

Sheringham Woodfields School

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Chair of Governors

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EARLY YEARS POLICY

Approved by SMT: 24th November 2025

Approved by Governors: Autumn 2025

Next Review date: Autumn 2027

Person(s) responsible for review: Head Teacher / Early Years Lead /
Deputy Head: Quality of Education

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life." (EYFS 2025)

We aim to support children's learning through teaching, experiences and environments that comply with the updated requirements (from Sept 2025) ensuring pupils are kept healthy, safe and develop well.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five. At Sheringham Woodfields School, our Early Years pupils are placed in the class most suited to their individual needs. In partnership with parents and carers, we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We endeavour to ensure that children "learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe." We aim to support children in their learning through teaching and experiences that "give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life." (EYFS 2025)

The EYFS is important in its own right and we recognise it as a crucial stage in education. We value the importance of play at Sheringham Woodfields and believe that through play, our pupils become highly engaged and should have many opportunities to take control of their own learning.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child** - developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- **Positive relationships** - supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- **Enabling environments** - where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- **Learning and developing** - An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways at different rates, and supported by updated curriculum programmes that emphasise early language, vocabulary and total communication.

At our school, we recognise that every child has the potential to be a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We understand that children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a **positive attitude to learning**.

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." (EYFS 2025) It is very important to us in our EYFS environment that all pupils have good relationships with staff and that they feel 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. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.

- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Additional or strengthened requirements under the 2025 framework include:

- Safer Recruitment (please see Safer Recruitment Policy)
- Attendance - follow up on prolonged or unexplained absences as per whole school attendance policy.
- Safer eating requirements
- Update requirements for paediatric first aid training.

Positive Relationships:

At Sheringham Woodfields School, we recognise that children need to learn to form strong, independent and secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators, and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, as well as their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Conducting home visits to meet pupils and their families before children start their Transition into school
- Inviting all children to attend transition sessions before they start school
- Inviting parents to attend various workshops e.g. Signalong
- Offering parents/carers regular opportunities to communicate about their child via telephone conversations, home school diaries, email and EFL.

- Holding parents/carers consultations twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private.
- Producing an annual report on each child's attainment
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, e.g. Parent/carers coffee mornings, Christmas activities and school performances.

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.

At our school, the EYFS staff acts as a 'Key Person' to all children in their class. Where there is a high level of support needed for a child and their family, one member of the team may act as the key person. Staff acting as key persons ensure continuity of information sharing and building relationships.

Enabling Environments:

At Sheringham Woodfields School, 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 the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning:

We have long-term topic plans for themes to ensure breadth and depth of learning opportunities.

Medium term plans to ensure breadth, coverage, continuity and progression.

Short term plans to ensure effective delivery and differentiation.

Individual plans which have stemmed from the children's own interests each week.

Individual plans for EHPC , SaLT and Therapy targets.

These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This is referred to as in the moment planning (ITMP). This allows us to cater for

the unique child in the moment of spontaneous play. We believe ITMP is good Early Years practice and especially caters for the needs of our pupils in the most effective way, which have stemmed from the children's own interests.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Detailed and brief observations are assessed each week and individual activities are planned for the unique child alongside medium term plans.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, using the Engagement Model and our own assessment frameworks which are based on the Differentiated Early Years Outcomes (DEYO). These are used to track pupil's progress, using professional judgement rather than rigid age bands or checklists. This involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations may or may not have a specific focus, and are built throughout the year and recorded on Evidence for Learning (EfL). They also contain information provided by parents and other settings.

All EYFS staff are proficient at making relevant and insightful observations of the children and these are used to plan the next steps for that child and at as many opportunities as possible. In the moment planning is also used when possible to further the pupils learning.

All reception age children are assessed using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within six weeks of joining our school. We use the EYFS Profile to record our judgements at the end of the Reception Year. Each child's level of development is recorded against the Early Learning Goals at this point.

We provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's through the EHCP Annual Review process, recording within EfL. We give opportunities for parents/carers to discuss these judgements at parents evenings and at EHCP Annual Review meetings.

The Learning Environment:

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate some equipment and resources independently.

However because of the needs of our pupils and safety the resources are sometimes limited but regularly changed and pupils preferred resources based on observations are

available. Our EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor area, so as much as possible free flow indoor and outside play are available.

The outdoor learning environment is seen as incredibly important at Sheringham Woodfields School with its impact on health and wellbeing a significant factor, especially for young children.

Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development at Sheringham Woodfields.

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. Features that are specific to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers 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 to extend and develop play, and talk or utilise 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, and professional judgement, which are shared with parents/carers.

- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

Playing and exploring:

"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 which is guided by adults." (EYFS 2025)

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which enable them to make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules.

Our children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own, whilst being given the space to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

Active Learning:

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning, and room to develop their confidence in order that they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically is where children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions. Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of learning and development:

There are seven areas of learning and development. Three are "prime areas" and four are "specific areas."

The prime areas are -

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are -

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world and
- Expressive arts and design

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. 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.

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most mainstream children to reach by the end of the EYFS. At Sheringham Woodfields School we use the early year's development indicators non-statutory guidance to support progress monitoring and planning.

Health and Safety

At Sheringham Woodfields School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy and risk assessments in place) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the

environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this, we have a general whole class risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2025, we undertake;

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. A written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child's parents and/or carers on the same day.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- We provide healthy snacks & drinks.
- All EYFS staff complete food safety e-training.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept (see accident and injury whole school policy).
- The EYFS leader liaises with SLT (refer to Inclusions policy, behaviour policy, physical restraint policy, Support and Intervention plans)
- A health and safety policy and procedures, which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- A safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.
- Appropriate clothing, in particular in relation to the wearing of heels (stilettos or a heel that comes to a point). Staff are expected to wear clothing that supports them in getting to a child's level and playing and engaging with children at floor level.

Additional requirements under the 2025 framework within Health and Safety / Safeguarding / Intimate Care:

- Ensuring children's privacy during nappy changing and toileting while balancing with safeguarding
- Ensuring safer eating practices and supervision during meals

Monitoring, Reporting and Reviews:

Monitoring is undertaken by SLT to ensure effective delivery and differentiation and that pupils are making good progress. The EYFS class teachers regularly meet with SLT to discuss pupil's progress. The relevant member(s) of SLT will also carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Headteacher and EYFS lead will review this policy every 2 years. The Governors will be advised of any changes to this policy.

Acronyms

EYFS - Early Years and Foundation Stage

EHCP- Education, Health and Care Plan

SaLT- Speech and Language Therapist

SLT - Senior Leadership Team

EfL - Evidence for Learning

Legal Framework and references

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2025)

SEND Code of Practice (2015)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

Equality Act (2010)

Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Attendance Policy

Health and Safety Policy