EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

St George's CE Primary School

Date of issue	September 2026
Policy owner	Executive Headteacher / EYFS Lead
Approved by	Governing Body
Date approved	
Statutory framework	EYFS framework for group and school-based providers – effective 1 September 2026
Next review	September 2027

1. Purpose and aims

At St George's CE Primary School, we recognise that children's experiences in the early years provide the foundations for future learning, wellbeing and life chances. Our Nursery and Reception provision is rooted in our Christian vision and values and in the four guiding principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

This policy aims to ensure:

- a broad, ambitious and balanced curriculum which develops the knowledge, skills, language and attitudes children need for later learning and life;
- high-quality, consistent teaching and care so that every child makes progress;
- secure, positive relationships between children and adults;
- strong partnership with parents and carers;
- equality of opportunity, anti-discriminatory practice and appropriate support for children with SEND;
- full compliance with the statutory learning and development, assessment, safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.

2. Statutory framework

St George's follows the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026. The framework is mandatory for maintained schools providing early years provision.

The statutory framework is organised around three areas: learning and development requirements; assessment requirements; and safeguarding and welfare requirements. It should be read alongside current Department for Education assessment guidance, early years qualification requirements and standards, Keeping Children Safe in Education, the SEND Code of Practice and relevant school policies.

The September 2026 framework includes strengthened and clarified requirements relating to safeguarding training, references, child absences, safer eating, paediatric first aid, children's screen use, premises safety and other welfare matters. St George's arrangements reflect these requirements.

3. Structure of the EYFS at St George's

St George's EYFS consists of a Nursery class and a Reception class. Nursery admission is separate from Reception admission. The school's current admissions information records 25 Nursery places and a Reception Published Admission Number of 30.

Children are supported through carefully planned induction and transition arrangements. The school works with families and previous settings, where applicable, to understand children's needs, interests, development, medical information, SEND and safeguarding information before and during transition.

4. EYFS principles

Our practice is shaped by the four statutory guiding principles:

- Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual interests and needs and build learning over time; strong partnership with parents and carers is central.
- Children develop and learn at different rates. Our provision includes and supports children with SEND.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum meets the learning and development requirements of the EYFS and is designed to give children the knowledge, language, experiences and foundations they need to succeed. It is delivered through a purposeful combination of play, adult modelling, direct teaching, observation of others and adult-guided learning.

There are seven statutory areas of learning and development. The three prime areas are:

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

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world;

- Expressive arts and design.

All seven areas are important and interconnected. The prime areas provide essential foundations for learning and relationships, while the specific areas strengthen and apply this learning.

5.1 Our curriculum approach

Themes and first-hand experiences continue to provide useful starting points for planning at St George's. Planning remains flexible so that staff can respond to what children know, need and are interested in, while ensuring that important curriculum content is taught deliberately and progressively.

Children have opportunities to revisit, practise and deepen learning. Practitioners plan purposeful experiences indoors and outdoors for whole classes, groups, pairs and individuals. Adult-led and child-initiated learning are balanced according to children's age, development and learning needs, with an increasing proportion of adult-guided learning as children move towards Year 1.

Staff place particular emphasis on high-quality interactions, communication and language, vocabulary, reading, early mathematics, physical development and personal, social and emotional development.

5.2 Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

Practitioners reflect on the characteristics of effective teaching and learning when planning and interacting with children:

- playing and exploring – children investigate, experience things and 'have a go';
- active learning – children concentrate, persist when difficulties occur and enjoy achievements;
- creating and thinking critically – children develop ideas, make links and develop strategies for doing things.

5.3 Inclusion, SEND and English as an additional language

We set ambitious and appropriate expectations for all children. Staff plan from children's starting points and make reasonable adjustments so that children with SEND or disabilities can access the curriculum and participate fully.

Where a child appears to be behind expected levels or where progress gives cause for concern, practitioners consider the child's needs, including whether there may be SEND. The EYFS team works with the SENCO, parents and relevant professionals in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice and the school's SEND Policy.

For children whose home language is not English, staff value and support the continued development of the home language while ensuring children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English.

6. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning but should not take practitioners away from high-quality interaction with children or create excessive paperwork. Staff use their knowledge of each child, professional judgement, observations arising naturally through day-to-day practice and information from parents to understand progress and plan next learning.

Practitioners are not required to collect physical or photographic evidence to prove assessment judgements. Practitioners use observations arising naturally through day-to-day practice to inform Insight, the school's assessment and tracking system. Learning journeys are shared with parents and carers through ClassDojo. Assessment is not dependent upon creating a large body of recorded or photographic evidence.

