L.E.A.D. Academy Trust
Lead • Empower • Achieve • Drive

SIR EDMUND HILLARY ACADEMY

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy/Procedure management log

Document name	Early Years Policy
Date approved	Trust approval Autumn Term 2026 AGB approval Autumn Term 2026
Date issued	**Autumn Term 2026**
Date of review	**Autumn Term 2027**

Introduction:

This policy sets out the expectations in practice and provision alongside key definitions and the legal framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage within the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust.

As such, the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust requires this policy to be implemented by all its member academies to ensure consistency of practice across the network of academies.

The L.E.A.D. Academy Trust defines the policy expectation, but the responsibility for implementation of the policy as well as the adaptations and personalisation as necessary rests with the Headteacher of each academy.

Legislative Background:

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

Aims:

Within the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust, we aim for each of our academy early years foundation stage settings to give every child a positive and meaningful start to their school life. We aim to establish solid foundations upon which children can develop into independent and fearless, lifelong learners.

At Sir Edmund Hillary Academy this means children are at the heart of everything we do and we are all passionate about keeping our children safe, about their well-being and their learning. Sir Edmund Hillary Academy children will stand out as courageous, inclusive and mindful learners who build positive relationships and are empowered to achieve.

We encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere by supporting them in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing. We will help them to recognise their own strengths and achievements and develop their confidence to work towards personal goals.

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

We greatly value the diversity of individuals within our academies and every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best, so planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by considering the range of life experiences for all children when planning for their learning. In addition, we set realistic and challenging expectations linked to the needs of all pupils, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of the EYFS. We do this through:

- planning opportunities that 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;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities to meet the needs of different pupil groups including boys and girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), more able pupils and children from different social, ethnic, language and cultural backgrounds;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary whether in the EYFS setting or outside through the intervention of different services and organisations;
- working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure that all children's needs are met and that they are enabled to access the curriculum and make good progress.

The EYFS Curriculum:

At Sir Edmund Hillary Academy, we follow a curriculum which meets the educational programmes outlined in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage – July 2025. Curriculum planning also takes account of the non-statutory DfE curriculum guidance, Development Matters (Revised September 2023) and Birth to 5 Matters (Early Years Coalition 2021 – updated March 2026).

The EYFS Framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. Three areas, known as the *Prime Areas*, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The Prime Areas are:

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

The Prime Areas are strengthened and applied through four *Specific Areas*:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the World;

- Expressive Arts and Design.

At Sir Edmund Hillary Academy, we aim to provide activities and experiences that enable all children to develop and learn effectively. The curriculum rationale, written by us as an individual academy within the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust, also reflects the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of pupils. We use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff also reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff are well trained to respond to each child's starting points, emerging needs and interests and guide pupil development through warm and positive interactions. As children grow older and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning in readiness for Year 1 and beyond.

Whilst academies within the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust have the freedom to ensure that their curriculum is adapted to the needs of their children and individual context, the Trust also provides detailed direction via the Early Years Handbook (updated September 2026).

Assessment:

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning and staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

When a child is aged between 2 and 3, staff review their progress and provide parents/carers with a written summary of the child's development in the *Prime Areas*. This *Progress Check* highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception/Foundation Stage 2, staff administer the *Reception Baseline Assessment* (RBA).

Throughout the year, the summary goal statements for the *Prime and Specific Areas* are assessed against the RBA. This takes place on a half-termly basis within our academy and results are collected at the three end of term assessment points in line with the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust procedures. This enables teachers to determine whether a child is '*on track', 'vulnerable'* or *'accelerating'*. It also allows teachers to judge if children are keeping pace with the rate of teaching (as defined by the academy's early years curriculum) and whether children are making progress by knowing and remembering more.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the *EYFS Profile* for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 *Early Learning Goals*, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting the expected levels of development (expected);

- Not yet reaching the expected levels (emerging).

The *EYFS Profile* reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents/carers and the results of the profile are shared with parents/carers for their child at the end of the school year.

The profile is moderated internally in partnership with other academies within the L.E.A.D Academy Trust to ensure consistency in assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is also submitted to the local authority on an annual basis.

In addition to summative assessment, the L.E.A.D Academy Trust places great importance on the requirement for effective day-by-day assessment to be able to identify gaps in children's knowledge, skills and understanding and to address issues as early as possible. For this formative assessment to be effective, it is important for the staff making any judgement to know the child well and to have a secure understanding of the benchmarks of development as laid out in the L.E.A.D. assessment milestones document. In the practice of assessment, staff need to carefully consider a range of evidence such as:

- observations;
- workbooks/ learning journeys;
- recorded clips;
- anecdotal evidence;
- parental observations.

