

East Midlands Academy Trust

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

Scope: East Midlands Academy Trust & Academies within the Trust	
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Policy type:	
Statutory	

Revision History

RevisionDate	Revisor	Description of Revision
October 25 – v6	J Lawson	Updated in line with EYFS framework. Inclusion of staff training
Sept 2024 – V5	K Russell	Policy review – No changes
Sept 2023 - V4	K Russell	Updated links and minor changes. Policy owner & approver updated
July 2022 –V3	M Juan	Policy review – No changes
July 2021 –V2	M Juan	Changes reflect the new EYFS statutory framework, including the new assessment process.
Sept 2020 – V1	M Juan	New EMAT Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy issued to all schools

EMAT Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents East Midlands Academy Trust ethos, enables consistency and quality across the schools and is related to the following legislation:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for Organisations Who Work With and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE) and (DoH)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)

At EMAT we believe *'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 (DfE))

At EMAT we are aware that *'The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.'* (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE))

The EYFS, which refers to children from birth to five years of age, is based upon the following four principles: (i) **a unique child**, (ii) **positive relationships**, (iii) **enabling environments** and (iv) **learning and development** and seeks to provide **quality and consistency, a secure foundation, partnership working and equality of opportunity**.

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- we give every child the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.
- 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.
- quality and consistency of teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- close partnership working between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- compliance with all relevant legislation .
- we work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to children in Reception (ages) and nursery (ages)

3. Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61222/early_years_foundation_stage_eofsf.pdf). This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

Each Primary school within EMAT has its own EYFS structure of Nursery and Reception provision. Details for individual schools can be found by contacting the primary school directly.

4. Curriculum

Our early years settings follows the curriculum guidance as outlined in the statutory EYFS framework. ([Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61222/early_years_foundation_stage_eofsf.pdf)). The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language

- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

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 experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Staff make sure that the children experience the 3 key characteristics of effective teaching and learning: playing and exploring; active learning; and creating and thinking critically.

As the children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more focus on teaching essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning, to help the children prepare for Key Stage 1.

4.3 Assessment

At EMAT, 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. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Staff will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

Where there is a nursery setting, when a child is aged between 2 and 3, practitioners review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed. It also focuses on any areas of possible concern, which may indicate a disability, special educational need or developmental delay. The progress check will

describe the activities and strategies that the school intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns, involving parents and/or carers and other professionals as appropriate.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the reception baseline assessment (RBA). [The requirements for the RBA are set out in Annex B of EYFS statutory framework]

In the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age 5, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child (before 30 June in that term). Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

We share the EYFS profile the child's year 1 teacher. This helps to inform a discussion between reception and year 1 teachers about the child's stage of development and learning needs and helps with planning activities in year 1.

The school shares the results of each child's 'progress check' and EYFS profile (but not the reception baseline assessment) with their parents and/or carers.

In very exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child might stay in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they turn 5. In these exceptional cases, we will continue to assess the child throughout their time in EYFS provision and complete their profile at the end of the year before they move into year 1.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. We submit EYFS profile data to the local authority on request.

In Reception children are assessed termly against developmental 'milestones'. As stated in [Development Matters \(Sept 2020\)](#) these *"set out the pathways of children's development in broad ages and stages. However, the actual learning of young children is not so neat and orderly. The main purpose of these pathways is therefore to help assess each child's level of development. Accurate assessment helps practitioners to make informed decisions about what a child needs to learn and be able to do next."*

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 (expected)
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

5. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

We keep parents and/or carers up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

For specific aspects such as intimate care, sleep arrangements, toileting and administration of medicines please see separate policies and speak with your child's setting.

6. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in each academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

7. Staff

7.1 Staff training

We will:

- Train all staff in safeguarding procedures in line with Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance
- Support all staff to feel supported and confident in implementing our safeguarding policy and procedures
- Renew training every 2 years, or more often when it's needed to help maintain skills; keep up to date with any changes to our safeguarding procedures; or because of any safeguarding concerns
- Outline how training is delivered, and how staff are supported to put it in place, in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will:

- Provide ongoing support, advice and guidance to all staff
- Attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework
- Liaise as needed with local statutory children's services agencies and our local safeguarding partners

7.2 Safer recruitment

When recruiting staff, we will follow the procedures set out in the latest EYFS framework guidance on checking the suitability of new recruits, including:

- Obtaining a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited
- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references

See our safeguarding policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures.

8. EYFS staffing and pupil ratios policy

8.1. Statutory compliance

All academies within the trust must adhere to the statutory requirements set out in the **EYFS Statutory Framework (DfE, 2023)**. This includes both **staff-to-child ratios** and **staff qualification requirements**.

