**Swain House Primary School**

**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Updated September 2022**

**Safeguarding Statement**

At Swain House Primary School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Swain House Primary School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

**Equality Statement**

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

**1. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

This policy aims to ensure:

* That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad 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 gets left behind
* A close working partnership between staff and 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 [2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2).

**3. Curriculum**

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

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

By developing the characteristics of effective learning, we aim to give each child access to a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum, which will enable them to reach their full potential intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and spiritually. We believe that learning takes place through activities, which promote the three characteristics of effective learning:

* playing and exploring - finding out and exploring, playing with what they know, being willing to ‘have a go’;
* active learning - being involved and concentrating, keeping trying, enjoying achieving what they set out to do;
* creative and critical thinking - having their own ideas, making links, working with ideas

**3.1 Planning**

Our Early Years curriculum puts stories and early language at the heart of it and offers experiences which build on children’s existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning.

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. 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.

In planning and guiding children’s activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. The EYFS framework provides a long term plan outlining the Learning Outcomes and Early Learning Goals to be covered throughout the pupil’s time in the Foundation Stage. Medium term planning provides an overview of learning which will take place over a few weeks and includes input from the children as to what they want to learn. Short term planning identifies planned learning for individual and groups of children across all areas of learning in both adult led and child initiated activities indoors and out.

**3.2. 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 interactions.

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.

**6. Assessment and Record Keeping**

At Swain House Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Evidence of children’s learning is used in each child’s Learning Journey, recording children’s progress over the academic year in all areas of learning and development.

When a child is aged between 2 and 3, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child’s development in the 3 prime areas. This ‘progress check’ highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (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 (expected)
* Not yet reaching expected levels (‘emerging’)

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

**7. The Learning Environment**

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. The environment must be warm, calming and welcoming in order to nurture and facilitate a sense of belonging.

Children are encouraged to think and talk about their learning and to develop self-control and independence. It is essential to us that all children in our school are ‘safe’ and we educate them to understand why rules and boundaries exist. We believe children should be allowed to take risks but we educate them to recognise and avoid hazards by providing children with choices to help them develop this vital life skill.

The physical environment supports learning with appropriate space, facilities and equipment and is organised with due regard to health and safety. Resources are provided to allow children to access the curriculum. Some resources will be continually available, whilst others will enhance the current topic, learning and/or children’s interests. Wherever appropriate, we will attempt to reflect the world in which we live, through our provision of resources. Displays will reflect both current learning and children’s work, and will be changed regularly. They will invite children to respond in different ways.

**8. Working with parents**

We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children’s learning and development. We strive to build a partnership based upon shared understanding, mutual respect and open dialogue and recognise the importance of building and maintaining strong links between home and school. We value the role of parents as children’s primary educators and encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children’s needs and interests.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child’s progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child’s development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

We build relationships with parents through:-

* talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
* teacher visits for all children in their setting prior to them starting school
* Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
* Providing a welcoming environment with approachable staff who are interested in the needs of all children.
* A formal written report at the end of the year.
* A curriculum letter/newsletter which outlines the main concepts covered over the course of a half term, to allow reinforcement and extension of learning at home.
* Workshops to support parents and carers in supporting their child’s learning out of school.
* Parents are invited to class assemblies and special events throughout the year.
* An open door policy with approachable, friendly staff.
* Asking them to complete “Star Moment” cards to share achievements at home.

**9. Transition**

We want all children to settle quickly and confidently into Foundation stage at Swain House Primary and transition supports this process.

We hold a Welcome meeting for new parents/carers prior to the child’s entry to Reception class, including a welcome pack containing all the information needed before starting school. Practitioners visit children in their own settings if they don’t attend Great Oak Nursery at Swain House Primary School. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners to develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to school as smooth as possible. All children are invited to come to visit the Reception classes during the latter part of the summer term, to allow them to meet the practitioners and start to become familiar with the school environment. We operate a staggered entry to Reception in September in order that practitioners can give time to the children in order that they all feel safe, happy and secure.

We also hold open evenings for our Little Acorns, 2-year-old nursery and our Great Oak Nursery for 3 – 4 year olds. This allows children and parents alike to meet staff, see the learning and environment and ask any questions they may have before their child starts in our care.

**10. Equal Opportunities**

All children have the right to equality of opportunity through both the taught and hidden curriculum. We value individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of differences. All children at Swain House Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their full potential. We do this by taking account of children’s life experiences and using this when planning for their learning.We aim to foster and develop mutual tolerance and respect through our teaching and our actions, both with children and adults within the setting. This is done through:

* Planning opportunities that build upon and extend what the child already knows, can do and understands.
* Using a range of teaching strategies based upon children’s needs.
* Providing a range of opportunities to motivate, support and develop children’s learning.
* Providing a safe and supportive environment where the contribution of all children is valued, and where racial, religious, disability, and gender stereotypes are always challenged.
* Using materials and resources that positively reflect diversity and don’t discriminate or present stereotyped ideas.
* Differentiating work to meet the needs of more able and less able children, boys and girls, children with Special Educational Needs, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds and children from different ethnic groups and linguistic backgrounds.
* Monitoring children’s progress, identifying areas of concern, and providing support when necessary.

**11. Special Educational Needs (see SEND Policy)**

It is recognised that early year’s staff play a key role in working with parents to identify learning needs and in responding to areas of difficulty. Strategies to meet needs may be:

* Working with parents to ensure shared knowledge and understanding.
* Observations to present an overall picture of needs.
* Sharing observations and identified plan of action with all members of team to ensure continuity.
* Adapting teaching and/or resources.
* Individual Education Plans to identify need and highlight strategies.
* Working together with staff from other agencies.
* Providing additional support, when needed.

If a need is identified, the SENDCO is informed and the school’s procedure put into place. A meeting will be held with parents to discuss concerns and a plan of action will be agreed. Parents will be kept fully informed at all times.

**12. Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

* The effects of eating too many sweet things
* The importance of brushing your teeth

As part of our safeguarding and welfare procedures, we ensure staff have regular supervision meetings with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Early Years to:

* discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns
* identify solutions to address issues as they arise
* receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

**13. Monitoring and review**

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS who will discuss EYFS practice with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Early Years and provide feedback to the Governing Body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Leadership Team will monitor the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

**Linked Policies:**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and appendices

Positive Behavior policy and

Teaching & Learning Policy