

Tollgate Primary School Early Years Policy

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1. Aims and Objectives

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Early Years Education is a vitally important stage in itself and not just the preparation for the next stage. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of Early Years Education at Tollgate Primary School.

In this policy, Early Years Education refers to the children in the Foundation Stage; this includes children from Nursery through to the end of their Reception year.

2. Our Approach

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 helps provide the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework for children's development from birth to the end of the Reception year. The EYFS principles, which guide those working within the early years setting, are grouped into four themes:

- **A Unique Child:** Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents/carers and/or a key person.
- **Enabling Environments:** The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- **Learning and Development:** Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

These themes inform the practice of the Early Years staff. This helps ensure that Staff provide the best possible support for the development, learning and care of each individual child within the Foundation Stage at Tollgate Primary School.

3. Teaching and Learning

The EYFS curriculum is organised into Prime and Specific Areas of learning and development;

Prime Areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Specific Areas

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

Through topic work, carefully selected resources and a wide range of activities of all seven areas of learning are covered. We encourage the children to become involved in their own

learning and development. Our planning for each topic is based on the children's interests. The staff are able to adapt their planning and topics to fit in with the interests of the children.

Children learn at different speeds and in a variety of different ways so a wide range of teaching strategies are employed within the classroom to ensure that all children make progress. We plan activities which inspire and engage the children in their learning; we plan opportunities for child-initiated and adult led learning to take place. Objective Led Planning is used to target the children on a specific objective in any area of the classroom – it allows the staff to take the learning to the children.

The children are carefully observed and monitored from their first day at Tollgate so that each child's individual needs and interests are fully met. If necessary children are supported through our Special Education Needs program and our Gifted and Talented provision.

A range of assessments are carried out throughout the year. These include formative assessments which are carried out on a daily basis and summative assessments which are carried out termly. Children will be assessed, through observations, in order to obtain a Baseline (On Entry) Assessment. All children have an online Learning Journey where observations, photographs and parent contributions are held. We also have a Learning Journey for each child which has examples of their work in. The Learning Journeys are used as an assessment for learning tool to inform our planning and is also used when making summative assessments at the end of each term and at the end of the Foundation Stage when completing the child's EYFS profile.

We feel that a daily routine is very important for the children's learning and development, helping to create a sense of security and safety; Children are introduced to these routines from their first visit to the classroom. During the first few days of school we encourage the children to take ownership for their classroom by working with them to understand the schools golden rules and together make some classroom rules.

4. The Learning Environment

Well planned, purposeful play, both indoors and outdoors, is the foundation of development and learning for young children. Children learn by watching others, talking, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. Learning through play is both enjoyable and challenging and helps children to develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

Our learning environments, both Nursery and in Reception, provides opportunities for children to access all of the seven areas of learning. Although the classroom is into areas all are interconnected and children are able to flow freely between areas. The learning environment contains resources which are constantly available and are enhanced with topic related resources. Activities within the environment will be planned to offer the children opportunities to practise objectives being covered or to extend their learning following a particular interest.

We have direct access to an outdoor area and children have opportunities to access this classroom throughout the day. This is an area where children can learn without the restrictions of a normal classroom.

5. The Role of Adults in the Foundation Stage

Within the Reception and Nursery classrooms there are at least two members of staff at all times. One is the ClassTeacher and the other is a Teaching Assistant.

The Class Teacher is responsible for the long term planning, but the Class Teacher and the Teaching Assistant(s) work together to talk about children's achievements and planning. It is important that all the staff are aware of where the children are and what their next steps are.

All the Foundation Stage staff have a responsibility for observing and reflecting on the children's spontaneous learning through play. These observations are placed within the children's electronic learning journeys and are used to inform planning to ensure all children's developmental needs are being met and that activities planned are appropriate for the individual needs of each child.

6. Liaison within the school

The Reception and Nursery teachers work closely together to make sure there is a smooth transition between part time and full time school. Nursery children have opportunities to visit the playgrounds and classrooms and will be use to visiting the hall. Reception teachers also work closely with the year one teacher to insure a smooth transition to year one.

Reception children take part in three assemblies a week; Open the book, the main weekly focus and Celebration assembly.

7. Parents as partners

We recognise that parents influence is important throughout childhood. Parents guide, encourage and teach their children. Research has shown that parental involvement in a child's schooling is the most important factor in the success of the child's educational achievements in adolescence.

We encourage parents to play an active role in their child's schooling. To this end we work hard to forge strong home-school links. The settling in process plays a key role in this but it does not end there.

To enable parents to work in partnership with the school we:

- Have an open door policy, ensuring that Early Years staff are accessible both at the beginning and end of the day so that parents/ carers can chat and share information. Appointments can also be made to meet with staff in a more formal context;
- Encourage parents to participate, wherever possible, in the school life of their child through reading at home, parent-child workshops, opportunities to come into school.
- Provide a topic map at the start of each half term to let parents and carers know what topic is being covered and other classroom information so they are fully informed;

- Keep parents up to date with children's learning through emails sending observations made by staff to the parent/ carer;
- Encourage parents to make observations and send them into their child's electronic learning journey.
- Provide termly feedback on children's progress through two parent consultations and an end of year report.

8. The settling in process

In the Summer term a meeting is held for the parents of those children moving to Reception in the September. This meeting enables the parents to meet their child's new teacher and the other members of staff, ask questions, look around the classroom and school and find out a little more about the Early Years curriculum. This meeting takes place before the children are invited for their Induction visits.

The children are invited to attend three induction sessions towards the end of the Summer term in preparation for them joining in September. These induction visits give the children the opportunity to explore their new classroom, their new school and it gives both the children and us a chance to get to know each other a little better.

For children starting Nursery, children are invited in for three sessions; each session increases in length. Parents are encouraged to stay for the first session. Again this gives an opportunity to pass on relevant information and for parents to ask questions.

9. Community Links

At Tollgate we work hard to forge strong links between the school and the local community. This is especially important in regard to the onsite preschool. There is also an official meeting between all staff to pass on relevant information.

Members of the wider community are encouraged to visit the children to talk about their role in the community, their jobs or any interesting hobbies they may have. We feel it is important for the children to see their school as being part of a community, to see how the community helps the school but also how the school and pupils contribute to the community around them.

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