



## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”



## 1. Aims

- 1.1. This policy marks the beginning of a child's educational journey at Heatherwood, laying the foundations for future learning and aims to ensure:
  - 1.1.1. That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life;
  - 1.1.2. Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
  - 1.1.3. A close, strong working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers;
  - 1.1.4. Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice;
  - 1.1.5. That the child is at the centre of everything we do by offering a flexible holistic play-based approach to a child's learning based around their needs and interests; with total communication strategies at the core of everything we do.

## 2. Legislation

- 2.1. This policy is based on requirements set out in the [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf) ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS\\_statutory\\_framework\\_for\\_group\\_and\\_school\\_based\\_providers.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf)) which was updated in July 2025.
- 2.2. This document also complies with our funding agreement and the articles of association of the Trust.

## 3. Structure of the EYFS

- 3.1. "All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential."



Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (DfE, 2024)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. Heatherwood School is a school that welcomes children from **3 to 19 years of age**. Our Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises of three learning environments:

- 3.1.1. Early Learners (children who turn 3 during the school year);
- 3.1.2. F1 (Nursery 3 – 4 year olds); and
- 3.1.3. F2 (Reception 4- 5 year olds).

### **3.2. Early Learners, Foundation One, Foundation Two**

- 3.2.1. Early Learners are children who commence are eligible to start the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. At Heatherwood we have a January and April start date.
- 3.2.2. Foundation One (F1) is normally three terms attendance, commencing in the Autumn term after your child turns 3, which equates to one full school year before entry to Foundation 2 (Reception);
- 3.2.3. Due to the varying transport arrangement, children in the Foundation Stage attend on different days. Early Learners and F1's attend Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- 3.2.4. Children start Foundation two (Reception) the September after they turn 4, and this is full time education which becomes compulsory from the age of 5. Places for Foundation two are allocated by Doncaster Local Authority and via the child's needs and EHCP; parental choice will also be sought to make sure that the needs of each child can be adequately met. Children will attend 5 full days a week.
- 3.2.5. Every child will have a EHCP and a holistic approach to learning will be developed based around each child's needs, abilities and interests.
- 3.2.6. All parents of children with SEND are actively encouraged to look around the different Special Schools in the area to support them to make an informed choice as to the path their child's education should take. Based on their individual needs and requirements, observations by staff and discussions with other professionals involved in the care or education of



the child, a decision will be made for how effectively their needs can be met; this will also take into account parental preference.

- 3.2.7. Once Heatherwood has been named in the child's Education Health and Care Plan admissions visit in school will be arranged to complete the relevant paperwork. This is followed by play visits for both parents/carers and their child prior to their official start date. Different children need a differing number of visits so the number of play visits is according to pupil need.

## 4. Overarching Curriculum

- 4.1. At Heatherwood School our curriculum has been designed to meet the educational programmes in the Statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Foundation Stage marks the beginning of a child's educational journey at Heatherwood. Our aim is to lay firm foundations for learning, achievement and well-being in order for each child to achieve their full potential. Our curriculum promotes the learning and development of all children in our care, ensuring they are ready for year 1. The EYFS is not only about what children learn, but about how they learn via using a blend of effective practice and a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning. Each child follows a highly personalised curriculum using a small steps approach in order for every child, through support and encouragement, to succeed in their own right.
- 4.2. The EYFS learning and development requirements of the EYFS comprise of:
- The seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes;
  - The assessment requirements of the EYFS.
- 4.3. The overarching principles set out in the statutory framework for the Early Year's Foundation Stage (2025) shape our practice. These are;
- Every child is a **Unique Child**;
  - Children learn to be strong and independent through **Positive Relationships**;
  - Children learn and develop well in **Enabling Environments** with teaching and support from adults;



- Importance of **Learning and Development**.

