Early Years Policy

Agreed on September 2026

Review date September 2027

Statement of intent

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'
Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

At Evergreen Primary Academy (EPA), the child is at the heart of everything we do. We recognise that the Reception year is the beginning of a child's school journey. So, it is essential that strong foundations: academically, socially, physically and emotionally are instilled and curiosity and a love of learning is fostered.

We intend for our children to develop curiosity as an underlying skill for successful learning and the development of the unique child. All adults will therefore foster children's curiosity by establishing positive relationships, developing an enabling and supportive environment, by responding to their individual interests and needs and helping them build their learning over time. They will therefore:

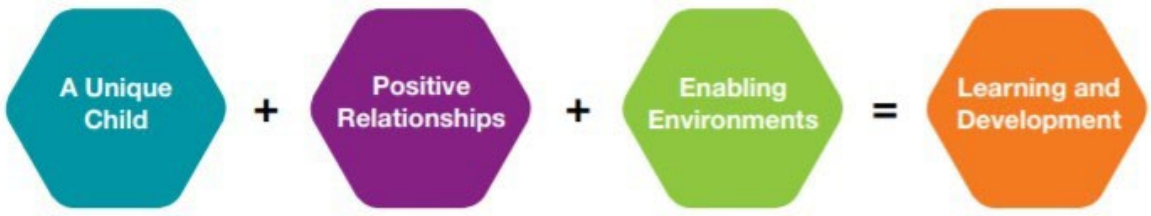
We intend for children to:

- Be curious
- Develop independence, self-agency and creativity
- Feel, safe, secured and loved
- Build resilience
- Have self-belief, determination and confidence that anything is possible
- Engage in a variety of play and learning experiences with intrinsic motivation
- Begin to understand the part they play in the modern world and their responsibility
- Understand the value of reading
- Have access to a broad, rich and balanced EYFS curriculum with both child-led and adult-led learning opportunities.

EYFS Principles

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 Development – an acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.



Learning and development

- At Evergreen, our curriculum is designed to provide rich, meaningful and exciting learning opportunities for our children. Some learning is adult-led and some directed by the children themselves during their child lead learning time. Appropriate intervention by EYFS practitioners, supports children to engage and extend their learning.
- We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We achieve this by considering each child's life experience so far and plan accordingly.
- Learning is planned with regards to the three characteristics and effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:
  - Being curious (playing and exploring) – children investigate and experience things
  - Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their experience.
  - Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

EYFS curriculum:

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **Quality and consistency** in early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left being.
- **A secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensure that every child is included and supported.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to

learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as EYFS reforms early adopter framework 9 necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as

building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Early Learning Goals

- The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs) as set out below.
- The ELGs should not be used as a curriculum or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development, from being read to frequently to playing with friends.
- Instead, the ELGs should support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development and their readiness for Year 1.

Communication and Language

ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding
- Hold conversations when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

ELG: Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduces vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

ELG: Self – Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.

- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions

ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

ELG: Building relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers
- Show sensitivity to their own and others needs.

Physical development

ELG: Gross Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing

ELG: Fine motor skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Literacy

ELG: Comprehension

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories
- Use and understand recently introduces vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

ELG: Word reading

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

ELG: Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Mathematics

ELG: Number

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number
- Subitise
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5, (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including doubling facts.

ELG: Numerical patters

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed evenly.

Understanding the World

ELG: Past and present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling

ELG: People, cultures and communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps

- Know some similarities and differences between religious and cultural communities in this country drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and where appropriate maps.

