



Early Years Policy

- Effective: September 2026
 - Review: September 2027
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Vision and principles

At Bosley St Mary's, every learner flourishing begins with a secure, ambitious and joyful start. We believe early childhood is a vital stage in its own right. Children learn best when they feel safe, known and valued; when adults teach precisely and respond warmly; and when purposeful play, talk, movement and first-hand experience deepen carefully sequenced learning.

Our approach is rooted in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, alongside the national ambition set out in Best Start for Life, which emphasises the importance of early development, strong relationships and high-quality provision in shaping children's life chances.

We are equally guided by the principles outlined in Strong Foundations in the First Years of School, recognising that the Early Years is not a preparation phase alone, but a critical period for securing the knowledge and skills children need for later success.

Our Christian vision is informed by the words of Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." That, alongside our BEARS values (Believe, Encourage, Achieve, Relate, Serve), informs our approach to Early Years, along with everything else that we do at Bosley School. We therefore:

- hold high expectations for all children, regardless of starting point
- prioritise secure attachment, emotional wellbeing and relationships
- ensure no child is left to chance, with carefully planned experiences
- recognise that early gaps can widen quickly without precise teaching and support

Aims

Our approach is rooted in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers, effective from September 2026. It is informed by Best Start for Life and Strong Foundations in the First Years of School. We prioritise relationships, communication and language, physical development, self-regulation and the foundational knowledge children need for later success.

We aim to:

- provide a safe, welcoming and language-rich environment in which every child belongs and is known well;
- secure strong foundations across all seven areas of learning, with particular attention to the prime areas;

- develop vocabulary, early literacy, number sense, physical control, independence and social understanding;
- teach self-regulation and positive learning behaviours so children can focus, persist, cooperate and manage feelings safely;
- identify need early and provide timely, well-matched support, particularly for children with SEND or other barriers to learning;
- offer rich indoor, outdoor and community experiences which reflect our rural setting and broaden children's knowledge;
- build confident, curious and resilient learners who are well prepared for transition into Year 1 and Willow Class.

Curriculum

Intent

Our curriculum identifies what children need to know, remember and be able to do. It is ambitious for all children, coherently sequenced from their starting points and responsive to individual need. Communication and language sit at its heart because spoken language enables children to understand, think, participate and learn across the curriculum.

Planning identifies the essential knowledge, vocabulary, concepts and skills to be taught. It gives priority to strong foundations, including secure pencil grip and control, letter and number formation, phonological awareness, early reading, early writing and mathematical fluency, without narrowing the wider EYFS curriculum.

Areas of learning

We provide for the three prime areas and four specific areas. They are interconnected and equally important in supporting children's development.

Prime areas	Specific areas
Communication and language	Literacy
Personal, social and emotional development	Mathematics
Physical development	Understanding the world
	Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

Adults plan for and notice the ways in which children learn through:

- playing and exploring - children investigate, experience and have a go;
- active learning - children concentrate, keep trying and take pride in what they achieve;
- creating and thinking critically - children develop ideas, make links, test strategies and solve problems.

Implementation

The curriculum is implemented through a deliberate balance of explicit teaching, high-quality continuous provision and purposeful, well-supported play. The daily timetable protects key teaching and learning routines while remaining responsive to children's needs.

Adults:

- model precise language, extend vocabulary and create sustained back-and-forth conversations;
- give clear explanations and demonstrations, breaking learning into manageable steps;
- use stories, songs, rhymes, Read Write Inc. phonics and carefully chosen texts to develop language and early reading;
- teach early mathematics explicitly and provide frequent opportunities to practise and apply it;
- plan meaningful indoor and outdoor learning, including regular outdoor learning and exploration of our local environment;
- observe carefully, check understanding and adapt teaching in the moment;
- make continuous provision intentional, so it revisits, applies and deepens taught knowledge rather than operating as an unrelated activity;
- teach routines, independence, care for resources and the school rules consistently.

Impact

Children's progress is evident in what they know, remember, say and do across different contexts. We expect children to make strong progress from their starting points, develop secure communication and self-regulation, and gain the knowledge and skills needed for Year 1. Leaders evaluate impact through professional dialogue, observation, children's work and experiences, assessment information, pupil and parent voice, and transition evidence.

Teaching and learning

Teaching includes adult-led sessions, guided groups, responsive interactions, modelling, questioning, demonstration, feedback, storytelling, singing, practical experiences and play. Adults use strong subject and child-development knowledge to decide when to join, extend, teach directly or step back.

The environment is calm, orderly, inclusive and well resourced. Areas are clearly organised and maintained so children can access resources independently and learn safely. Staff use consistent language and routines to secure calm expectations while responding sensitively to developmental and additional needs.

