



SOMERHILL

# EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

**Owner: Head of SPP**

**Reviewed: January 2024**

**Next Review: October 2024**



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## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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The Early Years Department at Somerhill places great value in giving pupils the opportunity to flourish in all areas of school life. Our ethos is one of strong pastoral care, nurturing each child and supporting children and their family. We understand that children are individuals who mature at different times and in different ways.

### **1. Introduction aims and ethos**

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate and discover their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

The Early Years department at Somerhill comprises of Nursery (children aged 2.5-3.5), Kindergarten (children aged 3-4) and Reception (children aged 4-5). We do not provide an education for pupils who are below the age of two years and 6 months.

A copy of this policy is available to all current and prospective parents on the school website. It forms part of the induction pack for all staff who are new to the EYFS at Somerhill, together with other documentation and policies, including information relating to child protection and safeguarding.

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed to progress positively through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good or excellent progress and develops a love of learning



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- Early intervention and identification of support needed to ensure children's emotional, social and academic needs are addressed at the soonest opportunity
- 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

At Somerhill, the EYFS team are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage as outlined in the Statutory Framework 2024, this framework sets the standards for learning, development and welfare for children from birth to 31 August, following a child's fifth birthday.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their 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. 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.' (Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024)

## 3. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Safeguarding is EVERYONE'S responsibility

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Sian Lambert, Deputy Head Pastoral

Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for EYFS and Pre-Prep: Mrs Amanda McKnight, Head of Pre-Prep

Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding: Mrs Eleanor Henery

The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Somerhill. Staff have access to the 'Smoothwall' safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

Somerhill has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role.

The EYFS staff hold the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Somerhill. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety. In EYFS we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately;



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- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose;
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote good oral health as well as good general health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. At Somerhill we discuss with the children, the effects of eating too many sweet things, the importance of brushing your teeth, eating a balanced diet and drinking water.

### **Photographs and videos**

At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed/videoed during their time in school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children's learning journeys and on the school's website or social media. EYFS staff record children's learning using Tapestry software, which is downloaded onto staff ipads, issued by the school. Recording learning on staffs' personal devices is not permitted and must not be accessed or used when children are present. Mobile devices must be stored away in a locked cupboard or drawer.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class cameras are used to photograph children (for Tapestry observations and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

## **4. Structure of the EYFS**

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS' and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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 their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers;
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests;
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported;



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- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

## 5. Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and sometimes exceed the Early Learning Goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1.

The **prime areas** are:

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

The **specific areas** are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn. These are referred to as the ***characteristics of effective teaching and learning***:

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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

## Planning

We create medium term plans based on the Creative Curriculum topic for each term, which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning. At the beginning of each topic the children are encouraged to share their ideas for learning experiences with us. These ideas are then used to inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations which identify areas to focus on. We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met. Children will engage each day in whole group and small group activities these are referred to as 'Teacher Directed Activities' alongside their independent learning.



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The creative curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: *'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'*. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible. As children progress through the early years, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more directed whole class learning, ready for Year One.

## **6. Assessment**

During the first 4 weeks in the new class, each child's key worker completes a Somerhill baseline document. A form to complete about the child's development is also sent to each child's parent. This information then informs the starting point for each child so that next steps can be determined. Using the Early Years Framework, children's progress is measured applying developmental milestones referenced in the government document Development Matters and Birth to Five. However, as experienced practitioners, we also know children develop at different rates and it is not always seen in linear patterns. So, though we measure and track using the track and on track criteria, our focus is on the progress of each unique child.

Every half term, the EYFS team sit down to discuss where each child is and what progress has or has not been made. Every 6 weeks, there is a pupil progress meeting with the Head of Pre-Prep and EYFS SEN coordinator to highlight children that need intervention or specialist referrals. This meeting also informs next steps and intervention is put in place accordingly.

Tracking the social and emotional wellbeing of children is paramount to their making progress. Therefore every child's wellbeing is discussed in weekly staff meetings; children that raise any concern are highlighted and support is put into place when needed.

In Reception assessments are carried out more regularly to track progress in phonics, reading and writing. Read Write Inc. assessments take place around every 6 weeks to track phonics and reading progress. An independent writing piece is evaluated every half term. At the end of the academic year a GL Progress Test for Maths and English is completed.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30th June, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The profiles provide parents with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against the Early Learning Goals and their readiness for Year One. The teacher indicates whether the child has met the expected level of development or if they are not yet reaching expected levels. Parents are welcome to discuss the profile report with their child's class teacher. The results of the Profile are shared with our Year One teachers as part of a handover discussion. The Profile results are reported to Kent County Council upon request.