ELG: The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants
  Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
  Understand the importance processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG: Creating with materials

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters and narratives in stories

ELG: Being imaginative and expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher

- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and -when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

Inclusion

At Evergreen, we believe that every child is unique, valued, and entitled to an environment where they can thrive, feel safe, and belong. Inclusion is at the heart of our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. We are committed to dismantling barriers to learning, celebrating diversity, and ensuring that every child—regardless of their background, culture, ability, or additional needs—is given the opportunity to reach their full potential.
To turn this commitment into daily practice, we ensure that:

- **A Unique Child:** We recognise, respect, and celebrate each child's individual identity, cultural heritage, and personal strengths. We use the **Zones of Regulation** framework universally with all children, teaching them to understand, talk about, and safely manage their emotions at their own developmental pace.
- **Positive Relationships:** We work in close, transparent partnership with parents, carers, and external professionals. We foster an environment built on mutual respect where every family feels heard, supported, and represented within our community.
- **Enabling Environments:** Our physical spaces are intentionally designed to support diverse emotional and sensory needs. Inside our classrooms, dedicated **calm spaces** provide a quiet, predictable retreat for children to regulate. Outside, our **outdoor forest space** offers a rich, natural environment where all children can build confidence, take supported risks, and connect with the world through accessible, hands-on learning.

- **Learning and Development:** We hold high expectations for all children. Through proactive early identification and targeted, flexible scaffolding, we ensure that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or English as an Additional Language (EAL) are fully included in all aspects of our curriculum.

At Evergreen, inclusion is not an addition to what we do; it is the **foundation** of who we are. We continually reflect on our practices to ensure our setting remains a warm, equitable, and nurturing space where every child can grow.

Learning environment and outdoor space

- We recognise that the environment plays a fundamental role in supporting and extending a child's development and that the use of resources and environment needs to be carefully considered and planned for.
- We aim to create a welcoming, inviting, engaging and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and problem solve.
- Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area, and daily activities are planned appropriately using not just the EYFS area but all areas at Evergreen

Observation, Assessment and Planning

- Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and challenging. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do.
- Observations are recorded when/where appropriate. If observations are recorded, these will be shared in learning zone 3. This is shared with all EYFS staff, SLT and parents/carers.
- Parents and carers are partners in the assessment, observation and planning process through regular meetings with the class teacher through sharing their child's interests, achievements and home learning.

Safeguarding and 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.'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Evergreen, the safety, health, and emotional well-being of our children are our highest priorities. We strictly adhere to the mandatory requirements of the **2026 EYFS Statutory Framework** to ensure a secure, transparent, and nurturing environment where children are protected from harm and supported to thrive.

1. Child Protection and Safeguarding

Culture of Vigilance: We maintain a proactive safeguarding culture where all staff undergo regular training to recognize, record, and report signs of abuse, neglect, or radicalisation.

Reporting Thresholds: In line with updated guidance, Evergreen commits to notifying Ofsted and always within 14 days—of any allegations of harm (lowered from the historical "serious harm" threshold) regarding anyone living, working, or looking after children on our premises.

Electronic Devices and Screen Time: To mitigate online safety risks, staff use of personal mobile phones and recording equipment is strictly prohibited in the presence of children (please see mobile phone policy). In line with 2026 DfE guidance, children aged two to five are limited to a maximum of one hour of high-quality, educational screen time per day.

2. Safer Recruitment and Vetting

Robust Pre-Employment Checks: No staff member or volunteer is permitted to begin working or assisting at Evergreen until an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, barred list check, and suitability letter have been officially received.

Supervised Volunteers: We enforce mandatory enhanced criminal record checks for all volunteers, regardless of whether they are supervised, ensuring total oversight of adults in contact with children.

Ongoing Suitability: All employees are subject to strict continuous disclosure requirements, meaning they must immediately report any change in circumstances, convictions, or disqualifications that could affect their suitability to work with children.

3. Health and Well-being

Emotional Regulation: We actively protect children's mental well-being by embedding the Zones of Regulation across the setting and providing dedicated classroom calm spaces alongside our outdoor areas to support self-regulation and emotional safety.

Premises and Animal Safety: We guarantee a safe physical environment. Evergreen operates a zero-tolerance policy regarding banned dog breeds, ensuring no prohibited animals are ever kept or present on our childcare premises.

- The DSL is Julie Vincent (Safeguarding Lead)
- The deputy DSL is Toni Dorse (Vice Principal).
- The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services where possible.
- Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and recognise signs of abuse and neglect.
- All concerns will be recorded on CPOMS and shared with the relevant staff and DSL's

- For further information, please consult the Safeguarding Policy.

Mobile phones and devices

- For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images of record videos, including tablets.

