

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (EYFS)

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS

RESPONSIBLE PERSON - HEADTEACHER

The Early Years are a fundamental part of every child's learning journey. At Riverside School, we invite all our families to join us as we embark on this exciting journey together; making memories and building special relationships. Together, we plan for and provide an enriching, engaging and truly personalised curriculum for every child focussing on communication and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

We are passionate about giving every one of our children a voice, a choice and every opportunity to Be All That They Can Be at Riverside School. We provide a safe, positive and enabling environment, where children are guided and supported by adults that they trust, allowing them to feel confident to explore the world around them, extend their interests and discover their passions.

At Riverside School our Early Years Foundation Stage will provide:

- Irresistible, engaging and memorable experiences for all our pupils. Exploration and learning will be through practical and play activities which are structured and personalised to the pupil and where appropriate these will relate to real world experiences.
- A profoundly personalised curriculum which takes account of, and responds to the pupil's developmental needs and allows them to make progress.
- Positive experiences of success at their own levels in order to give them confidence and motivation for learning in the future. This will offer support and trust allowing our pupils to "have a go" themselves and learn from their own experiences.
- Appropriate support so all pupils can achieve the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM), staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.
- A curriculum which promotes the 'Early Learning Goals' with a particular focus on the PRIME areas of learning using Personalised Learning Plans and building close relationships with families.
- A setting which has at its core the four key themes which underpin the EYFS guidance; a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development.
- A curriculum with equal learning and development opportunities for all pupils.
- A partnership with families to support and enhance the development of the pupils in every aspect of their learning.

Our Early Years Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes at Riverside School aim to provide pupils with a fun, creative and enticing start to their Riverside Journey.

Our curriculum enables pupils to learn and develop skills within the 7 areas of learning outlined by the EYFS Framework. However, we also provide a profoundly personalised curriculum which reflects measures and celebrates strengths, achievements and progress.

Please see the following Prime and Specific areas of learning:

The prime areas are:

- *Personal, Emotional and Social Development. (PSED)*
- *Communication and Language. (C&L)*
- *Physical development (PD)*

The specific areas are:

- *Mathematics.*
- *Literacy.*
- *Understanding the World*
- *Expressive Art and Design*

Throughout the Early Years we plan activities to give pupils learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals as well as their Personalised Learning Plans. Teaching and learning will take place within the classroom, in the outside areas and in our specialised facilities. Within these areas pupils will participate in a variety of activities, independently, with adults and with their peers.

We are acutely aware that our pupil's learning is holistic and therefore ensure we have no missed opportunities. This extends to working closely with our therapists and families, regularly sharing achievements and expectations. Sometimes some of the most valuable assessments can come from independent child initiation at home.

Climate for Learning

Practitioners

- Understand and observe each pupil's development and learning, assess progress and plan for next steps.
- Support pupils to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture.
- Identify any need for additional support.
- Keep pupils safe.
- Value and respect all pupils and families equally.

Positive relationships are

- Warm and loving, and foster a sense of belonging.
- Sensitive and responsive to the pupil's needs, feelings and interests.
- Supportive of the pupil's own efforts and independence.
- Consistent in setting clear boundaries.
- Stimulating.
- Value key support relationships.

Enabling Environments

- Encourage spontaneous learning.
- Encourage independence.
- Offer support at every level of communication.
- Offer stimulating resources, relevant to all the pupil's cultures and communities.
- Provide rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- Support pupils to take risks and explore.

Our play policy

Playing and exploring is the first characteristic of effective learning outlined by the Early Years guidance. At Riverside school, we believe that play provides one of the most valuable contexts for our pupils to explore, grow and develop. We believe that play, both inside and outside the classroom, is the fundamental way in which our pupils learn. Play can be both enjoyable and challenging. When playing, our pupils may behave in different ways. Through independent and scaffolded play, our pupils will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals as well as working towards their Personalised Learning Plans.

We ensure that the opportunities we offer and the way we support learning enables our pupils to be all that they can be.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, pupils will be able to:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world.
- Practice and build concepts, ideas and skills.
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules.
- Be independent, be alongside others or co-operate as they communicate their feelings.
- Take risks and make mistakes.
- Think creatively and imaginatively.
- Interact and communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.
- Express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Adults in the setting will support play by:

- Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment.
- Supporting pupils' learning through planned play.
- Extending and supporting pupils' spontaneous play.
- Extending and developing pupils' language and communication in their play.
- Listening to all forms of pupils' communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning.
- Narrating pupils' play.
- Asking questions about pupils' play.

Spontaneous Play vs. Structured Play

It is crucial that the adults appreciate the importance of play as a process and do not become overly focused on end results. Whilst learning that may result from spontaneous play is likely to be incidental, we also encourage developing structured and purposeful play with the aim of promoting learning.