## **7. Working with parents**

We recognise the importance of building strong relationships and working in close partnership with every parent or carer right from the start. Having a Key Person with whom to leave their child everyday will give



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parents peace of mind knowing that their child will be looked after and cared for as an individual within any group situation.

We promote positive links between home and school throughout the school year:

Calendar of parental links in EYFS			
	Nursery	Kindergarten	Reception
September	Stay and play to support transition Welcome to Nursery Coffee Morning	Stay and play to support transition Welcome to Nursery Coffee Morning	Meet the Teacher & Welcome to Reception Evening <i>How we teach maths parent workshop</i> How we teach your child to read and write parent workshop
October	<b>Parents Consultation Meetings</b>	Maths workshop <b>Parents Consultation Meetings</b>	What is the Creative Curriculum parent Workshop <b>Parents Consultation Meetings</b>
November	Somerhill Fireworks Evening <b>Parents Consultation Meetings</b>	Somerhill Fireworks Evening <b>Parents Consultation Meetings</b>	Somerhill Fireworks Evening
December	Parents Christmas Craft Day	Nativity performance	<b>Interim written Report</b> Christmas Singing performance
January	Potty Training Parent Workshop	Potty Training Parent Workshop	
February	Sleep Parent Workshop Open Classroom	Sleep Parent Workshop Open Classroom	Sleep Parent Workshop Open Classroom
March	Fussy Eaters Parent Workshop <b>Parents Consultation Meetings</b>	Fussy Eaters Parent Workshop <b>Parents Consultation Meetings</b>	Fussy Eaters Parent Workshop <b>Parents Consultation Meetings</b>
April	Early Reading & Writing Preparation Parent Workshop	Early Reading & Writing Preparation Parent Workshop	
May	Open classroom	Open Classroom	Open Classroom
June	Sports Day	Sports Day	Sports Day SPP Trinity show



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July	Move up day /Transition Meet the new Teacher coffee <b>End of year written report</b>	Move up day /Transition Meet the new Teacher coffee  <b>End of year written reports</b>	Move up day /Transition Meet the new Teacher coffee Family Book Look Picnic <b>End of year written report</b>
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- Curriculum information for parents is available on the school website
- At Somerhill Pre-Prep we operate an open-door policy, which will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if EYFS practitioners have concerns about the progress or behaviour of a child, they will approach parents and carers to discuss them.

## 8. Supervision

Child's Age on entry	Provision Available	Hours	Adult to child ratio
2 ½ years	Nursery	8.30-11.30am 8.30-1.15am 8.30-3.15pm	1: 4 2 year olds 1:8 3 year olds
3 - 4 years	Kindergarten	8.30-11.30am 8.30-1.15am 8.30-3.15pm	1:8 3 year olds
4 - 5 years	Reception	8.30am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday	1:30 4-year-olds statutory 1:9 at Somerhill
2 ½ - 3½ years	Saplings Nursery	8.30 - 11.00am 12.30 -3.00pm	1:4
3 - 4 years	Saplings Kindergarten	8.30 - 3.00pm	1:6

EYFS children that are signed up for wrap around care are supervised at the same ratios as stated above.

## 9. Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We work closely with the parents/carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential.





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We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies. We have an experienced EYFS SEN teacher who works with all the early years staff and children.

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The SENCo is responsible for providing advice and additional information for staff and parents and for arranging external interventions and support where appropriate. Somerhill is committed to the early identification of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and to adopting clear and open procedures which are outlined in this policy. Staff are committed to working closely with parents who are fully involved in all decisions that affect their children's education. The Pre-Prep will provide, within available resources, the highest possible quality support and inclusive education for children with SEND. The Pre-Prep will actively promote multi agency working to support with additional needs in the knowledge that early intervention is key to a child's learning journey.

Parents are consulted at every level of intervention and have the right to be involved in discussions about their child. Procedures are explained to parents in order to develop a close working relationship and so parents are made aware of the targets being set for their child. Parents are offered advice about how they can work with their child at home should they wish. The effectiveness of any intervention will also depend on the level of involvement with parents. For further information please refer to the Learning Support (Educational Needs) Policy.

Equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

## **10. Complaints procedure**

In the event of a complaint the school's complaint procedure should be followed. This can be found on the school website: Complaints Policy.