6.1 Reception Baseline Assessment

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is statutory. It must be administered within the first six weeks of each child starting Reception, including children who start later in the academic year and have not previously completed it. The school follows the current annual RBA assessment and reporting arrangements and administration guidance.

The RBA is an on-entry assessment and is not used as the Reception curriculum or to label children. Ongoing EYFS teaching and assessment continue to be based on the statutory framework and the school's curriculum.

6.2 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

The EYFS Profile is a statutory assessment completed for each eligible child in the final term of the academic year in which they reach age five, usually Reception. Teachers assess each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs), recording whether the child is meeting the expected level or is 'emerging'.

The ELGs are used for the end-of-EYFS assessment and must not be used as the curriculum or to limit the rich experiences children receive. Teachers use their professional knowledge of the child to make holistic, best-fit judgements; recorded, written or photographic evidence is not required.

The EYFS Profile must be completed and submitted to the local authority no later than 30 June. Results are shared with parents and carers, who are offered an opportunity to discuss them. Information is also used to support effective transition into Year 1, particularly where a child is emerging in one or more areas.

7. Working with parents and carers

St George's recognises parents and carers as children's first and most enduring educators. Effective two-way communication helps practitioners understand each child and helps families support learning at home.

We work in partnership by:

- talking with families before and as their child starts at St George's;
- providing regular opportunities to discuss progress, development, wellbeing and next steps;
- being available for appropriate day-to-day communication;
- holding parent meetings/conferences and sharing statutory assessment information;
- sharing children's learning journeys with parents and carers through ClassDojo and welcoming relevant contributions from home;
- providing induction and settling arrangements which enable staff to get to know children and their families;
- sharing information about curriculum, routines, key persons, staffing, food and drink, SEND support, safeguarding and relevant policies;
- signposting families to specialist or wider support where appropriate.

8. Key person

Each child in the EYFS is assigned a key person. The key person helps ensure that the child's care is tailored to their individual needs, supports the child to become familiar with the setting, offers a settled relationship and develops a constructive relationship with parents and carers. Where appropriate, the key person also helps families engage with specialist support.

9. Safeguarding and child protection

Safeguarding is integral to all EYFS practice. The school follows its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education alongside the additional requirements within the EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS safeguarding arrangements include procedures covering concerns about children, allegations against adults, safer recruitment, use of mobile phones/cameras and other devices with imaging or sharing capabilities, whistleblowing and staff safeguarding training.

All EYFS practitioners must receive safeguarding training that meets the criteria in Annex C of the statutory framework. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) provides ongoing advice and support. Statutory EYFS safeguarding training must be renewed every two years, with refresher training considered during that period according to need and wider school safeguarding requirements.

9.1 Child absences

Absence can be an important safeguarding indicator. St George's follows up absences in a timely way in accordance with the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy and safeguarding procedures.

Where an EYFS child is absent without notification, or for a prolonged period, the school will attempt to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts, consider patterns and trends and the child's and family's circumstances, and take further safeguarding action where required. Concerns may be referred to children's social care and/or result in a police welfare check where appropriate.

10. Suitable people, recruitment and references

People working with children must be suitable, appropriately qualified and subject to the checks required for their role. The school follows its safer recruitment arrangements and statutory safeguarding requirements.

The EYFS framework contains specific expectations for references. References should be obtained before recruitment, should not be open references or supplied by family members, and should normally come from an appropriately senior person at the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting. Electronic references must be checked as originating from a legitimate source, discrepancies must be followed up and reasons for leaving relevant employment must be established.

The school also complies with statutory disqualification requirements applicable to early years provision.

11. Staffing, qualifications and supervision

Staffing arrangements will always meet the needs of children and ensure their safety. The school complies with the statutory staff:child ratios and qualification requirements applicable to its Nursery and Reception provision, using the current EYFS framework and Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards.

Children must usually be within both sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing, with the specific safer-eating requirements applying at meals and snacks.

Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place for staff who have contact with children and families. Supervision provides support, coaching and training and opportunities to discuss children's development, wellbeing and safeguarding concerns.

12. Paediatric first aid

At least one person with a current full paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate meeting the EYFS criteria must be on the premises and available at all times when EYFS children are present and must accompany children on outings. PFA qualifications are renewed every three years.

The school also follows the additional EYFS qualification/PFA requirements governing which staff may count in statutory ratios. While EYFS children are eating, St George's ensures that the applicable statutory PFA and supervision requirements are met. Further arrangements are set out in the school's First Aid Policy.

13. Health, medicines and oral health

St George's promotes the good health, including oral health, of children in the EYFS. Children learn about healthy food and drink, physical activity and the importance of looking after their teeth, including the effects of too many sugary foods and drinks and the importance of toothbrushing.

