in a range of extra-curricular events. We make optimum use of the local environment, using the surrounding area as a tool to enhance learning opportunities for the pupils. We endeavour to organise trips and/or visitors to the school for each new topic. It is our aim to minimise the cost of school trips and we strive to fundraise or provide staggered payments where there may be a significant contribution required from parents.

### **Further Reading**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2014 (statutory)
- Development Matters in EYFS

- Early Years Foundation Stage: Assessment and Reporting Arrangements 2014
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile: Handbook 2014