EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

This policy is prescribed by The Good Shepherd Trust and all reference to 'the Trust' include all Trust schools, the central team and subsidiary organisations.

Date adopted:	14/09/2026		Last reviewed:	14/09/2026
Review cycle:	Annual		Is this policy statutory?	Yes
Approval:	CEdO		Author:	Head of Early Years
Local approval*:	Head teacher		Local author*:	Early Years Lead
			Next Review Date of Policy:	01/09/2027

Revision record

Minor revisions should be recorded here when the policy is amended in light of changes to legislation or to correct errors. Significant changes or at the point of review should be recorded below and approved at the level indicated above.

Revision No.	Date	Revised by	Approved date	Comments
1	24/9/2026	A Scott	1/10/2026	New Trust template policy

1. Introduction

It is the intention of the Trust that this policy reflects our vision of "Flourishing Together" and our values of kindness, integrity and resilience.

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and ambitious learning environment where children develop confidence, curiosity, independence and a lifelong love of learning.

At The Good Shepherd Trust, we believe every child deserves the best possible start in life. Our EYFS provision is rooted in our vision of **Flourishing Together** and reflects our values of **Kindness, Integrity and Resilience**.

This policy is informed by:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE). Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Equality Act 2010.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 Years.

The Trust will ensure that all EYFS provision meets statutory safeguarding, welfare, learning and development requirements.

2. The EYFS Curriculum

The early years curriculum at Ashley is ambitious, inclusive and carefully sequenced to ensure children acquire the knowledge, skills and vocabulary needed for future success.

Children learn through:

- Adult-directed teaching
- Skilled interactions
- Child-initiated learning
- Continuous provision
- Outdoor learning
- Enrichment opportunities
- Play-based experiences

The curriculum reflects children's interests while ensuring progression towards the Early Learning Goals (ELG). The curriculum promotes school readiness by developing communication, independence, self-regulation, physical development and positive attitudes to learning.

Cultural Capital

The early years curriculum at Ashley provides rich and varied experiences that extend the children's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the world around them. Through stories, visits, visitors, celebrations, outdoor learning, the arts and first-hand experiences, children develop cultural capital (the knowledge, skills and language needed to help succeed in society) that helps them make sense of their learning and prepares them for future success. The aim is to ensure that all children, regardless of background or starting points, have access to experiences that broaden their horizons, build aspirations and promote a sense of belonging within their local community and the wider world.

3. Prime and Specific Areas of Learning

The EYFS curriculum comprises of seven areas of learning.

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

The prime areas provide the foundations for all future learning and development.

4. Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Practitioners support children to develop the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning by providing opportunities that encourage curiosity, resilience, creativity and independent thinking.

At Ashley the children investigate, explore their environment, and learn through first-hand experiences. The children are motivated to learn, remain engaged in their activities, and demonstrate concentration and persevere when faced with challenges. They are encouraged to take pride in their achievements and to celebrate their successes. They develop and refine their own ideas, make links between their experiences and learning, and use their knowledge to solve problems. They are encouraged to think independently, make decisions, and find creative solutions.

5. Assessment

Assessment is ongoing and informs future teaching and provision.

Assessment includes:

- Observations
- Professional dialogue
- Learning conversations
- Children's work
- Formative assessment opportunities

Statutory assessment requirements include:

- Reception Baseline Assessment
- EYFS Profile at the end of Reception

Assessment information is used to identify strengths, next steps and any additional support required.

6. Learning Through Play

Play is fundamental to learning and development.

Children learn through:

- Exploration
- Investigation
- Imagination
- Problem solving
- Collaboration

Practitioners use skilful interactions to extend learning and introduce new knowledge.

7. Continuous Provision

Continuous provision enables children to practise and apply learning independently.

Provision will:

- Reflect curriculum priorities
- Promote independence
- Encourage sustained engagement
- Support challenge for all learners

Resources are carefully selected and reviewed regularly.

8. Outdoor Learning

Children need access to high-quality outdoor learning opportunities daily.

Outdoor provision supports:

- Physical development
- Communication and language
- Risk assessment skills
- Understanding of the natural world
- Personal and social development

The Trust recognises outdoor learning as an essential component of the EYFS curriculum.