We recognise that children learn and develop best when there is a strong partnership between staff and home. Parents/carers are therefore kept up to date with their child's progress and development as detailed as part of this policy. This includes the Progress Check and *EYFS Profile* which helps to provide parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Safeguarding and Welfare:

We are absolutely committed to the safeguarding of all our pupils and fully comply with the welfare requirements as set out in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage July 2025. These are to:

- provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence due to the positive relationships with the adults caring for them;
- ensure staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures and that they fully adhere to the Trust's code of conduct;
- promote good health;
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;

- ensure that all adults who look after children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting to meet the needs of the children;
- ensure that the setting, furniture, resources and equipment are safe and suitable for the purpose for which they are used.

Keeping Safe - It is imperative that all children within our academy are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand how to stay safe. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We also aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They also have access to water at all times. In addition, healthy living and good oral health are also promoted.

Safer eating – we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of safer eating. Staff gather and regularly review information regarding children's dietary needs, allergies, intolerances and medical conditions, ensuring appropriate support and risk management measures are in place. Children are always supervised while eating and adults sit facing children while they eat.

Food is prepared and presented in ways that reduce the risk of choking. This includes following current guidance on the safe preparation of foods such as grapes, cherry tomatoes and other potential choking hazards. Parents are asked to follow the same safe preparation practices with packed lunches and information regarding this and the 'Eatwell guide' is given to all families in our EYFS.

When children are eating there should always be at least one member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate and ALL staff are trained to recognise and respond to allergic reactions and to promote safe eating practices, creating a calm environment with minimal distractions during mealtimes.

Intimate Care - Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching, or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children can carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example, dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is given without the express written permission of the parent/carer of the child.

Key Person - Each child is assigned a *key person* who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. Parents must be provided with the name of their child's key person and details of their role when the child joins the academy. The *key person* supports

parents/carers in guiding their child's development at home and helps families to engage with more specialist support, wherever necessary.

Suitable Adults - We ensure that all staff looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. All L.E.A.D. academies have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners and any other person who may have regular contact with children are suitable. As a result, all adults working with children are subject to an enhanced DBS check as part of their ongoing employment within the Trust. The recruitment of staff always follows the Trust's **Safer Recruitment Policy**.

Any other adults working as volunteers in regulated activity within our academy are also subject to DBS checks.

All adults are trained in safeguarding practice and procedures on an annual basis as a minimum. In addition, all L.E.A.D. Academy Trust academies also provide regular updated training throughout the year to ensure the highest possible protection for children. (See the Trust's **Safeguarding Policy** for practice and detail).

Where a person is disqualified, academy leaders do not employ that person in connection with early years provision. Where we as the employer become aware of relevant information that may lead to the disqualification of an employee, academy leaders take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children. Please see the following for more information:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006

www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

Expectations of Early Years Settings:

We ensure that appropriate support is put in place to ensure a successful transition from home to school in order that the start to each child's learning journey is made as positive as possible. This includes planning for such aspects as:

- arranging for the teacher to visit all children in their home settings and childcare provisions prior to starting at the academy;
- providing a parent/carer and child handbook of information in preparation for commencing early years education;
- inviting parents/carers and children to spend time in nursery/FS1 or reception/FS2 for induction visits before starting at the academy;
- providing an induction meeting for nursery/FS1 or reception/FS2 parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss academy routines, expectations and to answer any questions that they might have;
- holding a parent/carer consultation meeting early in the academic year to establish how their child is settling into the school environment as well as two further parent/teacher consultation meetings (i.e., three per year);
- operating an open-door policy for parents/carers to build relationships as well as share any queries or concerns to resolve problems swiftly;

- providing written contact through home-school diaries and academy newsletters;
- publishing a curriculum map detailing the areas of learning, the overarching theme of the term/half-term as well as a class newsletter/termly overview;
- inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics/reading and maths;
- regularly sharing the children's *Learning Journey* with parents/carers and showing value for their on-going contributions;
- sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in nursery/FS1 (where applicable) and reception/FS2;
- asking parents to sign a generic permission form at the start of the academy for visits, food tasting and photographs, etc.;
- inviting parents/carers to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports days, etc.;
- offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning, e.g., hearing readers;
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, academy and parents, e.g., stay and play sessions etc.

  Please note that this list in not exhaustive.

