



Victoria Academies Trust

EYFS POLICY V1.0

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1. The EYFS

The period of time from birth until a child is 5 years old is described as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). As its name suggests, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in Victoria Academies Trust (VAT) Schools provides the foundation for all future learning. At VAT, we know excellent education in the early years is crucial to achieving our mission. Regrettably, gaps in development between disadvantaged children and their peers open up well before school age. We are committed to closing this gap and ensuring equal life chances for all pupils right from the start. Early Years' providers currently have a legal requirement to meet the standards set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. This framework sets out:

The legal welfare requirements that everyone registered to look after children must follow to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

The areas of learning and development.

An assessment framework that will include parents in conversation about their child's progress.

Expected levels that children will attain by the end of the EYFS.

There are four principles, which underpin the EYFS and shape practice:

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments;
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in EYFS including children with special educational needs and disabilities. VAT schools have SEND Policies which are dedicated to supporting children throughout their time with us.

2. Aims

The vision for the EYFS Curriculum is: CHALLENGING, PURPOSEFUL, PLAYFUL.

Children are passionate about the exciting challenge-driven approach that includes purposeful hooks and experiences and where their ideas are not only valued but actively encouraged, recorded and acted upon, giving them ownership of their learning.

Children show high levels of wellbeing and involvement in their child-initiated learning, which research shows leads to deeper learning. They are able to do this because they are safe, valued and adults show genuine interest in their ideas and play. We develop a growth mind-set with our youngest children by making learning through mistakes and taking risks an integral part of their development. Children are encouraged to develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning in this way.

High expectations of learning, development and behaviour embedded through our values encourage all children to be the best they can be.

3. Curriculum

The EYFS curriculum at VAT allows children to follow the learning and development outlined in the Early Years Outcomes document, taking into consideration children's own interests and encompassing a real purpose or outcome to their learning. We do this alongside our Trust approach, for learning to be Real, Immersive and Purposeful. We incorporate a play-based approach with quality adult instruction and interactions which place an emphasis on developing language.

By using this approach to learning, children develop and apply the Characteristics of Effective Learning (see 'How children learn') and this supports them to become the best that they can be.

Using challenge based learning, children are widely involved in the direction of learning from Nursery upwards as we promote sustained, shared thinking as a collaborative learning style (see more from 'How we Learn'). If planned effectively, there should be clear opportunities in the learning challenge for children to take responsibility for decisions, work together and learn independently.

Literacy and maths is woven into all other areas of learning through a balance of continuous provision and adult-led learning, with phonics being taught discretely and disseminated organically. Where appropriate, literacy and maths is linked to the challenge and takes place both indoors and outdoors.

Rich and challenging, continuous and enhanced provision both indoors and outdoors sits alongside the adult-led planning and teaching, reflecting a combination of the challenge, the learning objectives and the children's interests - Challenging, Purposeful Playful. It is the quality of the adult interactions that moves learning forward, taking into account theories of child development such as Vygotsky and Piaget backed by research.

4. How children learn

As children learn and develop through EYFS, staff will follow a cycle of observing, assessing and planning. This will rely heavily on strong relationships being formed between staff and children as they interact daily. Children will be provided with a balance of child-initiated and adult-initiated learning opportunities.

When observing children, specific focuses may include the following:

- Personal to the pupil - reflective of the 'unique child' - one of the original overarching principles of EYFS.
- Child initiated activity or child interest.
- The language used by the observer - particularly reflecting the language of Characteristics of Effective Learning and other independent learning or thinking skills such as Learning Power, CoRT 1 or Thinking Hats.
- Questioning and enabling by the observer where appropriate. Challenges that are set in response to the child's activity/learning, open-ended questions which prompt critical thinking, resources added to extend learning.
- Next steps - are not necessarily needed all the time, but where they are, they should be skills linked to early years' outcomes. These can also inform changes to the continuous provision.
- Child language/dialogue - it is important to record examples of language used by the child, questions asked and answers given where it shows evidence of attainment in Communication and Language aspects of *speaking, listening & attention and understanding*. Anything the child says should be recorded with speech marks and using the child's words.
- A good photo - particularly if writing is included - it needs to be clear and big enough to read. Multi-photos offer good evidence of a sequence of learning happening as do videos. There may also be occasions where a photo is not required.
- Cross-curricular - an observation may cover evidence of many different aspects of learning happening at once.

