



**Excalibur Academies Trust**  
Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

Date of approval	17 January 2020
Approved by	Excalibur Education Scrutiny Committee
Review date	January 2023

## **I. Document History**

Policy agreed by LGBs	2013	LGBs
Policy review	2016	Wendy Chadwick, Anne Normington and Sarah Montague-Smith
Policy review	2020	Julie McKay (Lead Practitioner EYFS), Anne Normington (Head of Primary), all Principals

## **2. Philosophy**

Excalibur Academies Trust believes that 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. We aim to provide welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environments for all our children, where they are able to enjoy learning through play, to grow in confidence and to fulfil their potential.

## **3. Aims**

It is every child's right to grow up safe and healthy, enjoying and achieving. In Excalibur Academies, the following four guiding principles shape our EYFS practice:

- Every child is a unique child, a person who is constantly learning, a person who 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, where their experiences meet their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between staff and parents or carers
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We provide for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Principal has the overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is implemented and overseeing all issues relating to the Early Years.

The Reception Teacher or teachers have the responsibility of keeping abreast of current national and local initiatives and leading the school in this curriculum area and implementing high quality teaching and learning.

The Governors have the responsibility for monitoring, supporting and challenging the work of the school, including the EYFS provision and this policy.

The Principal, the Local Governing Body (LGB) and the Excalibur CEO are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the provision as well as the progress and attainment of the children in the Reception year.

## **5. Learning and Development**

We believe children learn best through real experiences and active learning. We provide opportunities for teacher directed, teacher initiated and child initiated learning opportunities. In doing so we ensure children have opportunities to engage and thrive in all aspects and areas of learning and development.

We follow the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* document (Department for Education 2017) which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. This is updated as new documentation becomes available from the DFE.

The statutory framework identifies seven areas of learning and development which are split into Prime Areas and Specific Areas:

### Prime Areas

- Communication and Language (Listening and attention, Understanding and Speaking)
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

### Specific Areas

- Literacy (Reading and Writing)
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Within the above areas of learning, our teaching supports the different ways that children learn. The three characteristics of effective learning are: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically.

## **6. Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand their current interests, development and learning.

When planning, we are mindful of *Development Matters* (DFE, 2013) which is guidance material, supporting practitioners in implementing the statutory EYFS requirements.

## **7. Learning Environment**

In each Academy, we aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment where we encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, able to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; the outside is used as often as is practical. Every day children have sessions where they select focussed play activities.

## **8. Assessment and recording**

Assessment is the responsibility of the class teacher. All staff who work with the children contribute towards the assessment process, along with parents and carers and to a degree, the children.

Assessment is undertaken regularly and in two different forms:

### **a) Formative assessment**

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on continual observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations or other focused assessments. Over the year, the teacher's own knowledge of the children will provide the prime evidence which can be used for assessment. Other examples of evidence could include a Learning Journey, the use of electronic recording assessments, informal jottings, drawings, writing and photographs.

### **b) Summative assessment**

At the time of writing, baseline assessment at the start of the EYFS year is optional. Academies will base future baseline assessments on statutory requirements. During the year, attainment and progress is periodically monitored by each Academy and the Trust. Governors are kept informed so they are able to challenge and support, as appropriate.

Each Academy will follow the statutory processes for summative assessment at the end of the year. Currently this is the EYFS Profile (see document list below) which summarises the formative assessment and makes statements about the child's achievements. It assesses the children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. These assessments are reported to the Local Authority in June.

Moderation of assessments takes the following form: internal moderation throughout the year and external statutory moderation, as required by the Local Authority. All Academies are mindful of good practice; the teachers will attend where possible, cross-school moderation sessions and moderation training each year.

## **9. Reporting**

During the year there are formal, planned opportunities for parents to meet with the EYFS teacher to discuss progress. These are scheduled throughout the year. Should there be concerns about a child's learning, behaviour or progress, other meetings can be arranged by the teacher or by parents and carers.

Formal reporting to parents, carers and receiving teachers is followed in line with the Standards and Testing Agency's *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile*, which is updated annually. This can be accessed using the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

## **10. Admission to Reception**

The Academy admissions arrangements are in line with our admissions policy which can be found on our website. Guidance for parents and carers who have children who are starting school in Reception can be found on each Academy's website or provided at the point of transition. All Academies operate a transition programme designed to support the child joining the school and their family.

### **11. Home/School Links (academy specific)**

We recognise the huge contribution parents and carers make to their child's learning and we work hard to develop and sustain links with parents and carers so that we work together.

We encourage parents and carers to speak to their child's teacher or teaching assistant to share any celebrations, concerns or worries. All children are provided with a Reading Record book / Diary or similar, which can also double as a 'communication book' between home and school. Parents and carers are encouraged to write in it and check it for staff comments.

### **12. SEND**

We provide for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – see SEN Policy. As Excalibur Academies we believe that early identification and support for these children is important and we work with parents and carers to achieve this.

### **13. Safeguarding, Health and Safety**

The welfare of all our children is a priority.

Safeguarding, child welfare and health and safety procedures for are following in line with section 3 of the DFE's *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)*. This includes specific requirements with regards to staffing and pupil ratios.

The class teacher acts as the 'key worker' for the children in Reception. We ensure the requisite number of staff are paediatric first aid trained. Safeguarding, welfare, health and safety procedures and policies are reviewed regularly.

### **14. Relevant Documents**

#### **Academy:**

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

#### **National:**

Department for Education's *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)*

DFE's *Development Matters (2013)*

Standards and Testing Agency's *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook EYFS Handbook*

Standards and Testing Agency's *Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment and Reporting Arrangements*

Standards and Testing Agency's *EYFS Profile Exemplification for the Learning and Development Expected at the End of the EYFS*

Date of Review – January 2020

Date of Next Review – January 2023