



Early Years Policy

This policy was adopted by the Full Governing Body.

Issued: Autumn 2024

Next review: Autumn 2026

Signed:

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Headteacher

Date:

Date:

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- children access a broad and balanced curriculum offering them the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child falls behind.
- close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) 2024.

3. Structure of the EYFS

At Stonehill, our Early Years provision includes a 26 place Nursery for 3 and 4 year olds and one Reception class of 30 children.

The Nursery and Reception classrooms are linked by a shared cloakroom. The outdoor space is used by both classes and is spacious, offering a playground area as well as a woodland area.

Nursery offers 15 hours a week Monday to Friday during term time over 5 mornings and 30 hours for up to 8 children. We also offer lunch club to the children that attend the morning session for a small fee. Children bring their own packed lunch for this.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework for the EYFS.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

4.1 Planning

The EYFS at Stonehill provides a happy, safe, caring, stimulating and well-organised environment in which children learn by building upon what they already know and can do.

Staff at Stonehill look carefully at the children in their care, consider their needs, their interests and their stages of development and use all of this information to help plan a challenging and enjoyable experience across all areas of learning and development. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas, especially in the Nursery class.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate and in collaboration with the school's SENCO.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

5. Assessment

At Stonehill, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff consider observations shared by parents and/or carers. Staff use paper journals which are regularly shared with parents and parent contribution is encouraged strongly.

In reception, members of staff will administer the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of the children starting school. Assessments continue throughout the academic year for any pupils who join reception and have not already participated in the RBA.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Exceeding expected levels or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

6. Working with parents

Continuity is key to ensuring a high quality EYFS experience and to ensure that the children's social, emotional and educational needs are addressed appropriately. At Stonehill, transition is seen as a process, not as an event and is planned for and discussed with parents and with practitioners of the pre-school settings that the children attend prior to starting at Stonehill.

At Stonehill we recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and that when parents and staff work together the results have a positive impact on the children's development and learning.

In Nursery, we invite the children and parents for a 'stay and play' session where the staff can begin to build relationships with the children and their parents or carers prior to them starting school. We hold an induction meeting for parents and carers during the term before their child starts school. We also arrange home visits as another opportunity to get to know the families.

In Reception, we invite the children to spend time with their teacher on the school transition morning. We hold an induction meeting for parents and carers in the summer term before their child starts school. Reception children that have not attended our Stonehill Nursery, are offered an additional individual visit to enable them and their parents or carers to meet the teacher.

Throughout the year, parents are invited to 'share and shine' sessions where they can read stories to their child and look at their special books. During sessions we welcome parent contributions where they can add positive comments to their child's journal.

We have an open door policy and communicate with parents regularly face to face, via email and on Marvellous Me. We also welcome contributions from home where parents can share special moments for example; a family holiday, first trip to the cinema, first tooth falling out or trying new foods.

Parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through parent meetings and the sharing of the paper journal. Parents receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year. We also encourage parents to attend informal parent evenings in the first two terms to share their child's successes.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children in our care. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe, when their individual needs are met and when they have the chance to build positive relationships with the adults around them and their peers. It is important to us that all children in the school are safe and feel safe.

We teach children about boundaries, rules and limitations to help them understand themselves and risk taking. We provide children with choices to help them develop these important life skills. Children are taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

The school safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in the Child Protection policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by staff and governors in accordance with the school's policy review schedule.

Appendix 1. Relevant policies and procedures linked to the EYFS

All policies are available on the staff shared drive.

Statutory policy or procedure linked to the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	Child Protection Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	Health and Safety Policy
Administering medicines	Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	School Emergency Response Plan
Intimate care and toileting	Intimate Care Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Child Protection Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	Complaints Policy
Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND)	SEN Policy