



SAGE COLLEGE – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EARLY YEARS POLICY

1.1 Introduction

At Sage College, we are committed to providing a high quality and safe Early Years' education; giving children a secure and confident start to their school life which nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, as stated in March 2017.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. This policy reflects how, at Sage College we are building upon the fundamental EYFS principles which support children's learning.

These principles include:

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

A Unique Child

At Sage College we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual 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.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Sage College are treated regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that all our children matter and give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account



of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and gaining information through our strong links with parents and carers.

Autonomy

To enable young children to become more aware of the importance of staying healthy, and to help them build their skills in looking after themselves. It is important that we as practitioners create an emotional and physical environment that:

- encourages healthy eating and physical activity, but also values time and space for rest and sleep throughout the school day.
- gives children the time and opportunity to learn how to manage their own dressing and toileting needs.
- provides opportunities and support so children can learn how to keep themselves safe.

Parents are advised that children entering the Nursery or Reception class should be toilet trained and therefore are out of nappies. They should also have the basic skills needed to manage mealtimes and the toilet independently. Parents are advised on self-care requirements at a New Parent Meeting before the start of school year. Children attending Pre-Nursery will be supported to develop the above skills throughout the year leading up to Nursery admission.

Being Active

The children have access to an outdoor area, which provides a range of physical activities, including softplay blocks, large balls, climbing frame, rockers and digging equipment. They are also able to access the main playground for P.E. activities.

Food and Drink

- Information about the children's dietary needs is sought when they enter the setting through the Children's Information Booklet filled out by the parents and carers on entry. A list of the children's dietary needs is available in the classroom and all practitioners take these needs into regard when distributing food and drink in the lunch area, at snack time or when leading a cooking or food tasting activity.
- Unless the children go home for lunch; the children are provided with a well-balanced school lunch. The children are encouraged to feed themselves but are supported if necessary, and drinking water is provided with their lunch.
- Parents are encouraged to send in fruit for the morning snack, and a sandwich for the afternoon snack. When the children have a birthday, parents are asked to send in a plain cake and are made aware of allergies. Parents are asked not to send in sweets or chocolate; if the children do, they are confiscated and given back to the parents at the end of the day with an



explanation why. The children are asked to bring in water bottles or cup depending on their class and have access to water at any time throughout the day.

Behaviour Management

Please refer to the 'Behaviour Management' policy.

Safeguarding

Please Refer to the 'Safeguarding' policy.

Positive Relationships: Parent Partnerships

At Sage College, we understand the importance and value of the contribution that our parents and carers make to their child's learning. We therefore take every opportunity to work in collaboration with them using various up to date communication tools.

Information for Parents and Carers

We provide a pack for new parents and carers that includes information about our daily routines, the types of activities provided, staffing and food and drink. Parents are provided with a 'Child Information Booklet' and resource list specific for early years. There is a parent's notice board located in the Primary corridor that is regularly updated.

- Through Class Dojo we maintain ongoing daily communication with all parents and carers and provide online visual photo stories of what the class has been doing throughout the day. Parents and carers can contact their child's class teacher via these systems, providing a sense of reassurance as well as allowing an insight into their child's day.
- Each week, we publish a school newsletter informing parents of what their child has been learning about and how they can support this learning at home. It also includes the wider school links that Early Years have been involved in.
- Parent Topic Webs are sent home electronically roughly every six weeks as the class theme changes. The Topic Webs highlight each area of learning and the skills and activities the children will be taking part in. Individual children's reports are sent out at the end of each term highlighting progress in all areas and next steps.
- Throughout the year, there are ongoing Mentor Meetings and various Open Mornings, Learning Journey Tea Parties and Parent Workshops for all our parents to be involved in. We always welcome parent helpers, especially for story time and support with theme activity days.

Staffing and Organisation

At Sage College, we have a designated Early Years Unit within the primary building. This unit consists of 3 classes. Pre-Nursery class caters for children of 18 months to 2 and a half years old, Nursery and a Reception Class. Each class has an outside space which they can access from each of the



classrooms. Each classroom has a carpet area and the rest of the space is organised into Learning Zones for the children to access.

There is a full-time teacher and teacher assistant in each classroom. This is in line with the staff/child ratios as stated within the statutory EYFS Guidelines (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education, 2017).

Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences throughout the day. Most sessions include free flow access to the outdoor area. Practitioners are aware of the need to be flexible to respond to unplanned events that the children are interested in.

Community Links and the Wider World

Throughout the year, we arrange visits from members of the local community to support our topic work. We also arrange trips for children in the EYFS within the local community, for example visiting the playground and local Farms. The children take part in several educational visits linked to their topic work. Film clips, non-fiction texts and artefacts are also used to introduce new concepts in real-life contexts. We aim to develop the children's awareness of other cultures by exploring different countries and celebrations.

Key Person Approach

The class teacher is responsible for the wellbeing of all the children in their class. In addition, each child is assigned a 'key person' who may be the teacher or a teaching assistant. Parents are informed of who their child's key person is and will receive information about their role.