8.2. Staffing ratios

a) Children under 2 years

- Minimum ratio: **1 member of staff for every 3 children**.
- Staff must have appropriate qualifications and experience.

b) Children aged 2 years

- Minimum ratio: **1 member of staff for every 4 children**.
- The trust permits use of the optional flexibility introduced in 2023: **1:5 ratio**, subject to risk assessment and leadership approval.

c) Children aged 3 years and over (nursery classes in academies/maintained schools)

- Where a **qualified teacher (QTS, Early Years Teacher Status, or Early Years Professional Status)** works directly with the children:
 - Ratio: **1 adult to 13 children**.
 - At least one other member of staff must hold a **Level 3 qualification** (or be approved via the experience-based route).
- Where a qualified teacher is **not working directly with the children**:
 - Ratio: **1 member of staff to 8 children**.
 - At least one other member of staff must hold a **Level 3 qualification**.
 - At least half of all other staff must hold a **Level 2 qualification**.

d) Maintained nursery classes (within academies)

- For nursery classes:
 - Ratio: **1 adult to 13 children**, with at least one Level 3 practitioner.

e) Reception classes in maintained schools and academies

- Ratio: **1 teacher per 30 pupils**, in line with infant class size legislation.

f) Mixed-age classes

- Ratios must be determined by reference to all relevant statutory requirements and the needs of the children in the group.

8.3. Staffing qualifications

- **Managers** must hold at least a **Level 3 qualification** and, since 2024, a **Level 2 maths qualification** (to be achieved within two years of appointment if not already held).
- At least **half of all other staff** must hold a **Level 2 qualification**.
- At least one member of staff in each setting must hold a **Level 3 qualification** (or be recognised via a DfE-approved equivalence route).
- Where ratios rely on a teacher-led model, the teacher must hold **QTS, EYTS, or EYP status**.

8.4. Trust-wide Implementation

- Each academy ensures compliance with these ratios and qualification requirements.
- Leaders may adapt deployment of staff to meet the needs of their setting, provided statutory ratios are maintained.
- Risk assessments must be documented where flexibility (e.g., 1:5 ratio for two-year-olds) is applied.
- Governors and trustees will receive assurance reports confirming compliance across all phases.

9. Paediatric first aid (PFA)

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

10. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

We also have a DSL who has lead responsibility for safeguarding children. They are also responsible for:

- Liaising with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSPs (local safeguarding partners)
- Providing support, advice and guidance to all other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Attending a safeguarding training course that complies with the criteria set out in annex C of the latest EYFS framework

11. Absence

We're required to promptly follow up on absences.

If a child is absent for a prolonged time or if their parents/carers haven't told us about the absence, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts.

See our attendance policy for more on this, including our expectations of parents/carers to report child absences.

12. Oral health and tooth brushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by for example, talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

We intend to introduce a supervised tooth brushing programme in all settings, to support the children's oral health. We follow [government guidance on supervised toothbrushing](#) to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, which can be found on the school website.

13. Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating and seated safely in an appropriate chair or highchair and, where possible, in a designated eating space.

Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

We will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At each mealtime and snack time it will be clear which staff member is responsible for checking that the food meets all the requirements for each child.

We will make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods.

We will consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate
 - We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff
- Discuss their child's progress with solid foods
- Work with them to move on to the next stage at a pace that's right for their child

We will prepare food in a way that:

- Prevents choking
- Meets each child's individual developmental needs
- Is in line with the DfE's [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of the incident and make the child's parents/carers aware. We will periodically review the records to identify whether we can change anything in our practice to make eating safer and then take action as appropriate.

14. Accident or injury

We keep a first aid box (which contains appropriate items for children) always accessible.

We keep a written record of accident or injuries and any first aid treatment.

We will inform parents or carers the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, of any:

- Accident or injury sustained by the child
- First aid treatment given

We will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of any child while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable.

15. Safety of premises

We make sure that our premises, including overall floor space and outdoor space, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children we care for and the activities provided on the premises.

We comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.

16. Toileting and privacy

We make sure that there are:

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children
- Suitable and hygienic nappy changing facilities
- An adequate supply of necessary items such as clean bedding, towels and spare clothes
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

During nappy changes and toileting, we will balance children's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs.

17. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved annually by the Trust Board. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Local Advisory Board.

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See EMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See EMAT Health and Safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See EMAT Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See EMAT Health and Safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See EMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See EMAT Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See EMAT Complaints policy

Other relevant policies:

- First Aid
- Intimate Care policy