5. Enabling the environment

As a guide, the EYFS environment should:

- Be bright and uncluttered. Children *choose it, use it, put it away*. Expectations are high and routines embedded (and visual where necessary).
- Have VAT values displayed.
- Have enhanced provision including role-play reflecting the challenge pack.
- Be organised into Learning zones which provide bays, corners, nooks or communication friendly spaces.
- Include a reading area (including decodable books), writing area, construction area, role play area, maths area, creative area.
- Have resources stored in labelled, child-friendly or open trays.
- Display pictures/print at child height as much as possible.
- Provide SEND children with access to work station, Now & Next, visual timetable as required.
- Be print and number rich – purposeful print displayed with children’s input. HFW and graphemes are visible in Reception. Graphemes are displayed as introduced in Nursery. Examples of adult writing is on display such as CAFS.
- Display photographs of children showing what the learning looks like in the learning zones.
- Have good sitting expectations displayed near carpet & referred to each session.
- Document the sequence/experiences of learning on working walls.

Outdoor learning should:

- Include learning zones, which may reflect those indoors but use different resources linked to outdoor learning – e.g. chalk, water in writing area, natural resources in maths area.
- Provide opportunities to self-challenge / take risks.
- Keep resources carefully stored / set up.
- Promote adult interactions: observe, listen, support, challenge.

6. Assessment and recording

The EYFS requires practitioners to track children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). In order to do this, we need to make on-going (formative) assessments which, at key points in time, we then use to help us make a judgement (summative assessment) about a child's stage of development. Baseline assessments are carried out on entry to Nursery and Reception to define starting points using both information gained through observing the child in the first few weeks, parental contribution and information from previous settings. To know whether or not a child is on track to achieve the ELGs at the end of reception, we make a judgement about whether their stage of development is typical for their age. Because the development bands described in the EYFS are broad in terms of months (and overlap), we use the refinements emerging (low), developing (mid) and secure (high) to indicate a child's level of mastery within each band. In addition to making judgements on a child's level of attainment, we also need to monitor rates of progress in the different areas of learning and whether progress is appropriate. Progress is measured by comparing the difference between summative assessments made at key points.

How do we make judgements?

When making summative assessment judgements, practitioners must draw on their knowledge of the child including information from other people e.g. parents and other professionals. Practitioners must then use both this *knowledge of the unique child along with their understanding of child development* to position the child within the age band which best describes them. The following prompts should be adopted to help make accurate judgements.

Making a judgement about developmental age bands

- What is the age of the child in months and which developmental band would they be positioned in if their stage of development were *typical (typical development for children in the UK...not a typical child in your setting)?* This will identify the band a child should be in for their age.

A child demonstrating age-appropriate development is referred to as working at an expected level of development. Those working above may be 'exceeding' or 'greater depth'. Those working towards an expected level of development may be known as 'emerging' towards the expected level of development.

Making a judgement about refinements

In EYFS we use the refinements, *emerging, developing and secure* within ages bands to indicate how well established the child's attitudes, skills and knowledge are within the age band identified. This allows practitioners to show smaller steps of progress than the bands alone allow.

By describing a child as secure (high) in an age band, we mean attitudes, skills and knowledge are embedded so that they are

- consistently demonstrated over time
- displayed independently without the need for adult support or encouragement
- transferrable so they can be applied to a range of unfamiliar situations.

By describing a child as developing (mid) in an age band we mean attitudes, skills and knowledge which are

- demonstrated most of the time

- displayed with occasional adult support and encouragement
- transferable to a variety of familiar contexts

By describing a child as *emerging* (low) *in an age band* we mean attitudes, skills and knowledge which are

- inconsistently demonstrated over time e.g. shows the skill one day but not the next
- displayed mainly when adult support and encouragement is given
- context specific (non-transferrable) i.e. skills shown in the context in which they've been learnt.

