

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

Applicable to:	All staff in all Academies and Central Support Services including individuals employed by the Trust, contractors and agency staff. All Parents and Guardians
Dissemination:	The policy will be available to staff via iAM Compliant and parents and carers via the Trust website
Training:	On request
Review Frequency:	The policy will be reviewed annually. The policy will be reviewed earlier if needed in the light of new evidence, legislation and guidance
Agreement Author:	Caron Johnson - Director of Primary, Inclusion, and SEND
Executive Policy Owner:	Caron Johnson - Director of Primary, Inclusion, and SEND
Approval by:	
Approval Date:	
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Rationale

The Howard Academy Trust is committed to providing every child with a high-quality Early Years education that enables them to thrive, develop confidence, build independence and establish strong foundations for future learning.

We believe every child is unique and capable. Through high-quality interactions, ambitious curriculum experiences and strong partnerships with families, our EYFS provision promotes children's learning, development, wellbeing and achievement.

Provision across the Trust reflects the four guiding principles of the EYFS:

- **Every child is unique**
- **Positive relationships**
- **Enabling environments**
- **Learning and development**

The EYFS provides the foundation for lifelong learning and aims to ensure children are ready for the next stage of their education academically, socially and emotionally. Provision across the Trust is delivered in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework and is underpinned by a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and high expectations for all children.

We believe that the Foundation Stage relates to all children in Nursery and Reception classes. All children are unique, and we aim for them to be happy, successful, and safe. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a distinct phase of education that is important both in its own right and preparing children for future learning and life.

We recognise parents and carers as children's first educators and value strong partnerships between home and school to support children's development, learning, and wellbeing.

We are committed to ensuring that all children, regardless of background, need, or starting point, are supported to develop the knowledge, skills, vocabulary, confidence, and independence required for future success.

Child protection and safeguarding are at the core of all that we do. Children's welfare, wellbeing, and safety underpin every aspect of Early Years practice and decision making.

Aims

- To provide a happy, safe and inclusive environment in which all children feel secure, respected, valued and able to thrive.
- To foster positive attitudes to learning and support children to develop confidence, resilience, independence and self-regulation.
- To provide a stimulating, well-planned and organised learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that promotes curiosity, exploration and sustained engagement.
- To deliver an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that builds upon children's prior learning, experiences and interests.
- To provide opportunities for children to learn through play, exploration, active learning, critical thinking, observation, talk, investigation and problem solving.
- To develop children's communication and language skills, including the acquisition and use of a rich and ambitious vocabulary.
- To ensure that all children develop secure foundations in early reading through the consistent teaching of systematic synthetic phonics.

- To develop children's mathematical understanding and confidence through a focus on number sense and mathematical reasoning.
- To ensure that all children have access to the full curriculum and make progress regardless of race, culture, religion, language, family background, gender, disability, educational need or starting point.
- To recognise that children develop at different rates and to meet the individual needs, interests and stages of development of every child.
- To use assessment effectively to monitor children's development, celebrate achievement and identify any additional support required.
- To develop positive partnerships with parents and carers, recognising them as children's first educators and working collaboratively to support learning and wellbeing.
- To support children's readiness for the next stage of education through the development of knowledge, skills, behaviours and positive learning habits.
- To ensure that all EYFS provision complies with the requirements of the current EYFS Statutory Framework.

Entitlement

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Trust recognises that how children learn is as important as what they learn. Learning experiences will be designed to promote the three Characteristics of Effective Learning that underpin the EYFS Framework:

Playing and Exploring

Children investigate, explore, experience new things and develop confidence to have a go.

Active Learning

Children are encouraged to concentrate, persevere when challenges arise and take pride in their achievements.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children develop their own ideas, make connections between experiences, solve problems and think creatively.

Staff will plan learning environments and experiences that enable children to develop these characteristics alongside the knowledge, skills and understanding required across the seven areas of learning and development.

All children are entitled to an ambitious, inclusive and developmentally appropriate curriculum that reflects the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and supports every child to achieve their full potential.

The curriculum underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - helping children develop confidence, resilience, self-regulation, positive relationships and a strong sense of self.
- **Communication and Language** - providing opportunities for children to listen, understand, communicate effectively, extend their vocabulary and develop a love of language.

- **Physical Development** - enabling children to develop fine and gross motor skills, coordination, physical confidence and an understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- **Literacy** - providing opportunities for children to develop early reading and writing skills through a language-rich environment, high-quality texts and systematic synthetic phonics.
- **Mathematics** - providing opportunities for children to develop number sense, reasoning, pattern, shape, space and measure through practical experiences and purposeful play.
- **Understanding the World** - providing opportunities for children to explore people, communities, cultures, the natural world and technology.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - providing opportunities to explore creativity, imagination, ideas and feelings through art, music, dance, role play and design.

Children are entitled to experience:

- Adult-led and child-initiated learning.
- Purposeful play and exploration.
- Indoor and outdoor learning opportunities.
- High-quality interactions with skilled adults.
- Direct teaching and modelling.
- Opportunities for sustained shared thinking.
- Rich language and vocabulary development.
- A curriculum that builds knowledge and skills progressively over time.