1. In the first instance parents/carers should address any concerns to their child's Key Worker/or the Reception Teacher
2. The next step would be to contact the Head of EYFS/Pre-Prep to arrange a meeting

## **11. Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of all staff working in EYFS to follow this policy. All new members of the Early Years Department receive a thorough induction into the school's expectations and procedures when they start at Somerhill. The Head of Pre-Prep is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Preschool Coordinator and the Reception team as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.



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All adults in the EYFS team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance targets.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by EYFS Leader annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## List of statutory policies and procedures for EYFS

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according to the statutory framework.

Statutory policy or procedure for EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy & procedures	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	Medical Policy
Administering medicines policy	First Aid Policy
Emergency evacuation procedures	Health & Safety Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Pre-Prep and EYFS Late & Missing Child Policy
Use of mobile phones and tablets in EYFS	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Intimate Care Policy	Pre prep and EYFS Intimate Care Policy

## Additional relevant policies include:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- School Trips Policy



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## Appendix 1

### Pre-Prep including EYFS Induction – SETTLING IN AND TRANSITION POLICY

Related documents: Admissions Policy

#### Prospective Parents

The Admissions Team usually deals with initial contact with prospective parents. Parents are offered a tour of Pre-Prep with a member of the admissions department. On that tour, they meet the Head of Pre-Prep. They visit the classrooms and see all the facilities their child would use during their days at school. They may then also meet with the Principal and tour the wider school facilities. Should the visit lead to registration, the Registrar will add the child's name to the appropriate list. The child will be entered as a prospective applicant in the electronic administrative system. Prospective parents are invited to special days such as Meet the Teacher, Stay and Play or The Bear Hunt to give a taster of life at Somerhill.

In Pre-Prep, we place a great deal of importance on the induction of new pupils as the start of a child's learning journey must be happy and secure to ensure a child's future success in education. At Somerhill, we believe transitions are **central to young children's development and emotional wellbeing**; therefore, we do everything we can to ensure parents and carers are fully informed about the journey ahead; the curriculum that will be taught, the approach to teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, as well as the practical arrangements of starting school.

All staff will supervise children new to the school to ensure that they are happy in their new surroundings. Staff will explain the fire evacuation procedure and demonstrate the locations of all fire exits, in a manner suitable for the child's age and maturity. Staff will regularly ask how a child feels, what activities they enjoy, and if they are unhappy about anything. A phone call to the parents/carers is made by the school mid-morning to share some reassuring words on how the child is settling.

#### Starting in Nursery, Kindergarten

Our Early Years Department recognises that all children are unique and the amount of time that a child takes to settle in can vary enormously. Therefore, children will be given time to settle in at their own pace to make them feel welcome, safe and confident in a new environment. Our practitioners work together with parents to support the children before, during and after the transition occurs.

Children in Nursery and Kindergarten are invited in for an initial taster session/day depending on the child's age. The Pre-Prep office work with the Admissions Team to liaise with the parents over when to come and what to bring. If the children require more than one taster session a second, longer session will be arranged. Once the child's key worker feels the child has transitioned well, the child will be ready for a full session. Your child's teacher will set up a time to then talk more about your child to gain more information about their development and their interests. This process begins to build the important parent teacher relationship with the child's parents/carers before the child starts school and helps the settling process.



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We are not registered for children under 2 years old, so prospective children for our Nursery are dealt with individually. The Pre School coordinator emails the parents and invites the child to join the Nursery class for an hour or so whilst the parent remains on site. This has been extremely successful in promoting ease of transition into our Pre School. Every child is different in their transitioning needs, so we work with each family to support their child.

## **Starting in Reception**

Reception is the natural entry point for those children who have not attended our Nursery and Kindergarten classes. To enable the best possible start, the Reception teacher gathers information about the new pupil. They will contact the child's previous early years setting to speak with their key worker. Children will be invited in for a taster day and moving up day, to help their transition.

## **Starting in Year 1 or Year 2/KS1 to KS2**

Prospective children will be invited to a taster day. They are welcomed into the class by the staff and children, and they are assigned a 'buddy'. On the taster day, children join in a range of activities, and the staff make informal assessments of the child's social and academic skills. Following the taster day, a formal letter offering a place is sent. In very rare circumstances, the taster day may not lead to an offer letter, and in this case, the reasons would be discussed with the parents. Once parents have accepted a place, an information pack is sent out.

## **Information pack sent to new parents.**

Parents of children who are registered to start in any of our Pre-Prep classes will receive their offer letter and medical information form. Once a parent contract is signed, you will receive the Pre-Prep Handbook. Information about activities and wrap around care is sent to the new families termly.