Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

The Duchy School

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CONTENTS

1. RATIONALE 3

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK 3

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 3

4. ADMISSIONS 4

4.1 Nursery ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

4.2 Reception 4

5. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT 4

5.1 Playing and Exploring 5

5.2 Active Learning 5

5.3 Creativity and Critical Thinking 5

5.4 Areas of Learning in the EYFS curriculum 5

5.5 Characteristics of Learning 5

6. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND OUTDOOR SPACES 5

7. ASSESSMENT 6

8. INCLUSION 6

9. SAFEGUARDING, WELFARE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY 6

10. MOBILE TECHNOLOGY 7

11. SCHOOL LUNCHES AND SNACKS 7

12. FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND PUPIL PREMIUM FUNDING 8

13. INFORMATION AND STORAGE AND RECORD KEEPING 8

14. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 8

15. TRANSITION PERIODS 8

16. MONITORING AND REVIEW 9

APPENDIX 1: POLICY HISTORY 10

1. RATIONALE

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five years. At The Duchy School this includes the reception class.

The EYFS is based on four overarching principles:

- 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 and/or carers
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

"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 the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education (March 2012)

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In addition to this Early Years Foundation Stage policy, the following policies are also of particular importance and should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Ventrus Multi Academy Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Ventrus Multi Academy Trust SEND policy
- The Duchy School SEND Local Offer
- Ventrus Multi Academy Trust Intimate Care Policy
- The Duchy School Behaviour Policy
- Ventrus Multi Academy Trust Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Ventrus Multi Academy Trust Data Protection policy
- The Duchy School Admissions Policy
- Ventrus School Equality Policy

The school website also provides useful information regarding children's learning and upcoming events. Of particular importance and should be read in conjunction with this policy is the school's sessions and fees information.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for all children at The Duchy School, including those within the EYFS. Each class teacher within the Early Years Foundation Stage has a duty of care and is responsible for the welfare, safety, progress and achievement of each child within their class. The class teacher should be the first port of call for parents/carers should they have any information or concerns regarding the well-being and progress of their child. EYFS classes may have an additional teaching assistant to ensure ratios are adhered to. Where there is additional need, further teaching assistants are deployed, usually to support pupils who have complex special educational needs where there is an Education, Health and Care Plan in place (see SEND policy for further information).

In addition:

- There is an EYFS Lead teacher
- The Duchy School's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator (SENDCo) provides support for staff, parents and pupils

4. ADMISSIONS

4.1 Reception

In The Duchy School, all children join us in their Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five years old. All children start full-time on the first day of the autumn term unless a part time approach is agreed in the interest of the child.

Before starting in Reception, children will have had a planned transition period to include visiting their new classroom. The Duchy School staff also contact prior settings, where appropriate, for information regarding each child's progress, achievements and interests and share the Early Years transition documents to share records.

Parents/carers have the right to request deferred or delayed entry into Reception. In both cases, parents/carers must outline their reasons for this request and explain how a deferred or delayed entry is in the best interests of their child. Requests for delayed or deferred entry must be made formally in writing to the Headteacher and in good time for allocation of school places. Please find a link to the admissions policy here.

5. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Teaching and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage at The Duchy School focusses upon:

- The partnership between teachers and parents/carers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching.
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- Making optimum use of the local community as an educational resource, taking the children on a variety of trips throughout the year.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children secure the Early Learning Goals (ELG) and achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of Foundation Stage, extending into National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 where appropriate.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence, self-management, and the ability to resolve personal conflict and disagreements with others.
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents/carers.
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.
- The clear aims for our work, and the regular reflecting and monitoring (between EYFS staff, year 1 staff and the school leadership team) to evaluate and improve what we do.
- The close communication between parents/carers and staff including workshops/open sessions to facilitate understanding of teaching and learning approaches.

We offer effective EYFS practice in the following ways:

5.1 Playing and Exploring

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

5.2 Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

5.3 Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

5.4 Areas of Learning in the EYFS curriculum

The EYFS has three 'Prime Areas' and four 'Specific Areas' of learning.

The three Prime Areas are:

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

The four Specific Areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

5.5 Characteristics of Learning

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area, the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage prior to moving to Key Stage One.

6. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND OUTDOOR SPACES

The planning within the EYFS is based around different themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers and teaching assistants as a guide for weekly planning, however the teachers will adapt these in response to the needs, progress and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. Staff make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

The EYFS classes are organised to allow children to explore and learn in a safe and secure environment. There are areas within their classroom where the children can be active, be quiet and rest, engage in solitary play and engage in cooperative play as well as direct teaching as whole class and in small groups or 1:1 with an adult. Each classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Each class has its own enclosed early years outdoor area. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all areas of learning. We also ensure that children experience a range of trips offsite to develop their experiences and learning further.