We support learning through play using an observational approach allowing pupils to maintain control of play while providing opportunities and ideas to develop their play further. Through scaffolding play we can enable our pupils to develop the skills they need to become successful learners.

Due to the complex needs of our pupils we also need to ensure that we offer structured sessions to ensure progress in the specific areas of development which can be harder for some pupils to evidence through play.

We may need to teach our pupils to play before they can access learning through play. In addition to this we take into account pupils on the Autistic Spectrum who, as well as having opportunities to learn through play, are also enabled to self-regulate through the access to and use of larger free play areas, enhancing their learning throughout the day.

Planning, recording, assessment and progress

The Early Years follow the school's topic based curriculum. In addition to free flow activities addressing all 7 areas of learning, we ensure we offer structured sessions such as: sensory stories, Mathematics, PSED, Sensory play and Expressive Arts. These allow pupils to develop in all areas of the curriculum as well as focus on their Personalised Learning Plans and Education Health Care Plans. A creative and broad topic based curriculum also allows pupils to explore and develop their own personal interests.

Topic planning takes place on a half-termly basis. An Early Years plan is written which identifies each of the Prime and Specific Areas of Development. This ensures that all

curriculum areas are covered. It also highlights opportunities throughout the day when natural learning may take place e.g. independence and communication during snack time.

Adult focused and independent activities are planned on a daily basis. Pupils have the opportunity to work in each of the learning areas within the classroom and outdoor area. Whole class, group and individual activities are used to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate.

Pupils are assessed and baselined at the beginning of the school year using our own Stepping Stones Framework. This allows us to complete of The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile with additional smaller steps added to the PRIME area of learning as we believe these are the most important for our pupils. Progress over time can be shown using our "2buildaprofile" assessment tool and online tool SOLAR, which is updated half termly.

Assessment is carried out daily using the app "2buildaprofile". Each Early Years class has access to a number of iPods and uses the app on these iPods to take photos and virtual post it notes. The "2build profile" app provides an individual profile for each pupil which is automatically updated via Wi-Fi. A report is printed weekly from pupil's profiles and this information is filed in the pupil's "Learning Journals". Each pupil has a Learning Journal folder which contains evidence of progress. Evidence of progress includes half termly progress reports from "2buildaprofile", examples of the pupil's work, a copy of the pupil's personal learning plan, a happiness passport and updated progress from home in the form of "wow houses, small post it note sized achievement cards.

At the end of the EYFS year, all adults will have identified an appropriate early intervention for each of the pupils. All adults will also understand the pupils preferred learning styles, their motivators and their preferred mode of communication and how they communicate with adults and their peers. All pupils will then be baselined for the schools R levels as they start year 1.

For pupils in an Early Years setting over the age of five, we still offer an Early Years curriculum. However, for these pupils, assessment on the "2buildaprofile" is linked to the pupil's Personalised learning plans and R levels, not the EYFS. Pupils in an Early Years class will have a Learning Journal regardless of their age as we ensure we are providing all our pupils with every possible experience to be all that they can be.

Engagement with Families

At Riverside School we ensure that all our families are as involved as possible in their child's education. Personal Learning Plans are reviewed twice a year. Structured conversations are held each time a new Personal Learning Plan is written and these are an opportunity for families to discuss their child's progress with the class team and discuss what is really important to the child and the family. These plans are also in line with each pupil's Education

Health Care Plan. Families can contact staff in writing, via email or over the phone and all pupils have a home-school contact book to keep in regular contact. Families are also encouraged to contribute to their child's Learning Journal by completing "Wow house" which are sent home regularly.

In addition to structured conversations, families with children in the Early Years classes will be invited into Riverside School every half term for a variety of family events including coffee mornings, stay and play events, sibling parties and special performances such as our Christmas immersive experience.

Every term an Early Years update is sent home to families. This celebrates all the exciting things that have happened in the Early Years and also suggests a helpful sensory activity and Makaton sign to try at home. It also lists any up and coming important dates for families such as "stay and play" or training opportunities.

Families are also invited and encouraged to attend "Riverside Connect". This is a monthly forum for families at Riverside School to share information and also to offer training and support.

We understand the importance of the Early Years at Riverside School therefore we have a very supportive transition process. We work closely with each family and education key workers for each pupil and ensure that a transition meeting has taken place as well as a stay and play opportunity so the pupils get to experience their new classroom environment.

Pupils who join in Nursery will join Riverside Nursery on an assessment placement and this gives us the opportunity to support families through the EHCP process/. The class team will support the family and education key worker in writing the first outcomes.

Pupils joining in reception are invited to a "Teddy Bears Picnic" which gives the families an opportunity to meet the class team and the pupils can explore their new early years class and make friends with some of their peers.

We also provide a transition package involving a coffee morning for new families where they will learn about the Early Years, meet the whole team and be given a children's pack to start their Riverside Journey including a photograph book of places within the school, helpful photographs and symbols and a home school contact book.