# *Early Years Foundation Stage Policy*

## *-Set Sail for Success -*

***Our Mission Statement***

**"Our learning adventure will see each and every one of us thrive in God's love as we set sail for success."**

**Implementation and Review of Policy**

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors in the **Autumn Term 2026**

The Executive Headteacher, Early Years Leader, the Governing Body and Staff will review this policy annually.

The next review date is **October 2027.**

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## 1. School Mission Statement

"Our learning adventure will see each and every one of us thrive in God's love as we set sail for success."

## 2. St. John the Baptist Multi Academy Trust – EYFS Vision Statement

In the Early Years in St. John the Baptist CMAT, we want children united in God's love to become happy, confident, well-rounded individuals with a love of learning. Our children are provided with a safe and stimulating environment that fosters independence, enabling them to learn through play and explore and express their own ideas, knowing that they are valued. We are committed to providing the best possible start to their school life, nurturing positive attitudes, teaching them skills, and giving them experiences that will ensure their well-being and success both now and in the future.

**'To think, to feel, to do' – Pope Francis**

## 3. Aims

The Early Years provision at St. Mary and St. Peter Catholic Primary School aims to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe, happy environment that offers exciting and motivating practical learning experiences, enabling children to become confident and independent learners. We value each child as an individual and work closely with parents and other professionals to meet their needs, helping every child reach their full potential.

## 4. Legislation

As outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance, 'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life'; therefore, 'their experiences in Early Years have a major impact on their future life chances'. This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, effective from 1st September 2026.

We adhere to the **EYFS statutory framework** and the four guided principles that shape practice within Early Years. These are:

- 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 thrive in **Enabling Environments,** where adults attentively support and

respond to their unique interests and needs. This responsive approach fosters continual growth in their learning journey. Establishing strong partnerships between parents and carers is vital for developing a shared understanding, which effectively enhances the support provided for pupils.

- All pupils' **Learning and Development** needs are unique, and therefore, we recognise that all pupils learn in different ways and at different rates.

## 5. Principles into Practice

As part of our practice, we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum using the EYFS guidance across the seven areas of learning, using play as a vehicle of learning.

- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.
- Plan challenging learning opportunities based on the individual child, informed by observation, assessment and planned next steps in learning.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-directed and child-initiated.
- Have a key person approach in our nursery to develop close relationships with adults.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

## 6. Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an engaging and ambitious curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. This supports them in achieving their Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of their reception year.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. The three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships, and thrive.

The **prime** areas of learning are:

**Communication and Language**

**Physical Development**

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, where children can strengthen their existing abilities and build new ones. This approach not only enhances their understanding but also equips them with the tools necessary to explore and succeed in other areas of learning, fostering well-rounded growth and development.

The **specific** areas of learning are:

**Literacy**

**Mathematics**

**Understanding the World**

## Expressive Arts and Design

At St. Mary and St. Peters, children are provided with rich and meaningful experiences that help form the foundations for future learning. Pupils are encouraged to actively explore, comment on and demonstrate their understanding through hands-on learning. By fostering an interactive and supportive environment, we support our students in demonstrating positive attitudes towards learning while enhancing their communication skills and self-confidence as they share their learning with others.

When children start nursery, there is a strong focus on developing their learning within the three prime areas of learning, which is the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning during their time in nursery as and when it is appropriate for the individual child's stage of development.

As outlined in the EYFS guidance, '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.' Therefore, we ensure that our curriculum encompasses a play-based approach where children demonstrate the skills outlined in the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

## Characteristics of Effective Learning

### Playing and exploring – engagement

- **Finding out and exploring**
- **Playing with what they know**
- **Being willing to 'have a go'**

### Active Learning – motivation

- **Being involved and concentrating**
- **Keeping trying**
- **Enjoying what they set out to do**

### Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- **Having their own ideas**
- **Making links**
- **Choosing ways to do things**

## 7. Planning and Teaching

Our long-term plan covers a range of topics linked to seasonal events and areas of expected interest. Alongside these planned topics, we follow children's emerging interests and provide opportunities for them to explore and extend their learning through experiences across all seven areas of learning. Daily enhancements to the learning environment are planned in response to children's current needs and interests, identified through ongoing observations.

Children have daily planned carpet times, which teach and model new concepts, where children are supported and encouraged to apply their learning within continuous provision opportunities and independent play. Daily taught sessions increase as the children progress through the EYFS, which is in line with their level of development. All children in nursery and reception access a planned, daily phonics session following the Read Write Inc (RWI) phonics scheme. Once children in reception have been taught all the Set 1 sounds, including Special Friends, they will be grouped according to their phonetic knowledge.