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play. Opportunities include first-hand experience, developing independence and resources to encourage children to initiate their own activities. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Small world resources for retelling stories
- Role play area
- Large and small construction
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Writing table with a range of writing resources
- Making area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources
- Technology
- Interactive whiteboard
- Malleable materials
- Musical instruments
- Painting and creative equipment
- Maths games and equipment
- Outside classroom – a safe, fenced area including a sand pit, den, mud kitchen, planting equipment and areas, water trays, outside toys including trikes

7. ASSESSMENT

At The Duchy School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation, we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, in order to plan challenging, achievable and exciting activities and experiences to extend the children's learning based on their interests.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation and is recorded on Tapestry, an online record of the children's learning. This involves the teacher and teaching assistants as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform ongoing assessments as well as end of year judgements for each child in all of the broad and prime areas of learning. Some writing and maths activities are also recorded in books to show children's learning and progress over time.

At the end of the summer term, teachers provide attainment results to parents/carers, reporting their child's progress and attainment against the Early Learning Goals and ages and stages. These final assessments at the end of the year are used to inform the child's next class teacher to highlight strengths and next steps for development.

8. INCLUSION

The Duchy School serves its local community and is a truly inclusive, mainstream primary school. It has a well-deserved reputation with parents/carers, other agencies and the Local Authority for meeting the needs and supporting the progress of pupils with additional needs.

Please see the SEND Local Offer and the Ventrus Multi Academy SEND policy for further information.

9. SAFEGUARDING, WELFARE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is important to us at The Duchy School that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children about boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they are special. Children should be

allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards and to ask for help, where needed. We are committed to protecting and promoting the physical and psychological well-being of all children. In addition, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships.

We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families and children's safety and welfare is paramount at all times.

Safeguarding is of paramount importance and all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff have completed Child Protection training and know about possible indicators of abuse and their responsibilities within Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All adults volunteering in school will have a cleared DBS check and will be guided directly by teaching staff in their support of pupils.

Staff have a duty of care to the pupils of The Duchy School which includes promoting the welfare and safety of pupils on all parts of the school site, and off-site when partaking in school visits.

The school's health and safety policy is adhered to at all times.

As a school, we are committed to:

- Promoting the welfare of children
- Promoting good health, and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensuring all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensuring that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensuring that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and develop experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintaining records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Please see the Trust's Safeguarding Policy, SEND Local Offer, The Duchy School's policy for Behaviour (including Anti-bullying), for how we support children and their families where there are concerns.

10. MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Pupils will use a range of mobile technology in their classroom to support their learning, including tablets and laptops. Pupils will also be taught about the safe use of technology and keeping themselves safe when using technology, in an age-appropriate, developmentally-appropriate manner.

Images and records will only be stored in line with the Trust's Data Protection Policy and GDPR guidelines. Parents/carers will have signed consent forms for the publication of non-identifying digital images of their children.

Parents/carers are encouraged to read the school's e-safety advice and updates and attend parent workshops to support children's online safety.

11. SCHOOL LUNCHES AND SNACKS

All children in the EYFS are provided with free fruit, daily. Water is also provided.

All reception-age children are entitled to a universal free school meal. These are cooked on-site by Ventrus.

Further information and menus can be found on the school website.

12. FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND PUPIL PREMIUM FUNDING

Children are eligible to receive free school meals if their parents/carers are in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

All eligible parents are requested to complete an application form, copies of which are available on request from the school office. You can also download this from the school website here: https://oneonline.devon.gov.uk/CCSCitizenPortal_LIVE/en?ReturnUrl=%2FCCSCitizenPortal_live

13. INFORMATION AND STORAGE AND RECORD KEEPING

In-school assessments by teaching staff and parents/carers are recorded in a number of ways. All records are stored securely in line with the school Assessment Policy and Data Protection Policy.

14. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents at new parent meetings about their child before their child starts in Year Reception
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the summer term before their child starts school
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents in the autumn and spring terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents of children aged 4 and over receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year in July
- Arranging open sessions throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents/carers
- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents/carers. We invite parents to a phonics/writing/maths workshops to discuss the progression and stages of development the children undertake in the foundation stage. In all other areas of the curriculum we encourage parents to participate and support learning through online observations and sharing of progress and achievements with school

All staff involved with our EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and parents, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen.

Communication from school for parents/carers is usually via email, but notices and reminders may also come home with the children in book bags and/or be placed on Tapestry.

15. TRANSITION PERIODS

During the first term in school, in both nursery and Reception, much consideration is given to supporting the children's transition into their new class. Activities are carefully planned to promote the building of friendships, practising of routines in the classroom, developing listening skills and concentration skills, positive play and independence.

Joining the rest of the school for assemblies and whole-school events builds during the course of the year, once children have the skills needed to benefit from these activities.

In addition, in the final term of the school year, pupils are supported into their next class through induction visits, teacher visits and open meet the teacher evenings.

16. MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and governors carry out monitoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

APPENDIX 1: POLICY HISTORY

Version / Date	Summary of Change	Review Date	Lead Author
14/11/2022	Schools are not expected to complete Home visits. There is a programme of induction visits offered to support transition.	Nov 22	FP
18/01/2024	Annual review undertaken by EYFS network – no amendments necessary	Jan 25	FP
27/01/2025	Annual review undertaken by EYFS – no amendments necessary	Jan 26	FP