Assessment

Assessment is proportionate, purposeful and integral to teaching. Practitioners use day-to-day observation, conversation, interactions, children's work and checks of specific knowledge to understand what each child knows and can do. They use this information to adapt teaching, plan appropriate next steps and identify where extra support or challenge is needed.

We do not require excessive written observations or data collection. Statutory assessments, including the Reception Baseline Assessment and the EYFS Profile, are completed and reported in line with current requirements. The EYFS Profile supports a precise handover into Year 1 so that learning is built upon rather than repeated or lost.

Inclusion and equality

We have high expectations for every child and make reasonable adjustments so all children can participate, learn and belong. Practitioners identify emerging needs early, work closely with the Headteacher/SENDCo and families, and follow the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review. Teaching, communication, resources, routines and the environment are adapted to remove barriers without reducing ambition.

Where appropriate, we seek advice from relevant professionals and coordinate targeted support. Children who are disadvantaged, learning English as an additional language, have SEND, are known to children's services or experience other barriers receive careful monitoring and timely support. Decisions are based on the individual child and are kept under review.

Safeguarding and welfare

Children's safety, health, wellbeing and emotional security are fundamental to learning. We follow the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements and the school's safeguarding,

child protection, staff conduct, online safety, first-aid, health and safety, behaviour, attendance, intimate care, medicines, food and allergy procedures.

Safeguarding practice

- All concerns are acted upon promptly and recorded and reported through the school's safeguarding procedures. A verbal report is made to a DSL as soon as possible where immediate action may be needed.
- Ofsted is informed of any allegation of harm or abuse against a person living, working or looking after children at the setting, whether the alleged harm occurred on or off the premises, within the statutory 14-day period.
- Staff are suitable, appropriately qualified and deployed effectively. Required paediatric first-aid cover is maintained, including on EYFS outings.
- New employees and volunteers do not begin in the setting until the required enhanced DBS check has been received. Enhanced DBS and barred-list requirements are applied to regular volunteers; the limited statutory exception for occasional helpers is considered individually.
- Staff understand their continuing duty to disclose matters that may affect suitability, including arrests, charges, convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings.
- Risk assessments, supervision, ratios, premises, equipment, intimate care, medicines, accidents and emergency arrangements meet statutory and school requirements.

Safe sleep, eating and screen use

The detailed operational policies in Appendices A-C form part of this policy. They apply to all children in the setting and must be understood by relevant staff. Screen use is limited, purposeful and adult supported; eating is seated and supervised with individual dietary and allergy needs checked; and any child who sleeps is moved to the designated safe sleep space and monitored in accordance with the statutory safer-sleep requirements.

Partnership with parents and carers

We build respectful, two-way relationships with families and recognise their knowledge of their child. We share information about learning, development, wellbeing, routines and emerging concerns; listen carefully to parents' views; and offer practical ways to support language, reading, mathematics, independence and healthy development at home. Information is shared accessibly and confidentially, with interpretation or other adjustments where needed.

Transitions

Transitions are planned around each child's emotional security and continuity of learning. Before entry, we gather information from families and previous settings, offer visits and familiarisation, and put additional arrangements in place where needed. Within school, routines and expectations are introduced explicitly and sensitively.

Transition from Blossom Class into Year 1 and Willow Class includes professional dialogue, assessment information, safeguarding and SEND information, and clear identification of the knowledge, routines and approaches that should continue. Year 1 provision builds from children's EYFS experience while moving them progressively into the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

Roles, monitoring and review

The Headteacher and Early Years Lead are responsible for implementing this policy, maintaining statutory compliance and ensuring staff understand their responsibilities. All practitioners are responsible for consistent day-to-day implementation. Governors provide appropriate oversight.

Leaders monitor curriculum implementation, teaching, the learning environment, safeguarding and welfare practice, inclusion and children's progress. Findings inform professional development and improvement planning. The policy is reviewed annually, and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, identified risk or school practice changes.

Statutory and supporting documents

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers, effective September 2026;
- Best Start for Life;
- Strong Foundations in the First Years of School;
- current Department for Education guidance on screen use and early years nutrition;
- NHS and Lullaby Trust safer-sleep guidance;
- the school's associated safeguarding, curriculum, SEND, behaviour, online safety, health and safety, food, allergy, first-aid and medicines policies.

Appendix A Early Years Safe Screen Time Policy

Purpose

Our setting recognises that technology can support learning when used appropriately. We promote a balanced approach to screen use, ensuring that children's physical development, communication, social interaction, play and real-life experiences remain the priority.