Use of mobile phones by EYFS staff

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present.
- Staff may use mobile phones on school premises outside of working hours when no children are present.
- Mobile devices will remain in the lockers provided or teacher's cupboards and on silent mode.

Use of the school's mobile phones and cameras

- EYFS staff are provided with a school device (iPad) to ensure that only school devices are used to take photographs and videos.
- School devices must have passcode protection.

Health and safety including safer eating

Safer eating

At Evergreen, we ensure that mealtimes are safe, social, and positive learning experiences. We strictly adhere to the mandatory safeguarding and welfare requirements regarding safer eating, choking prevention, and nutritional standards.

Children must always be within clear sight and hearing of staff while eating or drinking. Because choking is frequently entirely silent, staff must sit directly facing the children during mealtimes to immediately detect signs of distress, manage food sharing, and monitor for unexpected allergic reactions. At least one staff member holding a valid, full **Paediatric First Aid certificate** must be physically present in the room at all times while children are eating. At Evergreen, the following staff members have Paediatric First aid training:

- Charlotte Cox (EYFS teacher)
- Charlotte Atwell (EYFS LSA)
- Toni Dorse (EYFS lead and Vice Principal)
- Julie Vincent (DSL)
- Kerry Coote (Principal)
- Safia Duale (First aid lead and senior administrator)
- Agata Russe (SENDCo)
- Zainab Akther (LSA)
- Katie Goodfellow (Teacher)

All food provided by Evergreen, as well as packed lunches brought from home, must follow strict DfE Food Safety and Choking Prevention guidelines:

- High-Risk Shape Modifications: Round foods (such as grapes and cherry tomatoes) must always be cut lengthwise into quarters, never into circular rounds.

- Firm Foods and Sausages: Sausages, large fruits, and hard vegetables must be peeled, cut into narrow, vertical batons/strips, and cooked until soft. Chunks or cubes of cheese and meat are avoided.

- Banned High-Risk Foods: Whole nuts, whole seeds, popcorn, marshmallows, hard sweets, and raw jelly cubes are strictly prohibited in the setting.

Allergy Management

Pre-Admission Vetting: Comprehensive medical records detailing a child's food allergies, dietary intolerances, and preferences are obtained before the child's first day. This information is immediately logged and clearly displayed for all staff involved in preparing, serving, or supervising mealtimes. Individualised Allergy Action Plans are reviewed and updated regularly alongside parents and healthcare professionals.

Staff trained in advanced epi-pen are:

- Kerry Coote (principal)
- Toni Dorse (EY lead and vice principal)
- Charlotte Atwell (EY LSA)
- Agata Russe (SENDCo)
- Safia Duale (First aid lead and senior administrator)

Additional:

- A small first aid box is located in the EYFS classroom.

- Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered by a trained member of staff (see First aid policy).

- Class teachers will report any accident or injury involving the child to their parents on the day that it occurs.

- The school has a Fire Evacuation Plan in place

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times

For further information please see the full Health and Safety Policy.

Staffing

- 1 teacher and a LSA for designated children
- Each member of staff will have a line manager.

Information and records

- Information is stored in line with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

Parent involvement

- Parents are invited to parent's evenings in the Autumn and Spring term; however, EYFS has an open door policy and parents are welcome to talk to the team at the start and end of the school day.
- Parents are asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the school internet.
- It is recommended that parents download the Classdojo app. This is a great way for parents to receive reminders and get messages home ASAP.
- Parents are asked to complete admission forms including a medical form as part of the induction process when a child starts school.

Transition periods

The following process is in place to ensure children's successful transition to EYFS:

1. Parents receive a welcome phone call from class teacher, inviting them to attend a tour/initial welcome meeting.
2. School receives transition information from nurseries. This is shared with EYFS team and will be added to CPOMS in September.
3. During Summer term, child and parents/carers visit school for 5 stay and plays with class teacher and whole class stay and play session.
4. Term 1 – Mon/Tue – mornings only
5. Term 1 – Week 1 – Wed/Thu – mornings and lunch – Fri: full time

Monitoring and review

- This policy is reviewed by the Academy Council and Headteacher.
- Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
- All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction

. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and reception teacher will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.