7. Moderation and network

Moderating judgements

To ensure that assessments are accurate and consistent, practitioners need to engage in a process of moderation. This can take three forms at VAT:

- In-house: Justifying and agreeing judgements with colleagues within individual settings. This can be done as part of on-going dialogue with other practitioners when making on-going formative assessments. In addition to this, more formalised moderation should be carried out to support summative assessment judgements.
- Cross Trust: Moderation twice yearly before summer data submissions allows colleagues from within and across the Trust to share and agree judgements.
- External: Justifying and agreeing summative assessments with practitioners from other settings by describing the evidence judgements are based upon. This evidence can be presented through a range of information such as observations, practitioner knowledge and examples of children's work.

8. EYFSP

Taken directly from EYFS Statutory Framework:

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.

Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These should inform a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Schools must share the results of the Profile with parents and/or carers, and explain to them when and how they can discuss the Profile with the teacher who completed it. For children attending more than one setting, the Profile must be completed by the school where the child spends most time. If a child moves to a new school during the academic year, the original school must send their assessment of the child's level of development against the early learning goals to the relevant school, provider or practitioner within 15 days of receiving a request. If a child moves during the summer term, relevant providers must agree which of them will complete the Profile.

The Profile must be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs and disabilities must be made as appropriate. Providers should consider whether they may need to seek specialist assistance to help with this. Children will have differing levels of skills and abilities across the Profile and it is important that there is a full assessment of all areas of their development, to inform plans for future activities and to identify any additional support needs.

9. Health, safety and wellbeing

The EYFS Framework has clear health and safety requirements. These are outlined below and must be followed by all schools. Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover other EYFS requirements provided they are already met through an existing policy.

Requirements for ratios and capacity should be taken directly from the statutory framework.

Considerations for school policies should include admissions, safeguarding & child protection (*the safeguarding policy and procedures must include an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child and in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, and cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting. It must also include policy on children going missing and late collection of children*) looked after children, SEND, employment and suitable people, behaviour, complaints, ICT technology & e-safety, data protection, maintaining records and information sharing, and trips.

Health and Safety statutory guidance for all VAT schools is as follows:

Health

Medicines

The provider must promote the good health of children attending the setting. They must have a procedure, discussed with parents and/or carers, for responding to children who are ill or infectious, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action if children are ill.

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, for administering medicines. It must include systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medicines, and for keeping this information up-to-date. Training must be provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Prescription medicines must not be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor).

Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) must only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. Providers must keep a written record each time a medicine is administered to a child, and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings which sets out when and for how long children need to be excluded from settings, when treatment/medication is required and where to get further advice can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/infection-control-in-schoolsposter#history

Practitioners must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If practitioners are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, those practitioners should seek medical advice. Providers must ensure that those practitioners only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly. Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored, and out of reach of children, at all times.

Food and drink

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before a child is admitted to the setting the provider must also obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special

health requirements. Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible at all times. Providers must record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs.

There must be an area which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There must be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies' food. Providers must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. In group provision, all staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene.

Registered providers must notify Ofsted or the childminder agency with which they are registered of any food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises. Notification must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident. A registered provider, who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.

Accident or injury

Providers must ensure there is a first aid box accessible at all times with appropriate content for use with children. Providers must keep a written record of accidents or injuries and first aid treatment. Providers must inform parents and/or carers of any accident or injury sustained by the child on the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, and of any first aid treatment given.

At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings. The certificate must be for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A. Any assistant who might be in sole charge of the children for any period of time, must hold a full current PFA certificate. PFA training must be renewed every three years and be relevant for workers caring for young children and where relevant, babies. Providers should take into account the number of children, staff and layout of premises to ensure that a paediatric first aider is able to respond to emergencies quickly. All newly qualified entrants to the early years' workforce who have completed a level 2 and/or level 3 qualification on or after 30 June 2016, must also have either a full PFA or an emergency PFA certificate within three months of starting work in order to be included in the required staff:child ratios at level 2 or level 3 in an early years setting. Providers should display (or make available to parents) staff PFA certificates or a list of staff who have a current PFA certificate.

