

# Loyola Preparatory School Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage

*“Loyola Preparatory School will strive to instil recognition of the talents and achievements of all its members. It will seek to identify and develop a range of skills , techniques and abilities within its pupils which will serve the individual in future life, but will also be put to use as an expression of the Greater Glory of God, both in the personal development of the self and in service to others and the community.”*



*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam  
To the Greater Glory of God*

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## 1. Aims

- To develop positive relationships with parents and carers, to build a strong partnership in supporting their children's learning and development.
- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum with a solid and strong foundation in the three prime areas of learning, and the four specific areas of learning.
- To provide high quality learning experiences that correspond to each child's developmental stage through careful observation, assessment, and that guide children towards the achievement of the Early Learning Goals at the end of the EYFS.
- To provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment, one which provides challenges, and promotes a positive attitude to learning.
- To provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child, including those who have additional needs.

## 2. Introduction

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to achieve their full 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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right” (EYFS Statutory Framework 2017).*

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. We believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. We greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

At Loyola Preparatory School, we endeavour to provide high quality early learning experiences that uphold and demonstrate the four key principles outlined in the EYFS statutory framework:

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 there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- Children develop and learn **in different ways and at different rates**

## 3. Learning and Development

At Loyola Preparatory School, we follow the aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We recognise that all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

We aim to provide an attractive, challenging learning environment that offers high quality opportunities for the children to learn through play, both indoors and outdoors. There is a range of continuous provision available in the classroom that is designed to offer open-ended, practical learning opportunities. Children are supported to think creatively and imaginatively and explore how resources can be adapted.

Adult led activities are practical in nature and based on first hand experiences wherever possible. The children are supported to develop problem-solving skills through open-ended tasks and opportunities to share their thinking with others. The number of adult led activities that the children take part in increases throughout the year, as the children grow and develop.

We recognise that three areas of learning are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three prime areas are:

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

We also teach the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

We focus on the prime areas of learning first, the balance then shifts towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the child's parents/carers, and agree how best to support the child. More information on the EYFS curriculum is available in a parent friendly handbook and can be found at: <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2015/03/what-to-expect-when-a-parents-guide/>

As well as the seven areas of learning, we ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and exploring**- children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active learning**- children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creative and thinking critically**- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

#### 4. Planning

*"Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned and purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activity" (EYFS Statutory Framework 2017).*

At Loyola Preparatory School, we support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that enables each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

Our planning has a sharp focus on the children's needs, their interests, and their stages of development. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links between them. We aim to deliver the curriculum through planned, purposeful play and present new concepts in meaningful contexts that enable the children to build on what they already know.

We deliver a creative curriculum which is based around a new topic each half term. Medium term planning shows the key learning experiences for each area of the curriculum. At the beginning of each topic, teachers lead the children in discussion to identify areas that they are particularly interested in. These contributions are then incorporated into the medium term plans.

Our short term planning shows the learning opportunities that will be available over the week. This includes differentiated adult led learning experiences for all curriculum areas, as well as showing how the learning environment will be enhanced in response to the previous week's observations and assessment of the children. Children share in daily phonics, reading, writing and mathematics sessions.

At all times, the characteristics of effective learning (playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically) are considered in our planning and teaching in order to meet each child's needs.

We ensure that children's next steps are met in our weekly planning, and also respond to their social and emotional needs as well as their achievement inside and outside of school.

## 5. Assessment

*"Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support" (EYFS Statutory Framework 2017).*

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's learning in order to ensure that future planning and teaching reflects identified needs. All our observations are recorded in the children's individual online Tapestry learning journal and include teacher, parent and child voice. Parents have access to WOW slips throughout the year, whereby they can record their own child's significant learning moments outside of school. Each child also has a 'Special Book' which contains photographs of important events during their time in the EYFS. This is annotated with children's comments and given to parents at the end of the reception year.

Across the EYFS, we provide termly written summary reports with a commentary on children's progress, and attainment towards the early learning goals. Parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher twice a year in a formal parents meeting. More informally we meet with parents throughout the school year as and when necessary to discuss their child's particular needs.

Baseline assessments are carried out during the first two weeks of the Christmas term in Reception, Lower Kindergarten and Upper Kindergarten. This information will inform us of the cohorts needs as well as academic attainment at point of entry. This information will be analysed within the EYFS team and shared with senior management.

These assessments are then updated at the end of the Christmas term, Lent term and Whitsun term.

We ensure our end of EYFS assessments are reliable through:-

- Our knowledge gained through observations and interactions
- Our assessments ensure a range of contributors:- e.g. parents, additional subject teachers, relevant adults
- Moderation across the EYFS team
- Moderation with year 1 teacher as well as the Local Authority

## 6. Teaching and Learning

At Loyola, children in the EYFS participate in whole class, small group and individual activities, with increasing times as the year progresses, in order to accommodate children's needs and stretch their learning.

The early year's education that we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the need of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

*"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development" (EYFS Statutory Framework 2017).*

Our ultimate aim is to help and guide the children to become independent, enquiring and evaluative learners. We follow children's interests, in order to fully engage them in taking charge of their own learning. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world.

