Willesborough Infant School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Written: September 2025

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027

Written by: Emily Sparrow (EYFS LEADER)

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- Quality and consistency in all early year's settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for 2026.

Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Willesborough Infant School, children join the reception classes in the year that they turn five. At Willesborough Infant School our EYFS setting is made up of four Reception classes. Children attend school from 8.35-3.00 daily.

In partnership with parents and carers, we support children in their learning journey, providing a rich variety of learning opportunities and experiences that provide the right foundation for outstanding progress throughout their school life and beyond. If children need more time settling into school life, personalised part time timetables will be created in collaboration with parents and carers.

Curriculum

At the Willesborough Schools we aim for our EYFS to consider the following 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 times and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

At Willesborough Infant School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We follow the Willesborough Schools positive relationships policy, which will give guidance on how we support and understand children's behaviour.

Children need to build an attachment with their key person for their confidence and well-being. The key person also promotes children's learning by developing a deep understanding of their individual needs and children can particularly benefit from their modelling and support.

Enabling Environments with teaching support from adults

Our environment is created as an extension of the children's learning and exploration where the children feel safe and secure to challenge themselves and take risks. We provide high quality, open ended, stimulating resources which are relevant to all the children's cultures and communities and enhance these with resources and experiences which respond to their individual needs and interests.

The children have daily access to both indoor and outdoor learning environments which are set up with planned continuous provision that link to all areas of learning. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and staff plan activities and enhancements which are informed by observations of the children to ensure they follow their current interests and experiences as well as reflecting upon the learning in class. Observations of key moments of learning are recorded in their online Tapestry journal.

Learning and Development

The Willesborough Schools have referred to the educational programmes set out within the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for 2026.
The Curriculum has been carefully planned to ensure that our children's early years' experience contributes positively to their brain development and readiness for Key Stage 1.

There are seven areas of learning and development.

Three prime areas are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas.

These are the prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, which help strengthen and develop the three prime areas, and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

When planning opportunities for children we refer to the educational programmes that are high level curriculum summaries which set out what should be taught in settings for each area. We include activities and experiences that enable children to learn and develop, as set out under each of the areas of learning.

The level of development children should be expected to have reached by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals(ELGs).

Learning and Development Considerations

Practitioners should be ambitious for all children. They must consider the individual needs, interests and development of each child in their care. They must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

Acting on Concerns

Throughout the early years, if practitioners are worried about a child's progress in any prime area, practitioners must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners must consider whether a child needs any additional support, including whether they may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.

English as an Additional language
For children whose home language is not English, we will take steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.

We provide sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard of English language during the EYFS, ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Key Stage 1. When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, practitioners must assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of the English Language, practitioners must explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/ or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

Planning
Our staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. We understand that play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults. Our staff decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Our staff aim to stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.

As children grow older and move into the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for Key Stage 1.

When planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and adapt their practice in response to this. At Willesborough we support children in developing the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.
  (Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2026)

Development Matters, government curriculum guidance for the EYFS supports practitioners to deliver the EYFS learning and development requirements. It is used to help design an effective early years curriculum.

Teaching
Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions.

Play based learning is paramount and during child-initiated learning sessions children direct their own learning while staff support and enhance their play and extend as needed to impact individual learning steps.

Teacher directed learning sessions are carefully matched to the learning needs of individuals and groups of children and use the learning environment to offer a range of learning opportunities.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare ensuring they are ready for year 1.

A quality workforce focused on learning and development and health and safety
All children deserve high quality early education and care. This requires a quality workforce. A well-trained, skilled team of practitioners can help every child achieve the best possible educational outcomes. Children need to build an attachment with their key person for their confidence and well-being. At Willesborough Infant School the EYFS teaching team will developing a deep understanding of their individual needs and children can particularly benefit from their modelling and support.

Transition
During the summer terms prior to a child's entry into the reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- Parents are invited to a Welcome Meeting so that they can get to know the staff and school. They are introduced to a range of stakeholders and are able to access information, support and help as required.
- Children are invited to attend 2 'stay and play' sessions in June/July with their parents. During these sessions the children become familiar with the school environment while taking part in a range of fun activities. These sessions also

enable the children to begin building positive relationships with the adults and children they will be working with when they start school.