Registered providers must notify Ofsted or the childminder agency with which they are registered of any serious accident, illness or injury to, or death of, any child while in their care, and of the action taken. Notification must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident occurring. A registered provider, who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence. Providers must notify local child protection agencies of any serious accident or injury to, or the death of, any child while in their care, and must act on any advice from those agencies.

Providers must ensure that staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care. For example, settings must be in a position to keep records in English, to liaise with other agencies in English, to summon emergency help, and to understand instructions such as those for the safety of medicines or food hygiene.

Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment

Safety

Providers must ensure that their premises, including overall floor space and outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided on the premises. Providers must comply with requirements of health and safety legislation (including fire safety and hygiene requirements).

Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency, and must have an emergency evacuation procedure. Providers must have appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers) which is in working order. Fire exits must be clearly identifiable, and fire doors must be free of obstruction and easily opened from the inside.

Smoking

Providers must not allow smoking in or on the premises when children are present or about to be present.

Premises

The premises and equipment must be organised in a way that meets the needs of children. Providers must meet the following indoor space requirements:

- Children under two years: 3.5 m² per child
- Two year olds: 2.5 m² per child
- Children aged three to five years: 2.3 m² per child.

Providers must provide access to an outdoor play area or, if that is not possible, ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis (unless circumstances make this inappropriate, for example unsafe weather conditions). Providers must follow their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (for example, the provisions on reasonable adjustments). These calculations should be based on the net or useable areas of the rooms used by the children, not including storage areas, thoroughfares, dedicated staff areas, cloakrooms, utility rooms, kitchens and toilets.

Sleeping children must be frequently checked. Except in childminding settings, there should be a separate baby room for children under the age of two. However, providers must ensure that children in a baby room have contact with older children and are moved into the older age group when appropriate.

Providers must ensure there is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available. Except in childminding settings, there should usually be separate toilet facilities for adults. Providers must ensure there are suitable hygienic changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies and providers should ensure that an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels, spare clothes and any other necessary items is always available.

Providers must also ensure that there is an area where staff may talk to parents and/or carers confidentially, as well as an area in group settings for staff to take breaks away from areas being used by children.

Providers must only release children into the care of individuals who have been notified to the provider by the parent, and must ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised. Providers must take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises, and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors. Providers must consider what additional measures are necessary when children stay overnight.

Providers must carry the appropriate insurance (e.g. public liability insurance) to cover all premises from which they provide childcare or childminding.

Risk assessment

Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks.

Providers must determine where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how they are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers or inspectors. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

Outings

Children must be kept safe while on outings. Providers must assess the risks or hazards which may arise for the children, and must identify the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage those risks and hazards. The assessment must include consideration of adult to child ratios. The risk assessment does not necessarily need to be in writing; this is for providers to judge.

Vehicles in which children are being transported, and the driver of those vehicles, must be adequately insured.

Information for parents and carers

Providers must make the following information available to parents and/or carers:

- how the EYFS is being delivered in the setting, and how parents and/or carers can access more information
- the range and type of activities and experiences provided for children, the daily routines of the setting, and how parents and carers can share learning at home.
- how the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- food and drinks provided for children.
- details of the provider's policies and procedures (copies available on request) and the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent and/or carer failing to collect a child at the appointed time, or in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting.
- staffing in the setting; the name of their child's key person and their role; and a telephone number for parents and/or carers to contact in an emergency

Changes that must be notified to Ofsted

All registered early years providers must notify Ofsted of any change:

- in the address of the premises (and seek approval to operate from those premises where appropriate); to the premises which may affect the space available to children and the quality of childcare available to them; in the name or address of the provider, or the provider's other contact information; to the person who is managing the Early Years provision.
- any proposal to change the hours during which childcare is provided; or to provide overnight care
- any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the Early Years' provider or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with, children on the premises to look after children