9. Oracy and Language Development

Developing language is a central priority throughout the EYFS.

Practitioners will:

- Model high-quality language
- Explicitly teach vocabulary
- Engage children in meaningful conversations
- Promote storytelling, rhyme and singing

- Encourage sustained shared thinking

Language development is embedded throughout all areas of learning.

10. Phonics

Systematic synthetic phonics is delivered through the Trust's approved phonics programme - Little Wandle Letters and Sounds.

Teaching will be:

- Daily
- Consistent
- Sequential
- Closely monitored

Children will have access to fully decodable texts matched to their phonics knowledge.

11. Mathematics

Children will develop mathematical understanding through practical experiences and direct teaching.

Areas include:

- Number
- Numerical Patterns
- Shape
- Space
- Measure
- Comparison

Mathematical vocabulary is explicitly taught and embedded across provision.

12. Inclusion

The Trust believes every child is unique and capable of success.

We are committed to:

- Equality of opportunity
- Inclusive practice
- Removing barriers to learning
- Meeting individual needs
- Promoting belonging

Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary.

13. SEND

The Trust follows the SEND Code of Practice.

Children with SEND will be supported through:

- Early identification
- Graduated response
- Targeted intervention
- Individual support plans
- Partnership with external agencies

Parents and carers will be fully involved in the decision-making processes.

14. Behaviour

Positive behaviour is promoted through:

- Strong relationships
- Clear expectations
- Consistent routines
- Positive reinforcement
- Emotional literacy development

Children are supported to develop self-regulation and resilience.

15. Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. See Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

The Trust adopts a child-centred approach in line with KCSIE 2026 and the EYFS Statutory Framework.

All EYFS staff will:

- Receive safeguarding training
- Read and understand KCSIE Part One
- Understand local safeguarding arrangements
- Follow reporting procedures
- Understand online safety
- Maintain professional curiosity
- Report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

15.1 Additional Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL(s) will undertake training in accordance with statutory requirements and maintain appropriate links with local safeguarding partners and agencies. The DSL will ensure safeguarding arrangements reflect current EYFS and KCSIE requirements and that all concerns are recorded and acted upon promptly.

All staff will complete safeguarding training at least every two years and receive regular safeguarding updates as required. Safeguarding induction will be completed before new staff, volunteers or students work with children unsupervised. Training will include the mandatory safeguarding content identified within current statutory guidance.

Staff are expected to raise concerns about unsafe practice or safeguarding matters through the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy. Information regarding whistleblowing procedures forms part of staff induction and ongoing training.

15.2 Attendance and Child Absence

Regular attendance is essential to children's safety, wellbeing and educational development.

The Trust recognises attendance as a safeguarding responsibility and will:

- Monitor attendance patterns regularly
- Follow up unexplained absences on the first day of absence
- Consider whether persistent or prolonged absence may indicate a safeguarding concern
- Record concerns appropriately and take action in line with safeguarding procedures
- Work collaboratively with families and external agencies where attendance concerns arise

Attendance information will be shared with relevant professionals where required to safeguard children.

15.3 Safer Recruitment and Volunteers

The Trust is committed to safer recruitment practices and follows all statutory requirements designed to safeguard children.

The Trust will:

- Obtain written references before appointment wherever possible
- Complete all required safeguarding and suitability checks
- Maintain an accurate Single Central Record (SCR)
- Ensure recruitment procedures reflect current statutory guidance

Volunteers will be appropriately supervised and undergo suitability checks where required. All volunteers will receive safeguarding information and induction before beginning their role within the setting.

15.4 Emergency Contact Information

The Trust will maintain accurate and up-to-date emergency contact information for all children.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to provide more than two emergency contacts wherever possible. Emergency contact information will be reviewed regularly and updated whenever circumstances change.

15.5 Information Management and Cyber Security

The Trust is committed to protecting the personal information of children, families and staff.

Staff will:

- Handle information securely and confidentially
- Follow data protection procedures
- Adhere to cyber security expectations
- Use password-protected devices and systems where appropriate
- Report any data breaches or cyber security concerns promptly

The Trust will maintain appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect electronic and paper-based records

15.6 Animals on Site

The Trust recognises that animals can support children's learning and wellbeing when managed appropriately.