The curriculum will be carefully sequenced to ensure children acquire the knowledge, vocabulary, skills and behaviours required for future learning and successful transition to Key Stage 1.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, starting point, need or circumstance, have equal access to high-quality Early Years provision and are supported to make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Organisation

The Reception year forms part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nursery provision, where applicable, also operates in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework and Trust expectations.

Staff will ensure that the curriculum provides a balance across all seven areas of learning and development:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social, and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Teaching and learning will be characterised by:

- High expectations for all children
- Quality interactions between adults and children
- Explicit teaching of knowledge, skills, and vocabulary
- Consistent implementation of the Trust phonics approach
- Opportunities for sustained shared thinking
- A balance of adult-directed and child-initiated learning
- Purposeful play and exploration
- Effective use of indoor and outdoor learning environments
- Strong routines that support independence and self-regulation

Planning will be informed by children's interests, individual needs, prior experiences and ongoing assessment. Provision will be responsive and adapted to ensure all children make progress from their starting points.

Staff will provide a balance between direct teaching, guided learning and purposeful play, enabling children to practise, apply and consolidate their knowledge and skills.

Transition arrangements will support children's successful entry into Nursery and Reception and their progression into Key Stage 1. This may include information sharing, visits, meetings with parents and carers, and, where appropriate, home visits.

Parents and carers are recognised as children's first educators. Strong partnerships between home and school will be promoted to support children's learning, development and wellbeing.

Academies will promote school readiness through the development of communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, independence, self-regulation, resilience and positive learning behaviours.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The welfare, safety and wellbeing of children are paramount and underpin all aspects of Early Years provision across The Howard Academy Trust. All academies will implement the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the current Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework alongside Trust safeguarding policies and procedures.

Children will be appropriately supervised at all times and will usually be within sight and hearing of staff, or always within sight or hearing, in accordance with the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework.

Statutory staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times. Particular consideration will be given to supervision during outdoor provision, educational visits, mealtimes, toileting routines and any periods of rest or sleep.

All staff have a responsibility to promote children's safety, wellbeing and welfare and to act in accordance with safeguarding procedures should concerns arise. Academies will ensure that all required safeguarding checks are completed and that staff receive regular safeguarding training in line with Trust expectations.

Academies will ensure that paediatric first aid provision fully complies with the requirements of the current EYFS Statutory Framework. Appropriate arrangements will be in place for the administration of medication, management of medical conditions and responding to accidents and injuries.

Health, Nutrition and Oral Health

The Trust recognises the importance of promoting healthy lifestyles, physical wellbeing and healthy habits from an early age. Children will be supported to develop an understanding of healthy eating, physical activity, personal hygiene and oral health through planned learning opportunities and everyday routines.

Fresh drinking water will be available throughout the day and any food or snacks provided will be healthy, balanced and appropriate to the age of the children. Information relating to allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements and medical conditions will be obtained before admission and reviewed regularly. Individual healthcare plans and risk assessments will be implemented where necessary.

Academies will take appropriate steps to minimise risks associated with food consumption, including active supervision during mealtimes and the preparation of food in ways that reduce choking hazards. Mealtimes will be viewed as valuable opportunities to promote communication, independence, social interaction and wellbeing.

Children will be encouraged to develop positive oral health habits through learning opportunities that promote effective toothbrushing, healthy food choices and an understanding of the importance of looking after their teeth and overall health.

Rest, Sleep and Safe Sleep Practice

The Trust recognises that rest and sleep are important for children's health, wellbeing, development and learning. Where Nursery-aged children require sleep or rest during the school day, arrangements will be agreed in partnership with parents and carers and will take account of the child's age, developmental needs, medical requirements and usual sleep routines.

Academies will implement safe sleep practices in line with current statutory requirements and best practice guidance. Staff will ensure that:

- Sleep arrangements are discussed and agreed with parents and carers.
- Children are always appropriately supervised whilst sleeping or resting.
- Sleeping children are checked regularly and recorded in accordance with academy procedures.
- Sleep environments are safe, suitable, well-ventilated and appropriate for the age and needs of the child.
- Individual medical needs, risk factors or safeguarding concerns are taken into account when planning sleep arrangements.
- Any concerns regarding a child's health, breathing, temperature or wellbeing are responded to immediately and reported in line with safeguarding and medical procedures.

The comfort, safety and wellbeing of every child will remain the overriding priority during periods of sleep or rest. Academies offering provision for children who sleep during the day will maintain written procedures that reflect current statutory guidance and local risk assessments.

Where sleep provision is offered, academies will maintain and regularly review a Safe Sleep Risk Assessment and Procedure

Equal Opportunities

The Trust is committed to equality of opportunity and ensuring that all children have access to a fully inclusive Early Years curriculum.

Staff recognise that children develop at different rates and begin their Early Years journey with a wide range of experiences, strengths and needs. Provision will be adapted to enable all children to participate, achieve and make progress from their individual starting points.

All children will be given equal access to the EYFS curriculum regardless of:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- First language
- Social or economic background
- Family circumstances
- Special educational needs or disabilities

Staff will actively promote inclusion, challenge discrimination and ensure that all children feel valued, represented and respected within the learning environment.