The key person's responsibilities include:

- helping the child to become familiar with the setting
- building a relationship with each child's parents, working in partnership with them to ensure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.
- responding sensitively to the child's needs, feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- ensuring that the learning opportunities on offer meet the needs of each child.

Enabling Environments

EYFS: "The quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained in class and of the upmost importance."

Statutory guidance: Early years foundation stage: coronavirus disapplication's

Updated 28 July 2020

The Learning Environment

- The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely in line with any government or statutory regulations that may be put in place due to unforeseen or unprecedented external circumstances or events.
- The EYFS classroom is set up in safe learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own enclosed outdoor areas and areas where the children can be active or be quiet and rest. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children a chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.
- We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through firsthand experience. Resources are clearly labelled and organised into learning zones, enabling the children to



access them with a high level of independence. Practitioners regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the learning zones and make adaptations, as necessary.

Premises and Security

- Security and access are all adapted to fit alongside government regulations dependent of changing requirements.
- All access to the school is through the main school door, which is kept locked. The office staff are responsible for verifying the identity of any visitors before they enter school. Visitors are asked to sign into the school visitor's log and are given a visitor badge to wear.
- Staff are aware of their role in challenging anyone who is not recognized and asking for identification from anyone claiming to be from an outside agency. All parents are asked to fill out a permission slip which is kept by the class teacher. The child will only be allowed home with the adults specified on the authorization slip unless the teacher is informed otherwise and identification is provided at collection.
- The external classroom doors are kept locked, except when the children enter and leave the setting at the beginning and end of their sessions and when the children access the playground for playtimes and lunchtime. The door to the outdoor area is kept locked when this area is not in use.
- The external doors are closely monitored by staff when children are entering or leaving the setting, to ensure that they cannot leave unaccompanied. All staff are aware of the need to monitor the external doors to ensure that they are secure during the session. The register is used to check how many children are present. When moving from one area school to another, head counts are used to check that all children are present before leaving.

Promoting Awareness of Dangers and How to Stay Safe

We encourage the children to take an active role in ensuring their own safety and involve them in discussions about health and safety issues including wider social issues that may have an impact on school life.



Risk Assessments

In addition to the school's risk assessment, trip risk assessments are completed to ensure that any hazards are identified and managed before the children enter the classroom.

Learning and Development

Areas of Learning

The Early Learning Goals are the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the time they reach the age of five.

There are three prime areas of learning:

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

In addition, there are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

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 age-related objectives which lead on to the end of Reception Early Learning Goals.

We encourage the children to play an active role in shaping their learning experiences. Adults engage in discussion with the children about what they are interested in, which skills they would like to develop further and which resources they need to support their learning. Each half term, the children look at and discuss their Learning Journal as part of their "Learning Review". This is done in collaboration with their parents, carers and educators. Evidence of this collaboration can be found in the learning journals where they have made comments related to their child's developments.

We aim to provide an attractive, challenging learning environment that offers high quality opportunities for the children to learn through play, both indoors and outdoors. There is a range of "continuous provision" available in the classroom, that is designed to offer open-ended, practical learning opportunities. Children are supported to think creatively and imaginatively and explore how resources can be adapted. Each week, the provision is enhanced with additional resources, based on the previous week's observations.

Adult-led activities are practical in nature and based on first-hand experiences wherever possible. The children are supported to develop problem-solving skills through open-ended tasks and opportunities to share their thinking with others. The number of adult-led activities that the children take part in increases throughout the year, as their concentration develops.

Observation and Assessment

Please refer to the school Assessment Policy

Planning

Our planning has a sharp focus on the children's needs, their interests and their stages of development; this is evident within our Eeexat tracking and Learning Journals. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links



between them. We aim to deliver the curriculum through planned, purposeful play and present new concepts in meaningful contexts that enable the children to build on what they already know. Scaffolding in the Zone of Proximal Development means that our children achieve the best possible learning designed for their individual biopsychosocial and physical needs.

Long Term Planning

Our long-term planning shows our suggested themes organised into half terms and key events throughout the school year.

Medium Term Planning

At Sage College, we deliver a creative curriculum, which is based around a new theme each half term. These themes reflect the children's interests where possible. At the beginning of each topic, practitioners lead the children in discussion to identify areas that they are particularly interested in. These ideas are incorporated into the medium-term plan.

Medium term planning shows the key learning experiences for each area of the curriculum and is based around the ideas presented by all EY practitioners at a medium-term planning meeting.

Short Term Planning

Short term planning shows the learning opportunities that will be available over the week. It includes differentiated adult-led experiences for all curriculum areas, as well as showing how the learning environment will be enhanced in response to the previous week's observations and assessment of the children. Evidence of Assessments for Learning and reflections is shown within the weekly plans and can be accessed in each class folder.

Characteristics of Learning

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

- Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

- *"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."*
- Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.
- Creativity and Critical Thinking
- *"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."*
- Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open



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questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.