



# Holly Park School

## Early Years Policy

Holly Park School places high value on good Early Years Practice in Nursery and Reception

### **Links with the UN Rights of the Child**

#### Article 28

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity.

#### Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

#### Article 15

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

#### Article 31

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

### **Aims**

The curriculum for the Early Years should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning
- Social skills
- Attention skills and persistence
- Language and communication
- Reading and writing skills
- Mathematical skills
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Children learn in a complex way and are influenced by everything in their environment.

They use their senses to explore and make sense of the world around them.

They learn through play, hands on experiential learning, through conversation with adults and other children and through a variety of planned activities.

Staff will follow the Early Years Statutory Framework from Birth to Five and agree with and strive to implement in practice the principles stated for excellent early years education:

- Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements.
- Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years –physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.
- Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- Early years' experience should build on what children already know and can do.
- No child should be excluded or disadvantaged regardless of their need; inclusion is at the heart of this.
- Parents and practitioners should work together.
- To be effective the curriculum should be carefully structured.
- There should be opportunities for the children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves.
- Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children.
- Well-planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process.
- For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised.
- Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high-quality care and education by appropriately qualified practitioners.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We believe that children should be treated as individuals and that they have equal access to the Early Years curriculum. All staff should have an awareness of what Equal Opportunities means in principle as well as in practice. Practitioners should plan to meet the needs of girls and boys, children with S.E.N, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children with EAL, Children from disadvantaged backgrounds, children from all social and cultural backgrounds and children of different ethnic groups.

### **Learning and Teaching**

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Early Years many of these aspects are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Effective learning involves:

- Children initiating activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from each other.
- Children learning through movement and their senses.
- Children having time to explore ideas and interests in depth.

- Children feeling secure which will help promote confident learners.
- Children learning in different ways and at different rates.
- Children making links in their learning.
- Creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

Teaching is the process whereby children are systematically helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward to reflect and make use of what they have already learnt. Teaching has many aspects, including planning and creating a learning environment, organising time and resources, interacting, questioning, responding to questions, working with and observing children, assessing and recording children's progress and sharing knowledge gained with other practitioners and parents.

Effective teaching requires:

- Working in partnership with parents.
- Planning experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.
- Practitioners who model a range of positive behaviour.
- Using language that is rich and grammatically correct. Teaching new vocabulary through modelling and explanation.
- Using conversation and carefully framed questions.
- Direct teaching of skills and knowledge.
- Promoting positive attitudes to learning through interaction and support.
- Planning both indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Skilful and well-planned observations of children.
- Assessing children's development and progress.
- Identifying the next step in children's learning to plan for individual children's progress.

### **The Areas of Learning**

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in our EYFS setting. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the **prime areas**, are:

#### **• Communication and language;**

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

#### **• Physical development;**

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

#### **• Personal, social and emotional development.**

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

We also support children in four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- **Literacy;**

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

- **Mathematics;**

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

- **Understanding the world;**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

- **Expressive arts and design.**

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

## **The Value of Play**

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is an important way in which young children learn. It is the process through which children explore, investigate, recreate and understand the world in which they live. It is a vital component of children's lives and is the medium through which skills can be developed and practised. The role of the practitioner is crucial in developing high quality play in the learning environment. This includes planning and resourcing a challenging environment, supporting children's learning through planned and spontaneous play, and extending and developing children's language. Communication in play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Three **characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:**

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## **Planning and Assessment**

EYFS staff organise the curriculum through learning projects. These are topics that are relevant to needs of the children and are chosen to develop, and take account of their interests. They may be topics that have been successful and enjoyed by classes in the past. The staff will also ensure a balanced curriculum over the year. Assessment in the Early Years is constructive and always used to inform planning. Assessment is carried out through observations- both informal and planned. See Pupil Assessment Policy

## **The Role of Additional Adults in EYFS**

The EYFS teachers are supported by Nursery Nurses and nursery TAs who are valued for the special contribution that they make and are seen as 'practitioners' in the classroom. They are involved in planning, assessment, teaching and liaison with parents. They have a special role to fulfil and the following list is seen as some of the qualities and skills they bring.