## 5. Characteristics of Effective Learning

5.1. As supportive practitioners, through our curriculum planning we nurture the Characteristics of Effective learning to occur. The characteristics of effective learning as outlined in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

5.2. At Heatherwood School we use the Development Matters Non Statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage to guide our curriculum planning and professional judgement, to build on strengths and meet the needs of our children. This document outlines seven key features of effective practice which Heatherwood School embeds within our practice. These are:

- The best for every child
- High quality care
- The curriculum: what we want children to learn (this will incorporate Heatherwood's CORE Curriculum)
- Pedagogy: helping children to learn (in a way that is holistic and based around their needs, interests and abilities).
- Assessment: checking what children have learnt
- Self-regulation and executive function
- Partnership with parents

## 6. The seven areas of learning and development

6.1. The seven areas of learning and development outlined in the Statutory framework for the Early Year's Foundation Stage shape our curriculum. The prime areas are embedded first and then children are supported to develop in the specific areas. These are as follows.



## 6.2. Prime Areas

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

## 6.3. Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design
- These four specific areas are combined into one area '*Thinking*' within the Early Years Developmental Journal.

# 7. Planning

- 7.1. At Heatherwood School we plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively based around their abilities, needs and interests. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest or more complex children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.
- 7.2. Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable play-based experience. Whatever specific special educational need/disability a child might have, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate i.e. VI, HI, S&LT, OT, Physiotherapist.
- 7.3. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

# 8. Teaching

- 8.1. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities, and of personalised and firsthand learning experiences. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive and supportive interaction.



- 8.2. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

## 9. Assessment

- 9.1. At Heatherwood School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning using a holistic and a total communication approach to enhance and support further learning. Staff also take into account any observations shared by parents and/or carers, either verbally or via Seesaw.
- 9.2. Within the first 6 weeks of entry, staff will complete a baseline assessment to gauge starting points for all learners using their EHCP and aspects of The Early Years Developmental Journal.
- 9.3. Children will be formally assessed at 3 assessment points each year to show achievement using a small step approach. A holistic assessment of pupils' progress and development via their personalised profiles considers all aspects of their individual needs, including how they interrelate with each other and the factors that influence them, and how this affects how they learn. This allows the assessment to capture a fuller picture of pupils' progress and development over a period of time" (Engagement Model 2020)
- 9.4. At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:
- Meeting expected levels of development
  - Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')
- 9.5. The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. These are discussed at parents' evenings and at the child's Person Centred Review and are made accessible to parents whenever they wish to see them.
- 9.6. Progress is moderated internally (referring to the [Development Matters guidance](#)) and in partnership with other schools within the MAT, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.



## 10. Working with families

- 10.1. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- 10.2. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge understanding and abilities.
- 10.3. Each child is helped via the EYFS Teacher and Class Team to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key personnel support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. These key personnel also help families to engage with more specialist support, when/if appropriate.

## 11. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

- 11.1. It is important to all practitioners that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. At Heatherwood there is a good staff to child ratio to enable children to safely explore their learning environment. (See school Safeguarding Policy).
- 11.2. Heatherwood school student teachers and trainee staff must hold a valid and current paediatric first aid (PFA) qualification in order to be included in staffing ratios within EYFS.
- 11.3. Whilst pupils are eating, there will always be a member of staff in the classroom who holds a PFA certificate. The pupil will always be seated safely in an appropriate chair or seat (eg wheelchair) and they will always be within sight and earshot of a member of staff.
- 11.4. Before a pupil starts at Heatherwood, we will ensure that we have liaised with parents / carers and appropriate professionals to obtain information on special dietary needs, preferences, allergies and health requirements. This will be shared with all EYFS staff as well as those involved with preparation



and handling of food. We will ensure we remain abreast and up to date with any changes to these requirements.

- 11.5. We will create allergy action plans, in consultation with professionals to manage known allergies and intolerances. This information will be shared with all staff, including those involved with food preparation. We will ensure this information is regularly updated.
- 11.6. Our staff who prepare and handle food will prepare food in a way that prevents choking. In the event of a choking incident, we will record details via our Health & Safety protocols and via CPoms and make parents / carers aware. The food will meet each child's individual developmental needs and will be in line with dietician guidance and feeding regimes where appropriate. We will keep parents / carers updated with progress towards feeding regimes and with solid food.
- 11.7. We will adhere to Heatherwood's Intimate Care policy whilst ensuring that during personal care, we balance the pupil's privacy with safeguarding and support needs.