



Early Years Policy

September 2026

Georgian Gardens Early Years Policy

N.B. Throughout this policy the following terms are used to mean the Early Years Children: Foundation Stage, Reception, Year R.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4 to 5 years. In our school we have two full-time Reception classes. Children who have turned four by the 1st September of that school year are offered a full time place in one of our two Reception classes, with thirty places available in each class. Each Reception class has a full time teacher and a full-time teaching assistant. To ensure best practice and continuity our Foundation Stage classes work closely together as a unit and share planning, activities and an outdoor learning environment. All staff work with all children.

Aims

At Georgian Gardens we have 4 values that are the core of our beliefs:

- Ready
- Respectful
- Safe
- Kind

At Georgian Gardens C.P. School we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent, **respectful** and confident lifelong learners. We recognise it is crucial that children feel **safe** and secure as they start their school journey. We encourage good relationships with staff and each other and to **respect** one another and be **kind** to all.

We will encourage children to develop independence and confidence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals. Children are encouraged to reflect on their learning and challenge themselves.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school

The Curriculum

In Early Years we follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2024 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child

- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We regularly invite families in to school to work with their child.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

Our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of three prime area of learning:

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

There are four specific areas of learning:

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

At Georgian Gardens all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences

in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language. All staff work with all children and contribute to ongoing observations for every child.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the Reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are;

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We 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 we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupil premium children, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service and the educational psychologist. We have a member of staff that is a speech and language specialist and works regularly with Early Years children that require extra support. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Assessment

Statutory baseline assessment takes place within the first 6 weeks of the child starting school.

Throughout Reception children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We use the online Learning Journal 'Tapestry' to keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Parents / Carers are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's Learning Journal. They receive training on how to upload their own observations. Next Steps are shared with parents as and when appropriate either verbally or via Tapestry.

It is statutory to report the end of year assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'emerging' or 'expected' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum.

Transitions

At Georgian Gardens we recognise that starting school and moving classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Reception hold a meeting in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. All children are offered visits to school (a minimum of 3) and all families are offered a home visit a few days before their child starts school. This gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child. In the summer term prior to children starting school, all children are visited at their preschool. The teachers chat informally with the children and practitioners. Additional transition is put in place for children with additional support needs. Over the Summer holiday, staff send the children videos of them reading stories and sharing daily routines.

At the beginning of the school year we operate a staggered start over the first week to settle the children in to school successfully.

At the end of Reception children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms on a minimum of 2 occasions prior to starting Year one. The Year One teachers meet informally with the parents and come in to Year R to observe the children and understand their starting point for Year 1. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year. Additional transition is put in place for children with additional support needs.

During children's time in Reception a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the Foundation Stage. Children in Reception make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, library and playing field for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for

moving around the school and for mixing with older children when they start school. When children are ready they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies.

Community Links

In Reception at Georgian Gardens the children will visit some local venues such as the farm and we invite in members of the local community to support our topics, e.g. People Who Help Us.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. We also offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning, these include Phonics, Maths, 6 Weeks In Meeting and Reading. Parents are invited to join their child in class to experience maths, literacy, communication, physical development, expressive arts and design and keeping healthy. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

Observations by parents are actively encouraged and training is given. Parents contribute to their child's Learning Journal using Tapestry.

Formal parents meeting are offered twice a year, where parents have the opportunity of speaking with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their work books. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2024) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and our Reception children receive free fruit/vegetables from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for universal free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch. Children are supervised when eating and are in 'sight and sound' of adults that hold a paediatric first aid qualification. Children are sat so they can be seen by the adults. In addition, parents/carers are asked to provide a bottle of fresh water and an additional piece of fruit / vegetable for a second snack of the day.

Each Foundation Stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

Appendix 1

Safer Eating Policy

We will ensure that we meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework – (effective 01 September 2025) which states that:

Paediatric First Aid: 3.63

Whilst children are eating there will always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate (criteria set out in Annex A). Paediatric First Aid training is completed every 3 years. A Training Matrix identifies when this training needs to be updated.

Special Dietary Requirements :3.64

Before a child is admitted to our setting we will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. This information will be updated regularly and shared with all staff involved in the preparing and handing of food and the Hot School Meals Team. At each mealtime and snack time the class teacher will be responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.

Allergies: 3.65

We will ensure that Paediatric First Aid Training includes allergy information and how to treat anaphylaxis and ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis. We will work with parents and or carers and where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. This information will be kept up to date and shared with all staff. For children requiring an Epipen, one Epipen will be stored in the classroom in the first aid box in a named tub, the other will be kept in the first aid room. The school also has an emergency autoinjector and trained staff so that this can be used under medical guidance.

Choking: 3.67, 3.68, 3.69

We will risk assess and prepare food in a way to prevent choking., This will include, cutting up food to appropriate sizes, cutting sausages into strips, not giving risky food (whole grapes, whole cherry tomatoes, popcorn). All Early Years staff will be trained in knowing how to support children if they are gagging or choking. Parents are asked to cut grapes, olives, cherry tomatoes, cherries in halves or quarters and to cut sausages into strips if these items are in packed lunches.

Children will always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff. Staff will sit facing the children when they are eating, so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking, to prevent food sharing and be alerted to an unexpected allergic reaction. At snack time, children will sit in a horseshoe shape with paediatric first aid trained staff at the open end so that all children can be seen. Chatter will be

kept to a minimum so that children can be heard. At lunch time children will be sat at a table with a minimum of one member of trained staff on each table. At all times there will be a minimum of 4 members of paediatric first aid trained staff working as part of the early years team.

Record Keeping: 3.70

If a child experiences a choking incident, this information will be recorded and shared with parents/carers. These records should be reviewed regularly, and any themes or trends will be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action will be taken to address concerns.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Medical and Anaphylaxis policy.

Written by H Meakins 07/26

Review 07/27

Appendix 2

Safer Sleeping in Early Years at Georgian Gardens C.P. School

If a child falls asleep at school, a member of staff will gently roll/move the child onto their back on a flat carpeted surface and stay with the child. The child's parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to collect them as it is likely they are unwell and we do not have suitable mattresses for sleeping at school. The child will never be covered with a blanket so that their face is covered, or placed on a beanbag to sleep on. The child's body temperature will be monitored with an ear thermometer and blanket removed as required.

Appendix 3

The Use of Technology in Early Years at Georgian Gardens C.P School

Screen use will be limited, clearly planned and linked to learning outcomes. When screens are used there will be interaction between the teacher, the screen and the children. Screens will not be used passively. Screen time will be limited to a maximum of 1 hour on occasion but with a daily expectation of less than 20 minutes across the day.

All digital content will be:

- checked to ensure it is suitable for early years children, prior to showing it to the children
- slow-paced, repetitive and predictable
- advert-free
- free of scrolling and autoplay features, to ensure children are not inadvertently exposed to inappropriate content or able to access content for longer than planned use - this includes algorithm-driven content, such as video platforms.

The use of ipads will be under supervision only, in a small group with programs locked by the teacher supervising.

Staff mobile phones will be kept in handbags, bags and staff cupboards. Staff will not routinely carry a phone on their person. Staff will not look at their phone during lesson times and will not take their phone out whilst children are present. In the event that a staff member needs to take / make an urgent phone call, they will speak to SLT in advance and make arrangements to take a call / make a call in private.

This applies to all digital devices with screens:

- tablets
- laptops
- desktop computers
- mobile phones
- television
- gaming devices and toys with screens
- interactive whiteboards