- The children are invited to two separate visits to their new reception class. During these visits, parents are invited to information workshops led by the Head Teacher.
- Members of staff from Willesborough Infant School make visits to all feeder settings. They make visits to main feeder settings throughout the year.
- One on one meetings are carried out by the class teacher and teaching assistant at the beginning of September, which offer an invaluable opportunity to build relationships between staff, children and parents.
- Parents are invited to attend a series of workshops throughout the Autumn terms. These involve taking part in activities with their child.

Transition to Year One

Year One teachers are given a copy of the Profile report for each child and a meeting takes place between teachers to talk through the child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.

All children take part in a 'Transition morning' where they take part in a range of activities with their new teachers; where they learn about Year One, visit their classroom, meet their new teachers and teaching assistants and get the chance to share what they are excited about or any worries they might have. Year One teachers visit EYFS classes throughout the Summer Term to observe children in their EYFS learning environment so that relationships can be formed and observations made on provision. This informs constructive dialogue between Reception and Year One teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year One so that the Learning Journey can be continued.

Assessment

At Willesborough Infant School we understand that assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers, and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support.

Reception Baseline Assessment

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The Reception Baseline Assessment is a short, interactive assessment which the children will complete with their class teacher in their classroom environment, once they have settled into school life. If it is felt that it is not appropriate for a pupil to participate in the RBA headteachers should discuss the decision with parents and teachers.

Ongoing Assessment

Through planned, guided and independent activities, as well as child-initiated learning, staff make ongoing assessments of the children's levels and individual needs. Practitioners understand children's interests and what they know and can do, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. At Willesborough Infant School we use Tapestry online journal to record observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share. However, there is no requirement to keep written records.

In addition to this, class teachers record assessments throughout the year to track progression of the children's Involvement and Wellbeing (based upon Leuven scales), Characteristics of Effective Learning and all areas of learning and development.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

In the final term of the academic year in which the children turn five, and no later than 30th June in that term, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Each child's level of development is assessed against the 17 early learning goals with a best fit judgement, which is moderated with other Early Years professionals (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority, upon request.

Pupils are assessed for each ELG as either:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

When forming a judgement about whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, teachers should draw on their own expert professional judgement. This is enough evidence to assess a child's individual level of development in relation to each of the ELGs. Recorded, written or photographic evidence is not required.

The Profile provides parents and carers, staff 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 practitioners' own knowledge and professional judgement of a child to inform discussions with parents and

carers, and any other person whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

In exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child might remain in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they reach age 5. In these exceptional cases, assessment should continue throughout the child's time within EYFS provision and the Profile should be completed once only, at the end of the year before the child moves into year 1. If the child is only continuing in EYFS provision for part of the following year, the Profile should be completed at the end of the child's time in the EYFS before they move into year 1. The data should then be submitted at the end of that academic year with the rest of the cohort. We recommend the decision for the child to remain in the EYFS is made before starting the Profile for the cohort. However, if the decision is made after the Profile has already been completed, then a new assessment will need to be made and submitted the following year with the new cohort.

The school should discuss their intention to defer the child's statutory assessment with their local authority. This will ensure the child's data is not considered missing when the school submits Profile outcomes for the current cohort.

The Profile must be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with SEND 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 knowledge, 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.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we greatly value the contribution they make to their child's education. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- supporting children through the transition from pre-school to Reception with the children attending part time during the first two weeks. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children;

- inviting all parents to induction meetings during the week before their child starts school and regular workshops during the Reception year to detail how we aim to work with their child, particularly in relation to Literacy and Maths;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- arranging a formal meeting for parents three times a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- providing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- inviting parents to contribute to their child's learning journey through uploading 'magical tasks' with their child onto their online learning journal Tapestry and share learning and experiences that have taken place outside school. The children then share these with their teachers and peers.
- providing parents with opportunities to celebrate and share their child's learning and development by coming into school to share their work at least twice a term during 'Walk in Wednesday' and 'The Big Breakfast' for example.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Welfare

All children in the school must be 'safe'. We aim to educate children concerning boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

At Willesborough Infant School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2026. We understand that we are required to:

- Safeguard children
- Ensure the people who have contact with children are suitable
- Promote good health
- Support and understand behaviour
- Maintain records, policies and procedures.

The Willesborough Schools Safeguarding Policies include:

- The action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child.
- The action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.
- How mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting.
- Procedures to follow to check the suitability of new recruits
- Detail of how safeguarding training is delivered and how practitioners are supported to put this into practice

If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare they must immediately notify their local authority children's social care team, in line with school safeguarding procedures.