Our Approach

- Screen use for children aged 3-5 will be limited and purposeful, aiming to remain within one hour per day.
- Screens will only be used where there is a clear learning, developmental or communication purpose.
- Screen activities will be short, age-appropriate and adult-supported.
- Practitioners will interact and talk with children during screen-based activities.
- Screens will not replace active play, outdoor learning, creative experiences, books, conversation or social interaction.
- Children will not be left unsupervised when using digital devices.
- Only school-approved, age-appropriate and safe digital content will be used.
- Children will have regular opportunities to move, play and look away from screens.
- Screen use will not be routinely used as a reward, distraction or behaviour-management strategy.
- Individual needs, including SEND and accessibility requirements, will be considered.

Safeguarding

All digital devices and content must follow the school's safeguarding, online safety and acceptable-use procedures. Any concerns about inappropriate content or online safety must be reported in accordance with school safeguarding procedures.

Working with Parents

We will work with parents and carers to promote healthy and balanced screen habits at home and share information about the DfE's recommendations where appropriate.

Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if DfE guidance or the EYFS statutory framework changes.
- This policy has regard to the DfE's screen-use guidance and the EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers, effective from September 2026.

Appendix B Safe Sleeping Policy Early Years

Purpose

Our Early Years setting recognises that children may occasionally become tired and fall asleep during the school day. We will provide a safe, calm and supervised environment if this occurs, while following current Department for Education (DfE) and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) safer-sleep guidance.

Safe Sleep Arrangements

- A designated safe sleep space is available within Blossom classroom.
- The space will be quiet, clean, comfortable and free from hazards.
- A suitable, waterproof sleep mat will be provided on a clear, firm and flat surface.
- Children will not be allowed to sleep on sofas, armchairs or other soft furnishings.
- Children will be positioned safely on their back and will not have items around them that could create a risk of suffocation, entrapment or overheating.
- A child who falls asleep unexpectedly will be moved to the designated safe sleep space as soon as practicable.
- The sleep space contains only the mat and, if needed, lightweight bedding tucked firmly below the child's shoulders. Pillows, cushions, soft toys, bumpers, wedges and straps are not used. The child's head remains uncovered.
- Children will be appropriately supervised and monitored throughout their sleep. Staff will remain aware of the child and regularly check their position, breathing and general wellbeing.
- Sleeping children remain within sight and hearing of staff. Checks are frequent and recorded, including the child's position, breathing and general wellbeing.
- The child will never be left unsupervised or isolated from staff.
- The sleep area is maintained at 16-20°C so the child does not become too hot or too cold.
- Staff will ensure that the child is not overheating and that clothing or coverings do not obstruct the child's face.
- If a child appears unwell, has difficulty breathing, is unusually difficult to rouse or staff have any concerns about their wellbeing, the school's first-aid and emergency procedures will be followed immediately.
- Parents and carers are consulted about sleep routines and any agreed individual arrangements are recorded.
- All staff who supervise sleeping children receive safer-sleep training informed by NHS and Lullaby Trust guidance.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers will be contacted and informed if their child falls asleep during the session. Staff will record the circumstances, length of sleep and any relevant observations in accordance with school procedures.

If a child regularly falls asleep during the school day, the setting will discuss this with parents/carers and consider whether further information, support or advice is required.

Safeguarding and Risk Management

- All staff will follow the school's safeguarding, first-aid, supervision and risk-assessment procedures.
- Staff responsible for supervising sleeping children must understand and follow this policy.
- This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains consistent with current DfE, EYFS and Ofsted guidance.

Appendix C Safe Eating Policy Early Years

Aim

Our school is committed to ensuring that children eat and drink in a safe, healthy and positive environment. We follow DfE and EYFS guidance to reduce the risks of choking, allergies and food-related illness.

Snack Time

- Children will sit safely while eating their snack.
- An adult will supervise children at all times.
- Staff will encourage children to eat calmly and not rush or talk with food in their mouths.
- Food will be prepared appropriately to reduce the risk of choking.
- Children will have access to fresh drinking water.
- Allergies and individual dietary requirements will be checked before food is given.

Lunchtime

- Children will sit safely at the table while eating their lunch.
- Children will be supervised throughout lunchtime and remain within the sight and hearing of staff.
- A member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate will be present in the room while children are eating.
- Staff will check that each child's meal meets their individual dietary and allergy requirements.
- Staff will encourage children to eat independently and develop positive attitudes towards food.
- Children will never be forced to eat or finish their food.

Choking and Allergies

- Food will be prepared in a way that minimises choking risks.
- Whole nuts, popcorn, hard sweets and other high-risk foods will not be provided where they are unsuitable for young children.
- All known allergies and dietary requirements will be recorded, regularly updated and communicated to relevant staff.
- Staff will know the procedures for responding to an allergic reaction or choking incident.
- Any choking or allergic reaction requiring intervention will be recorded and parents/carers informed.

Healthy Eating

Food and snacks provided by the school will be healthy, balanced and nutritious, in line with DfE EYFS nutrition guidance.