## 7. Marking and Feedback

Each child in Reception and Upper Kindergarten will have a Literacy, News writing, Maths, and R.E. book. These books are used to record adult-initiated pieces of work. Entries into this book will be weekly and the work will be linked to the focus of the learning that week. These books are a way of tracking a child's progress and understanding over the year.

The learning objective and date will be displayed either on the work or on a sticker using an 'I can' statement.

Children's work is annotated where necessary (using a green pen), giving the context to the piece of work and/or recording the 'voice of the child'; this supports adults in the assessment of the child's overall understanding and attainment. Work is marked according to the Learning Objective (LO).

- Marking is done with the children verbally.
- Detailed marking is carried out by the teacher for half the class each week.
- The other half of the class will have verbal feedback with brief corrections. The symbol VF will be included for verbal feedback.
- Next steps are verbal and will be recorded as NS on their work.
- EBI, Even Better If will be used to focus pupil feedback.
- Children will usually respond to feedback immediately in most cases and not during the next lesson. E.g. letter formation, finding and writing a wrongly spelt tricky word, sounding a CVC word they know sounds for.
- If children are supported in their work this will be marked with an S or I if children have worked independently.
- Marking will not be detailed for child initiated activities.

## 8. The Learning Environment

At Loyola Preparatory School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. We always make sure that the learning environment inside and outside is planned effectively, to meet the requirements of all areas of learning.

We ensure that the classroom is well organised into clearly defined areas, which allows the children to explore and learn securely and safely. We encourage children to engage in purposeful, challenging activities with or without the presence of an adult.

The pupils in Lower Kindergarten have their own outdoor area and have many opportunities to work in the outdoors. Pupils in Reception and Upper Kindergarten have access to a small, shared outdoor space. Being outdoors offers opportunities for exploring and learning things differently to when pupils are indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. The children have access to sand, water, writing opportunities, **mud kitchen**, construction and role play. The children also have access to the school's adventure playground.

## 9. Parents as partners

*"Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up" (EYFS Statutory Framework 2017).*

We pride ourselves on having outstanding relationships with parents and other parties. 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 have played, and their future role in educating the children.

We hold stay and play sessions for our new starters and their families in the summer term, to give them the opportunity to spend time with their teacher, before starting school. We also invite parents to an induction meeting where they have the opportunity to meet with their child's new teacher and ask any questions they may have.

Any information provided by parents about their child will be kept confidential. If we have any concerns about a child's well-being during the day, every effort will be made to contact the parents or their emergency contact. Therefore, parents are requested to keep us informed of any changes to personal circumstances which may have an effect upon their child e.g. change of address, telephone number, doctor, emergency contact.

Parents are also requested to keep us informed of any circumstances which may have an effect on a child's overall well-being e.g. separation, or illness in the family.

When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We develop this by:

- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- sharing progress at school and encouraging parents to comment on their child's "WOW" moments
- encouraging parents to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school contact book
- encouraging relevant learning tasks to be continued at home ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- providing three formal written reports to parents summarizing the child's progress against the early learning goals
- Meeting with parents formally during the Christmas and Lent terms

Parents are informed via their child's class webpage about the weekly learning aims in each learning area. Parents are also provided with a weekly newsletter, or at times additional letters, giving diary dates and information regarding forthcoming events or articles about school life.

## 10. Safeguarding and Welfare

*"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, when they have positive adults caring for them" (EYFS Statutory Framework 2017).*

At Loyola Preparatory School, it is important to us that all children in school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

At Loyola we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding 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 and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

## **11. Inclusion and Equal opportunities**

At Loyola Preparatory 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 different ways, and at varying rates. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and treat children fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities.

We use a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs and use resources which reflect diversity. We monitor children’s progress and take action to provide support as necessary. We focus on removing barriers to learning and aim to identify any learning difficulties at an early stage.

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans and Pupil concern forms identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school’s Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy. The school’s EYFS SEN Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

## **12. Transition**

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children to settle into their new class quickly and happily. During the summer term children are invited in to attend induction sessions with their parents, in order to develop familiarity within the setting and with the practitioners as well as introduce them to the school’s key procedures and practices

In the summer term, we begin a programme of transition to support our Reception children with the move to Year 1. This involves visits to the year 1 classroom and opportunities for the children to ask any questions they may have. The year 1 teacher also visits the Reception class to teach a number of lessons and get to know the children.

Each child’s level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels (‘emerging’). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the child’s report together with a short commentary on their skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child’s stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

## **13 Health and Safety**

At Loyola, there are clear procedures for assessing risk which include procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment as follows:

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.

- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept in each EYFS classroom. First Aid will be administered by trained staff only.
- Daily risk assessment checks are completed in each EYFS classroom and outdoor area to ensure that any hazards are identified and managed prior to the children entering the classroom.
- Staff are not permitted to use their personal mobile phones, cameras or video recording equipment when in the presence of children on school premises.

#### **14 Outings**

Written parental permission is obtained to take children on trips. Risk assessments are completed for each outing and signed off by the Deputy Headteacher.

#### **15 Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of those working within the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head and the EYFS co-ordinator will monitor the EYFS provision as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

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