The school has procedures for illness and infection and follows its Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / medicines arrangements. Medicines are administered only in accordance with statutory requirements, appropriate permissions and record-keeping procedures.

14. Food, drink and safer eating

Meals, snacks and drinks provided to children must be healthy, balanced and nutritious, and fresh drinking water is available and accessible. The school has regard to the statutory EYFS nutrition guidance.

Before admission, the school obtains information about children's dietary requirements, food allergies, intolerances and special health requirements and ensures relevant staff are informed.

Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating. Staff organise mealtimes and snacks to minimise choking risk and respond to individual developmental and medical needs. The school's Allergy Safety and First Aid arrangements should be read alongside this section.

15. Behaviour and relationships

EYFS practice supports children to understand feelings, develop self-regulation, build positive relationships and learn how their behaviour affects others. Responses to behaviour are developmentally appropriate and consistent with the school's Positive Relationships Policy.

Corporal punishment is never used or threatened. Physical intervention is used only where lawful and necessary to prevent immediate harm or manage a serious safety risk, and is recorded and reported in accordance with school procedures.

16. Premises, safety and outdoor learning

The EYFS environment is organised to meet children's needs and enable safe, purposeful learning. Children have daily access to outdoor play unless circumstances, such as unsafe weather, make this inappropriate.

The school maintains appropriate fire and emergency procedures, first-aid equipment, hygienic toileting/changing arrangements and suitable spaces for confidential conversations with parents and for staff breaks.

Risk assessment is an ongoing process. Staff identify hazards, judge risk and take proportionate steps to remove or minimise it while enabling children to experience appropriate challenge and develop independence.

16.1 School dog and banned dog breeds

St George's has a school dog, Hero. Her presence is managed through the school's risk assessment and safeguarding arrangements, taking account of children's allergies, fears, SEND and individual needs.

In accordance with the EYFS statutory framework effective from September 2026, 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.

17. Children's screen use

From September 2026, EYFS providers must have regard to the Department for Education's guidance on screen use in early years settings. St George's uses digital technology purposefully and proportionately, considering children's age, development, learning, wellbeing and online safety.

Screen use will not displace the high-quality interaction, talk, play, physical activity, first-hand experience, books, creativity and exploration that are fundamental to effective early learning.

18. Intimate care, toileting and privacy

Children's individual toileting and intimate-care needs are supported sensitively and respectfully. Suitable hygienic changing facilities are available where needed. Staff balance children's privacy and dignity with safeguarding and support requirements and follow the school's Intimate Care arrangements.

19. Outings and educational visits

EYFS outings are planned and risk assessed in accordance with the statutory framework and the school's Educational Visits Policy. Staffing and supervision take account of children's age, individual needs, the nature of the activity and the environment. A member of staff with the required current PFA qualification accompanies EYFS children on outings.

20. Information, records and confidentiality

The school maintains required records and ensures an appropriate two-way flow of information with parents/carers and relevant professionals. Information is accurate, accessible and stored securely in accordance with data protection, safeguarding and school record-retention requirements.

Parents are informed about the setting's routines, staffing, their child's key person, curriculum, SEND support, food and drink arrangements, relevant policies and how to contact the school in an emergency.

21. Concerns and complaints

Concerns should normally be raised promptly with the class teacher, EYFS Lead or senior leadership so that they can be resolved. Formal concerns are considered under the school's Complaints Procedure.

For written complaints relating specifically to fulfilment of EYFS requirements, the statutory framework requires the provider to investigate and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days. Records of such complaints and outcomes are retained as required. Parents are also given information about how to contact Ofsted if they believe EYFS requirements are not being met.

22. Monitoring and quality assurance

The EYFS Lead and senior leaders monitor the quality of curriculum, teaching, interactions, assessment, environment, safeguarding and welfare practice. Monitoring may include learning walks, discussion with staff and children, curriculum review, assessment information, parent feedback and scrutiny of safeguarding and welfare arrangements.

The Governing Body receives appropriate assurance that the statutory EYFS requirements are being met. This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if the statutory framework, assessment requirements or school procedures change.

23. Related policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / medicines arrangements;
- Allergy Safety Policy;
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy;
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report;
- Positive Relationships / Behaviour Policy;
- Intimate Care arrangements;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Complaints Procedure;
- Admissions Policy.

24. Key statutory and government guidance

- Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026;
- Department for Education – Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards, effective 1 September 2026;
- Standards and Testing Agency – 2026 Reception Baseline Assessment administration guidance and assessment/reporting arrangements;
- Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook, updated September 2026;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Department for Education – Help for early years providers: screen use and other current practice guidance.