Annual Safeguarding training is delivered to all staff which includes the criteria set out in Annex C in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2026.

The Early Years Foundation Stage follow the Willesborough Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy to protect the welfare of all children.

Whistleblowing
The Early Years Foundation Stage follow the Willesborough Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and whistleblowing policy which includes procedures on when and how to report concerns and the process that will be followed.

For more information, please see The Willesborough Schools Safeguarding, child protection and whistleblowing policies.

Child absences
The Early Years Foundation Stage follow the Willesborough Schools attendance policy that is shared with parents/carers. We will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and professional judgement should be used when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged, as well as considering the child's vulnerability. Any concerns must be referred to the local children's social care services and / or a police welfare check requested.

Suitable People
The Early Years Foundation Stage follow the Willesborough Schools Child Protection policy which includes suitability checks and references for any member of

staff(including students and volunteers) before they are recruited. If a practitioner has been disqualified, providers must not employ that person in connection with early years provision.

References
We will obtain at least one written reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited, in line with the EYFS Statutory Frramework 2026 requirements.

Staff taking medication/ other substances
At Willesborough infant School our staff understand the importance of ensuring they are in a fit state to care for children. They will communicate with Senior leaders if they are taking any medication which may affect their ability to care for children. All medication on the premises must be stored securely, and out of reach of children, at all times.

Smoking and vaping
In accordance with our Health and safety policy smoking and vaping is not permitted on school site.

Health and Safety
At Willesborough Infant School there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2026, at Willesborough Infant School we undertake;

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. At Willesborough Infant School a written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child's parents and/or carers on the same day.
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to children;
- Safer eating procedures which include ensuring a member of staff with PFA certificate is present whilst children eat. We obtain any special dietary

requirements, allergies, intolerances and special health requirements which is shared with all staff members involved when children are eating. We follow our Allergy Safety Policy to ensure procedures are followed.

- At each mealtime and snack time providers must be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food and drink being provided meets all the requirements for each child. Procedures to prevent choking may include where possible practitioners sitting facing children while they eat so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and prevent food sharing in case of unexpected allergic reactions.
- Every child will be offered a piece of fruit during break time, and they can have free milk until they are 5, once turning 5 there is the opportunity for parents to continue with the scheme;
- A first aid box is always accessible, and a record of accidents and injuries is kept.
- Reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency as well as complying with health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.
- Access to an outdoor play area which is used daily.

We recognise that 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 safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

Supporting and understanding children's behaviour
At Willesborough Infant School we support, understand, and manage children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

We follow our positive relationships policy using the words 'ready, respectful. Safe, kind' to support children in understanding behaviour that we expect.

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that corporal punishment is not given by anyone who is caring for or is in regular contact with a child, or by anyone living or working in the premises where care is provided.

A person will not be considered to have used corporal punishment (and therefore will not have committed an offence) if physical intervention was taken to avert immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behaviour if absolutely necessary.

At Willesborough Infant School we will follow our 'Restrictive Intervention' policy and keep a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used, and parents and/or carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Banned dog breeds
Banned dog breeds (meaning dogs to which section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies including the XL Bully type), must not be kept or present on the premises at any time.

Toilets and intimate hygiene
At Willesborough Infant School we ensure that:

- there is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available.
- There are suitable hygienic changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies. Parents will need to sign an intimate care plan agreement for children who are in nappies or needing intimate care; see The Willesborough School Intimate Care Plan Policy.
- Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing and toileting
- There is an adequate supply of spare clothes

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff: child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of the children.

For reception classes in maintained schools and academies:

- We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils

We have always at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

Providers should display (or make available to parents) staff PFA certificates or a list of staff who have a current PFA certificate.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

Children's screen use
Evidence shows that screens can have a big impact on children and their development in the early years. Screen use should be avoided for under 2s and limited to up to an hour a day for children aged 2 to 5. At Willesborough Infant School, staff take a

precautionary approach to using screens in the setting by limiting screen use for children and only use it carefully and intentionally, for specific learning and development aims.

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, avoiding fast-paced and over-stimulating content.
- advert-free, where possible, as young children cannot discern between advertisements and other content
- 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

Supervision of Staff

Willesborough Infant School must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching, and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Emily Sparrow (YGL) every year.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.