- To assist in providing a full range of activities which meet the emotional, physical, social and intellectual needs of the children.
- To take groups of children for various activities in the different curriculum areas.
- To participate in the preparation of the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, before the children arrive and with classroom management during the session.
- To make observations of the children and share these with other staff.
- To contribute to the planning of the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children.
- To contribute (with regards) to record keeping and reports as required by the teacher
- To provide first aid and comfort children who are unwell or hurt
- To help children acquire self-help skills including toileting and personal hygiene as necessary.
- To work closely with parents and carers, providing a welcoming environment.
- To assist with the tidying up of materials and organisation of resources used during the sessions.
- To help with the putting up of displays.
- To run the after school, lunchtime and breakfast provision.
- To carry out lunchtime duties and attend staff meetings and courses when required.
- To attend Early Years meetings, training courses and contribute their knowledge and ideas.

## **Transition**

Transition to nursery involves first a meeting for new parents to come and hear about the curriculum, procedures etc. They meet the staff and visit our setting. Next there is a home visit by nursery staff to the child's home. There is also an open afternoon for children and parents to come and visit our nursery setting. When the children begin in nursery there is a settling in period.

Nursery teachers will meet and discuss children moving from nursery to Reception.

Transition to Reception involves first a meeting for new parents to come and hear about the curriculum, procedures etc. They meet the staff and visit our setting. Next there is a one to one family visit between reception staff to the family – usually done at school. When the children begin in reception there is a settling in period which involves staggering in the intake, children doing mornings only, then staying for lunch and then doing a full day. We aim to make the settling in process as quick as possible taking into account the different needs of the children.

Children in Reception come into a Reception unit and NOT a reception class. Each child is assigned a key worker.

At the end of the Reception year children are allocated to a class. When allocating children we take into account lots of factors including ability, good learning partners, EAL, SEN, ethnic backgrounds, Pupil Premium, friendships etc. Reception teachers will meet and discuss the children going from Reception to Year One.

Transition time is extremely important and it is essential that the children are well prepared and parents have an understanding of the next step.

### **Role of Parents**

The EYFS Team is keen to develop an effective partnership with parents. We recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and that in order to have a positive impact on a child's development and learning it is essential to develop a close working relationship with Parents, based on mutual respect. The EYFS team are always happy to talk to parents about any issues as they arise and communication between home and school is a fundamental to children's learning. There are also meetings each term to discuss progress for each child.

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Please read our school policy which provides all the relevant information regarding our Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures.

**DSL:** We have a DSL with responsibility for safeguarding and a team of Deputy DSLs. Their responsibility includes the nursery.

**Training:** EYFS practitioners are subject to the same training as all school staff as outlined in our Safeguarding policy. Training is renewed every two years. Annual refresher training is provided during any two-year period to help maintain basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to safeguarding procedures or as a result of any safeguarding concerns that occur in the setting.

**Recruitment:** New staff are recruited in line with whole school safer recruitment practices. References are followed up before employment. These must be from senior staff within the previous employment. A reference request also confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations that meet the harm threshold.

**Attendance:** We have a whole school attendance policy which includes the nursery. We follow up on absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts are made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. We consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use professional judgement when deciding if their absence should be considered as prolonged. Consideration must be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns are referred to the EWO, local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

**Whistleblowing:** We have a whole school policy which all staff are made aware of and which staff sign to say they are aware of every September.

**Low Level Concerns:** We also have a low-level concern form which staff are made aware of if they want to bring to our attention the behaviour of another member of staff in terms of safeguarding.

### **Supervision for EYFS Staff**

Following a recommendation from the Serious Case Review and the review into the EYFS 2008 by Dame Clare Tickell, staff supervision is now mandatory in all early years settings (EYFS 2012).

Supervision is a regular, planned, accountable two-way process which should offer support and develop the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. Its purpose is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives.

Supervision also provides an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague's practice. Supervision provides professional one to one support and "space" away from the direct work environment to discuss progress, professional role, workload and concerns. The supervisory relationship should develop trust which will allow for free and open discussion and learning without the fear of being criticised. Employees should receive constructive feedback about their work, with concerns being challenged sensitively and honestly and successes being acknowledged on a regular basis. This hopefully increases the feeling of being valued by management at the setting which in turn, increases job satisfaction.