Any animals visiting or kept on site will be subject to suitable risk assessments and appropriate supervision arrangements.

In accordance with current statutory requirements, prohibited dog breeds, including XL Bully dogs, will not be permitted on Trust premises. Hygiene arrangements and individual health needs, including allergies and phobias, will be taken into account whenever animals are present.

16. Welfare Requirements

The Trust complies fully with the EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. These include:

- Child protection
- Suitable people
- Staff qualifications and training
- Staffing ratios
- Key person arrangements
- Health and safety
- Managing behaviour

- Medicines
- Accident recording
- Information sharing
- Premises and equipment
- Risk assessment
- Toilets and intimate hygiene arrangements

16.1 Paediatric First Aid

The Trust will ensure that paediatric first aid requirements are met in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework. At least one person who holds a current and full Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate will be available at all times when children are present and will accompany children on off-site visits where required. Staff with Paediatric First Aid qualifications are trained to respond to choking incidents, allergic reactions and other medical emergencies. Records of accidents, injuries and first aid treatment will be maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.

17. Safe Sleeping

The Trust follows current safer sleep guidance and EYFS requirements.
Children who sleep in provision will:

- Be appropriately supervised
- Sleep in safe environments
- Be monitored regularly
- Have individual needs considered where relevant

18. Safe Eating

The Trust promotes safe eating practices by ensuring:

- Appropriate supervision
- Allergy management
- Safe food preparation
- Adherence to healthcare plans
- Good food hygiene standards

Staff will encourage increasing independence during mealtimes.

Staff will receive training in allergy awareness, choking prevention and emergency response procedures. Children will be appropriately supervised while eating and drinking. Any choking incidents will be recorded, reviewed and used to inform future risk assessments and practice improvements.

19. Intimate Care

The Trust recognises that some children require support with personal care.
All intimate care arrangements will be undertaken in accordance with the:

- Trust Intimate Care Policy
- EYFS Statutory Framework
- Safeguarding Procedures

Children's dignity, privacy, wellbeing and independence will be promoted at all times. Individual Intimate Care Plans will be implemented where ongoing support is required.

20 Screen Use and Digital Technology

The Trust has regard to current Department for Education guidance regarding screen use in the early years.

Where technology is used, it will support and enhance learning rather than replace high-quality interactions, play and exploration.

The Trust will ensure that:

- Screen use is purposeful, planned and linked to learning
- Passive viewing is avoided
- Screen use takes place for short periods and with adult interaction
- Children have access to designated screen-free learning environments
- Screens are not used during meals
- Screens are not used within one hour of sleep where children nap within provision
- Screens are never used as a behaviour management strategy
- Background televisions, videos or screens are not left operating
- Parents are supported to understand healthy approaches to children's screen use

Digital technology will be used safely and appropriately in line with safeguarding and online safety expectations.

21. Parent Partnership

Parents are children's first educators.

The Trust values strong home-school partnerships and will promote engagement through:

- Induction processes
- Parent consultations
- Curriculum information
- Workshops
- Online communication platforms (Seesaw)
- Learning celebrations (Great Work and VIP events)

Positive partnership working contributes significantly to children's achievement and wellbeing.

22. Transition

Effective transition arrangements support children's wellbeing and progress.

Transition arrangements include:

- Information sharing with previous settings
- Nursery visits
- Home visits
- Stay-and-play sessions
- Parental meetings
- Transition into Year 1 activities

Where appropriate, safeguarding records and relevant welfare information will be requested from previous settings before children start school. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will review information received and ensure relevant information is shared with appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis. Particular consideration will be given to vulnerable children and those requiring additional support to ensure effective transition arrangements.

23. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The quality of EYFS provision will be monitored through:

- Learning walks
- Environment reviews
- Planning scrutiny

- Assessment analysis
- Pupil voice
- Professional dialogue
- Trust review activities, including an EYFS annual moderation visit to every Trust school

Monitoring will be undertaken by:

- Headteacher
- EYFS Leader
- Senior Leaders
- The Trust Education Team and EYFS moderation team
- Quality Assurance visits
- Local Governance Committees

The findings from monitoring activities will be used to support continual improvement.

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Allergy Safety Policy
- Safe Sleep Policy
- Food, Nutrition and Mealtime Policy