There must be a balance between allowing children to engage in their own self-initiated activities and providing those that are planned and led by adults. We strive to create a stimulating environment that encourages children to explore both indoor and outdoor provisions. During child-initiated play, adults take on the role of facilitators, interacting with the children and offering challenges through thoughtful questioning to extend their learning. It is essential for adults to know when to be present to support children without interrupting their play.

## 8. Observation and Assessment

As part of our practice, all early years practitioners use ongoing assessment to observe children during play and adult-led activities to assess their understanding and level of development. A selection of observations are recorded using photos, videos and written notes are presented on Tapestry, an online learning journey. These observations show the children's achievement and progress and will inform practitioners of the necessary next steps to further extend children's learning.

The online learning journey is shared between home and school, and parents are strongly encouraged to contribute to their child's achievements from home. Parents who are unable to access Tapestry at home are regularly invited to the school to view these documents and can request this at any time.

Parents and carers are invited to attend parent meetings during the autumn and spring terms, where the children's development, progress and targets are discussed. In the summer term, parents are given a written report in the form of a 'Record of Transfer', which is shared with the child's new teacher to support continuity of learning. At the end of a

child's reception year, the class teacher is legally required to provide a report which shows the child's attainment against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the class teacher.

## 9. Parents as Partners and the Wider Context

We strive to maintain partnerships with parents and carers, recognising that together, we can significantly impact a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate in their child's education through regular stay-and-play and story café sessions and sharing learning from home on Tapestry.

Working with external services and organisations is integral to our practice. At times, we may need to share information with professionals to provide the best support possible to meet our children's needs.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting community members into our setting to share their professions.

## 10. Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for, and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child, including other settings such as pre-schools. Before children start in nursery and reception, they can attend a stay-and-play session to explore the environment, meet the early years staff, and begin to form positive relationships with peers in their class. When starting in reception, staff will contact the child's previous nursery, if applicable, where they will be able to find out about the child's interests and current levels of development.

In the summer term, the reception teacher liaises with the year one teacher to discuss the individual children, their needs, and learning styles and will discuss the EYFS profile assessments to inform future planning and ensure the continuity of learning.

## 11. Attendance

Although education is not compulsory until the age of five, parents who have chosen to send their child to St. Mary and St. Peters are expected to ensure that their child regularly attends nursery and reception class. Good attendance positively impacts all aspects of a young child's learning and development, and a regular routine supports young children in feeling settled and secure.

## 12. Behaviour

In our setting, we are committed to establishing a learning environment that promotes positive behaviour and relationships, where children treat each other with care and respect. We have an inclusive setting that supports all children as they take increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions and consider the welfare and well-being of others.

We have high expectations for behaviour and support children to achieve this through a positive and supportive approach, where good behaviour is rewarded through verbal praise and the school's reward systems. To support children with their behaviour while at school, they are given gentle reminders through words or pictures of what is expected. Children will be quietly spoken to where behaviour falls below the expected requirement, and the class traffic light behaviour system will be used. The child will then receive a consequence for their actions, e.g. time out (see school behaviour policy), and the opportunity to talk through the incident calmly with an adult to support their understanding of their feelings and actions and ways to manage these more appropriately.

## 13.Health and Safety and Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are happy, safe, and secure, where their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with adults who care for them. We follow the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2026) and the school's safeguarding policy.

Children's safety and welfare are paramount. We create a safe and secure environment that is risk-assessed and provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices, and manage risks.

## 14.Intimate Care

At St. Mary and St. Peters, we encourage the children to be as independent as possible concerning their personal care. However, there are times when a child may require support with their intimate care while at school, which may include:

- A child who is still toilet training.
- When a child has wet or soiled themselves.
- When a child's incontinence is part of a specific medical condition or developmental delay.
- When a child has vomited.
- When a child has become dirty or wet from involvement in play activities.
- When a child requires support with changing for PE. (Reception class)

In these circumstances, children may require some support from staff with their intimate care. All staff providing intimate care are DBS checked. Where necessary, practitioners may be required to help a child to use the toilet, support with cleaning and wiping of intimate parts of the body, and, assist with changing clothes. All children have the right to be safe and treated with dignity and respect, and all staff members will be sensitive to children's individual needs. Where intimate care has been given, parents will be informed at the end of the session.