Reasonable adjustments and appropriate support will be provided to remove barriers to learning and enable all children to access the curriculum and wider life of the school.

The implementation of this policy will be in line with the Trust's Equality, Inclusion and SEND policies.

Additional Educational Needs

The Trust recognises that some children may require additional support to access learning and achieve their potential. This may include children with:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Medical needs
- Social, emotional, or mental health needs
- Disadvantage or vulnerability

Early identification of need is a key priority. Staff will use observations, assessment and ongoing dialogue with parents and carers to identify children who may require additional support.

All children will have access to learning experiences, resources and opportunities that are appropriate to their individual needs, interests and stage of development.

Planning will be adapted through appropriate differentiation, scaffolding, support and challenge to enable all children to participate, achieve and make progress.

Children with SEND will be supported through a graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do, Review. Academies will work in partnership with parents, carers, external agencies and specialist services to ensure that appropriate provision, reasonable adjustments and targeted interventions are implemented.

Children who speak English as an additional language will be supported to develop and use their home language whilst also being provided with opportunities to develop their understanding and use of English.

Children who demonstrate high levels of attainment or particular strengths will be provided with opportunities to deepen their learning, apply their skills independently and engage with appropriately challenging experiences.

Personal Care and Intimate Care

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all children are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity when receiving support with personal care needs. Children develop toileting and self-care skills at different rates and provision will be made to support individual needs whilst promoting independence and wellbeing.

Where children require support with toileting, changing, continence care or other personal care needs, staff will work closely with parents and carers to ensure arrangements are consistent, safe and appropriate. Children's privacy and dignity will be maintained at all times, and any required records will be completed in accordance with academy procedures.

Children will never be excluded from learning opportunities because of continence, medical or personal care needs. Appropriate reasonable adjustments, risk assessments and support arrangements will be implemented where required.

Where lifting, moving or additional physical support is required, safe handling procedures will be followed and staff will receive appropriate training where necessary.

Key Person Approach

Each child will be assigned a Key Person in accordance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Key Person plays an important role in supporting children's learning, development, wellbeing and sense of belonging within the setting.

The Key Person will:

- Develop positive and secure relationships with children and families.
- Support children's emotional wellbeing and successful transition into school.
- Contribute to assessment, planning and monitoring of progress.
- Act as a key point of contact for parents and carers.
- Liaise with colleagues and external agencies where appropriate.
- Promote inclusion, participation and positive outcomes for all children.

Where a Key Person is absent, appropriate arrangements will be in place to ensure continuity of care and support.

Assessment, Recording, and Reporting

Assessment is an integral part of effective teaching and learning. It will be used to inform planning, identify children's strengths and next steps, and ensure that all children make progress from their individual starting points.

Assessment arrangements within the EYFS include:

- Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)
- Ongoing formative assessment

- Professional observations and interactions
- Responsiveness assessment during teaching and learning
- Identification of children requiring additional support or intervention
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) at the end of Reception

Staff will use their knowledge of each child, informed by observations, discussion, children's learning and day-to-day interactions, to make professional judgements about attainment and progress.

Assessment information will be used to:

- Inform future planning and teaching
- Identify children's next steps in learning
- Celebrate achievement
- Monitor individual and group progress
- Identify children who may require additional support or challenge

Assessment systems should be proportionate, purposeful and manageable. Evidence collection should support professional judgement and must not create unnecessary workload.

Reception children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment. At the end of the Reception Year, teachers will complete the EYFS Profile in accordance with statutory requirements.

Assessment information will be shared with parents and carers and passed on to the child's next teacher to support effective transition and continuity of learning.

Reporting

Parents and carers will be kept informed about their child's learning, development and progress throughout the year through a range of formal and informal opportunities.

Reporting may include:

- Parent consultation meetings
- Written reports
- Informal discussions with staff
- Transition meetings
- Sharing of learning, achievement, and next steps

Parents and carers will be encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey and to work in partnership with the academy to support progress and wellbeing.

At the end of the Reception year, parents and carers will receive a written report outlining their child's attainment against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), progress across the areas of learning and readiness for transition to Year 1.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Principal and EYFS Lead are responsible for ensuring that:

- Statutory EYFS requirements are met
- The curriculum is implemented effectively

- Teaching and learning are of a high quality
- Assessment is accurate, proportionate, and informs learning
- Safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met
- Continuous improvement is promoted

Academies will ensure that EYFS provision reflects the current EYFS Statutory Framework, relevant statutory guidance and Trust expectations. Schools will regularly evaluate the quality and impact of provision and adapt practice to support continuous improvement.

Monitoring activities may include learning walks, environment reviews, assessment moderation, safeguarding audits, parent and pupil voice activities, provision reviews and other quality assurance activities.

The Director of Primary Education will provide strategic oversight, support and quality assurance across the Trust to ensure consistency, compliance and high standards in EYFS provision.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored through academy and Trust quality assurance processes. Local Academy Boards will receive appropriate assurance regarding the effectiveness of EYFS provision within their school.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislative or statutory guidance changes, to ensure continued compliance and alignment with current best practice.