The aim of supervision is to allow staff and their supervisors to:

Discuss and challenge concerns, issues or difficulties;

- Identify solutions to address concerns and issues;
- Be coached in tackling issues as they arise and plan future action;
- Review work and workload;
- Explore feelings and emotional impact;
- Develop practice and competencies, including training needs;
- Explore the understanding of setting policy, philosophy and practice;
- Ensure every child's safety and wellbeing;
- To maintain an accurate and agreed record of professional progress (Appraisal sheets)

One to one confidential supervision should be held half termly. Group supervision, for example by means of a team meeting will be held on Inset days. Some staff, for example if they are newly qualified or less confident, may need supervision sessions to be held more regularly.

Appraisal and performance management clearly has some crossover with supervision. Holly Park staff have 6 Appraisal meetings in the year. Supervision and Appraisal at Holly Park are linked together closely. The focus of 2 meetings will just be about targets being met. A focus on how well an individual is performing in relation to organisational needs and priorities should not, however, be the main focus of the other four sessions.

At Holly Park there are clear team leaders for supervision/Appraisal. Team leaders are: SENCO – for TAs

SLT Members – for EYFS teachers and Nursery Nurses

### **Mobile phones and other devices that accept calls, messages and video calling**

In the EYFS we promote the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We believe our staff should be completely attentive during their hours of working to ensure all children in receive good quality care and education.

To ensure the safety and well-being of children we do not allow staff to use personal mobile phones, smartwatches and/or fitbits during working hours, unless within the staff only areas. This policy should be used in conjunction with our online safety policy and safeguarding policy to ensure children are kept safe when using the EYFS devices online

All staff working with EYFS children must adhere to the following:

- Mobile phones are locked away during working hours
- Smartwatches/fitbits are either turned off or on do not disturb and not accessed during your working hours
- Mobile phones/smartwatches/fitbits can only be used on a designated break and then this must be away from the children
- The use of EYFS devices, such as tablets, must only be used for EYFS purposes
- The EYFS devices will not have any social media or messaging apps on them
  - Any apps downloaded onto devices must be done only by the IT team. This will ensure only age appropriate and safe apps will be accessible to staff or children using them
- Passwords/passcodes for EYFS devices must not be shared or written down
- Photographs must not be taken of the children on any personal phones or any other personal information storage device. Only HPS owned devices will be used to take photographs or film videos.
- EYFS devices will not be taken home with staff and will remain secure at the setting when not in use. If a device is needed to be taken home due to unforeseen circumstances then the person taking this device home must ensure it is securely stored and not accessed by another other individual and returned to HPS as soon as practically possible

### **Parents' and visitors' use of mobile phones and smartwatches**

We recognise that there may be emergency situations which necessitate the use of a mobile telephone. In order to ensure the safety and welfare of children in our care, parents and visitors are kindly asked to refrain from using their mobile telephones whilst in the EYFS setting or when collecting or dropping off their children.

If parents/visitors are found to be using phones inside the EYFS premises they will be asked to finish the call or take the call outside. We do this to ensure all children are safeguarded and the time for dropping off and picking up is a quality handover opportunity where we can share details about the child.

### **First Aid**

Nursery nurses who work in the EYFS setting will have an up to date Paediatric First Aid Certificate. We have a whole school first aid policy.

## **Food and drink facilities**

Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.

Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating.

Before a child is admitted to the setting the staff must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. This information must be shared with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food. At each mealtime and snack time staff must be clear about checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.

Staff must have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. This information must be kept up to date.

Staff should be aware of ingredients/food additives present in foodstuffs they use.

Foods containing nuts should be avoided because of the fatal reaction that some individuals have to this ingredient. Even traces of nuts can cause an adverse reaction e.g. when food is contaminated by coming into contact with nuts and nut oils.

Staff should be aware of pupils' personal medical plans including anaphylaxis awareness and procedures.

Guidance on managing medicines in schools and early years settings should be followed.

Staff to make a 999 response should the need arise in the event of food allergies.

All staff have annual Epi pen training.

