

## LEO Academy Trust

### Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

***“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.” Original 2012 EYFS Statutory Framework.***

This policy reflects the school’s values and philosophy in relation to the education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We define the term Early Years Foundation Stage as the period of time that children spend in the Nursery and / or Reception classes.

#### **The Nature of the Early Years Foundation Stage Education**

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides the opportunity for the learning and development of skills, attitudes and understanding so that children can lead full, satisfying lives and become confident, active members of a diverse and constantly changing society. Our LEO PRIDE Values feature heavily in the delivery of our curriculum, ensuring that pupils develop skills of Perseverance, Respect, Imagination, Dedication and Encouragement.

#### **The aims of our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

At LEO Academy Trust our aim in the Early Years is to give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in order for them to establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning. We offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate and explore the world around them through a combination of carefully planned activities and opportunities to learn through structured and well planned play.

***Throughout the Early Years we aim to:***

- Provide a happy, secure, rich and stimulating environment in which children acquire the essential skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge to enable them to be independent, thinking, caring pupils.
- Develop a child’s positive attitude to learning and encourage them to strive to achieve their best.
- Extend children’s levels of social, emotional, physical and intellectual development.
- Provide opportunities for structured activities that build on first hand experiences and extend their interests and learning.
- Provide opportunities for children to investigate, explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves and make mistakes without experiencing a sense of failure.
- Encourage independence, confidence and effective learning.
- Acknowledge that the children’s first educators are their parents and aim to work in partnership to build upon and further develop the children’s existing skills and knowledge.
- Encourage children to communicate or talk about their learning and build relationships with adults and other children.
- Offer equal opportunity for all children and value them as individuals and ensure that children fulfill their learning potential by matching learning experiences to individual needs.
- Provide a carefully planned broad and balanced curriculum which helps all children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Provide a structure which ensures a smooth transition, continuity and progression for pupils entering school or transferring from the nursery into a reception class.

#### **Who do we mean when we talk about EYFS?**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our Trust the majority of children start in nursery in the September term after they are three with some starting the following January. The majority then start full time school the next September where they turn five.

## Four Principles of EYFS

### **The EYFS is based upon four principles:**

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **A Unique Child**

In LEO Academy Trust we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in different ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. The diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected. No child or family is discriminated against. All children have an equal right to be listened to and valued. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best which follows on from our LEO Pride values. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and making children aware of what type of learner they are. We do this through the 'Characteristics of effective learning'.

In the EYFS we set realistic but challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that as many as possible achieve the Profile points by the end of the Foundation Stage. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively and become independent;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide immediate next step support necessary. This may include support from external services.

### **Positive Relationships**

In LEO Academy Trust we recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. Induction procedures in each school are carefully planned to ensure all children have the best possible start to their learning journey.

Effective communication means there is a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and practitioners. We ensure parents are actively involved in their child's learning by;

- Offering a home visit and or induction meeting if they are new to the school;
- The children and parents spending a session in their new classroom;
- The nursery children having individual starting dates and the parents helping settle the children;
- Nursery and Reception parents attending an induction meeting at the beginning of the term
- Making parents feel welcome in our Foundation Stage at any time;
- Having regular pop in sessions for the parents to see their child's learning journeys;
- Sharing information from home and school through the year and regularly include parents voice (WOW captions);
- Providing parent workshops to support parents in understand how to enhance their child's learning at home.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. In LEO Academy Trust we have a key worker system for all children. In Nursery this tends to be one of the EY team whilst in Reception it is generally the EYFS teacher. The nursery teacher meets with pre-school settings to share children's next steps when they start. We also work closely with any other practitioner linked to the child, for example child minders or breakfast and after school clubs and outside agencies.

### Enabling Environments

In LEO Academy Trust we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we access the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects individual needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other practitioners in the EYFS. Baseline assessments are completed for all children in Nursery and for children new to the school in Reception. Using data appropriate next steps can be set for all children. Data is recorded on one of our data management systems; Pupil Asset, Target Tracker and O Track.

Each child has a learning journey. These folders contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents. Parents, teachers, the children themselves and practitioners can add comments to these journeys throughout the year. They are accessible at all times. Parents receive a written annual report to celebrate children's achievements.

The environment supports every child's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable. A rich and varied learning environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces.

### Learning and Development

In LEO Academy Trust we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked. Our classrooms are set up to encourage independent learning. There is an expectation that resources are easily accessible and clearly labelled. We promote active learning as we realise that children learn best through mental and physical challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Children learn best with a 'hands on' approach to learning. All children in our Early Years have the opportunity to access outside learning environments. This is again to encourage independent learning and to create a range of learning opportunities for the children.

All adults are working within our Foundation Stage are experienced and fully trained to support pupil's development. We strive to make all children reach their full learning potential by meeting their individual needs.

Our planning is flexible and adaptable and relates to children's interests. The importance of play and opportunities for play is evident in all our planning. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults support children's thinking and can help them to make connections by showing genuine interests, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

#### Areas of learning:

The Prime Areas	Specific areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Personal, Social and Emotional Development</li> <li>➤ Communication and Language</li> <li>➤ Physical Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Literacy</li> <li>➤ Numeracy</li> <li>➤ Understanding of the World</li> <li>➤ Expressive Arts and Design</li> </ul>
<p>None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are early learning outcomes that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.</p>	

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The EYFS Leader is responsible for discussing the EYFS practice with the governors. The Senior Leadership teams in each school carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

As a trust we provide several opportunities to look at standards across the schools through termly moderation meetings and Early Years Network meetings. We participate in many external reviews which always include Early Years. All Early Years staff take part in performance management meetings to support their individual development within their role and monitor their effectiveness.

### **Safeguarding**

Through practitioner's day to day contact with children and direct work with families, all staff, students and volunteers at the setting have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and in referring them to the Designated Person for Child Protection. All staff are aware of the Trust policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection and also the KCSIE 2018 document.

All quotations included in this policy are taken from the Early Years Foundation Stage Handbook May 2008 Development Matters in the EYFS 2013

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**Approved:**

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