Children are to sit at the table or on the floor to eat snack. There will be no movement around the classroom whilst eating.

There will be no grapes as they are a choking hazard

Hard fruits such as apples should be sliced/chopped into smaller parts

## **Toileting and Intimate Hygiene**

The school has a separate personal care policy for all staff to follow.

Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting.

The school will ensure that:

There is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available – there should usually be separate toilet facilities for adults.

There are suitable hygienic changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies.

There is an adequate supply of spare clothes, and any other necessary items.

Non-latex gloves are provided, for tasks such as nappy changing

Disposable aprons are provided

Staff should thoroughly wash hands afterwards

Waste is disposed of appropriately

Department for Health guidance is that whenever possible it is recommended that:

Mobile children are changed standing up

Children in FS1 & FS2 may be changed on a mat on a suitable surface if it is not possible to change standing up/ on a changing bed.

Children in FS1 and FS2 may be changed on a changing mat on the floor.

### **Risk Assessments**

There are risk assessments specifically for EYFS on the school Drive – in whole School Information.

The risk assessments are:

Food Preparation

Foundation Stage Indoor Activities

Foundation Stage Outdoor Activities

Manual Handling

### **Policies**

There are many other whole school policies that relate to EYFS including (but not restricted to): first aid, safeguarding, whistle blowing, safer recruitment, wellbeing, personal care, Food policy, positive handling, H&S, SEND, Behaviour, Staff code of conduct, Data security, Educational visits, Learning & teaching, Equal opportunities, uniform, Photos & Videos etc

### **Document Control**

This policy will be reviewed annually. Responsibility is delegated to the Governors Teaching & learning Committee.

### **Revision History**

| Version | Revision Date | Revised By    | Revision                                    |
|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1.0     | Autumn 2015   | Ann Pelham    | Policy written in line with curriculum 2014 |
| 1.1     | Spring 2015   | T&L committee | Amended, Adopted & ratified                 |
| 1.2     | Spring 2016   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |
| 1.3     | Spring 2017   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |
| 1.4     | Spring 2018   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |
| 1.5     | Spring 2019   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |
| 1.6     | Spring 2020   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |
| 1.7     | Spring 2021   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |
| 1.8     | Spring 2022   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |
| 1.9     | Spring 2023   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |
| 2.0     | Spring 2024   | T&L Committee | Reviewed                                    |

|     |             |               |                                               |
|-----|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 2.1 | Spring 2025 | T&L committee | Reviewed                                      |
| 2.2 | Sept 2025   | Ann Pelham    | In response to EYFS safeguarding reforms 2025 |
| 2.3 | Spring 2026 | T&L committee | Reviewed                                      |

#### Signed by

|                    | Name          | Signature                                                                          | Date        |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Headteacher        | Ann Pelham    |   | Spring 2026 |
| Chair of Governors | Clare Hegarty |  | Spring 2026 |

#### Distribution

| Shared with                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff via Google Drive</li> <li>• Parents via Website</li> <li>• Governors via committee meetings</li> </ul> |

| Date for next review |
|----------------------|
| Spring 2027          |

## Appendix 1

### Supervision Contract

Between Supervisor .....

and Supervisee .....

Holly Park expects all EYFS staff to take part in regular supervision sessions.

The main purposes of the supervisory process are:

- To ensure that the worker is fulfilling their responsibilities to the expected standards;
- To provide support to the worker;
- To identify the professional development and learning needs of the worker.

We have agreed on the following structure for the supervision

Sessions, which will typically:

- Take place half termly
- Last about 30 mins.
- Be uninterrupted, unless by prior agreement.
- Be held in a mutually agreed setting, which is quiet and ensures privacy.
- Be booked in advance
- If a supervision date has to be altered by either party, a new date and time should be fixed straight away.
- Follow the agenda set out on the project supervision record sheet.

## **Appendix 2**

### **SUPERVISION**

Date of supervision .....

Name of Supervisor .....

Name of Supervisee .....

Date and time agreed for next meeting .....

**Agenda standing items:**

**Specific additional agenda items:**

Supervisor ..... Date .....

Supervisee .....Date .....

**Both the supervisor and supervisee should sign and date the end of this record to confirm its accuracy.**