Play and Enabling Environments:

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

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. As such, we plan the environment both indoors and outdoors to encourage a positive attitude to learning and reflect children's individual interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. Children are enabled and supported to make their own selection of the activities on offer to encourage independent learning. In addition, all resources and spaces are safe to use and are checked regularly.

We believe that young children learn best from play with activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching, and extending play, skills and language. All academies provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore, develop and make sense of the world as well as think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. In addition, children are supported to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning at their own level and pace, pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. As a result, children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

Transition:

Starting school and moving up to new classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents/carers. As a result, we have established a strong procedure for transition to ensure that children, as well as their parents/carers, are well supported when facing the challenges of moving between each year group within the EYFS setting as well as up to Year 1.

At Sir Edmund Hillary Academy our Nursery and Reception children spend time together on our shared outdoor space and this gives good opportunity for Reception staff to build relationships with Nursery children prior to them moving into Reception.

Over the summer term, Nursery children will engage with a variety of different activities to support their transition, including: spending time within the Reception classroom in continuous provision, accessing story time and group time sessions. Parents are invited to a Getting School Ready meeting where they receive information about their child's move to Reception and how they can help to make it as smooth as possible. Where children are starting from another setting, the school will approach the provider for information about the child. If a child has additional needs a visit to the setting or a home visit may be arranged.

Children moving from Reception to Year 1 have opportunities to get to know their new class teacher and classroom, including 2 days of formal 'Transition'. Reception teachers spend time meeting with the Year 1 teachers to share important information about each child's strengths and areas of need . Parents are invited to meetings after school to help them learn about their child's move to Year 1 and what they can do to support the transition.

We recognise that every child is unique and may respond differently to change. Our staff work closely with families to ensure transition arrangements meet individual needs, helping children to feel safe, confident and excited about the next stage of their learning. Where appropriate, additional visits, transition booklets, photo guides or personalised support plans may be arranged to help children settle successfully.

Partnership with Parents:

Parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore we work very closely to ensure they are involved in their child's education and development whilst at the academy. As a result, parents/carers receive regular communication and are given a wide range of opportunities to speak to adults within the EYFS setting as well as the wider academy if they should need to do so. This includes a pre-start home visit, open events and workshops for parents/carers and their children to attend sessions in the setting, as well as termly parent consultation meetings. In addition, daily opportunities are also provided through an open-door policy and home-school diaries in which parents/carers can make comments and share issues in order that any problems can be resolved swiftly.

Staff Qualifications, Training, Support and Skills:

The daily experience of children and the overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills, knowledge, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

We ensure that all staff receive induction training to enable them to understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training includes information regarding emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues.

We support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure that they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improve. In addition, practitioners in the EYFS are offered regular supervision to discuss their practice and effectiveness in working with the very youngest children in our academy. This results in a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement and encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Qualifications - We ensure that leaders hold at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification or above and have at least two years' experience of working in an early years setting or other suitable experience. They must also hold a level 2 maths qualification or be working towards achieving this within 2 years of appointment, if appointed from the 4th January 2024. We also expect there to be a named deputy who is capable and qualified to take charge in the early years leader's absence.

We ensure that at least half of all other staff hold at least a full and relevant level 2 qualification.

In addition, we also ensure that at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is always on the premises and available when children are present and accompanies children on visits off-site. Any member of staff appointed after June 2016 must hold a paediatric first aid certificate if they are to be included in staff ratios.

For more information concerning EYFS Staff Qualifications, please visit:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualification-requirements-and-standards

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualifications-achieved-in-england/early-years-qualifications-achieved-in-england

Supervision - We ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and always ensure their safety. We ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times and are always in the sight and hearing of staff. This includes whilst eating. We also inform parents and/or carers about staff deployment, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.

Ratios - Within our academy, and all L.E.A.D Academy Trust EYFS settings, we ensure that only those aged 17 or over may be included in ratios if they are suitable. Suitable students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over), and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over), may be included in the ratios if we are satisfied that they are competent and responsible.

For children aged two, we ensure that there is:

- at least one member of staff for every five children;
- at least one member of staff who holds an approved level 3 qualification;
- at least half of all other staff who holds an approved level 2 qualification.

For children aged three and over, we ensure that there is:

- a qualified teacher;
- at least one member of staff for every 13 children;
- at least one other member of staff with an approved level 3 qualification.

Reception/FS2 classes are subject to *Infant Class Size Legislation*. The *School Admissions (Infant Class Size) Regulations, 2012* limits the size of infant classes to 30 pupils per school teacher (subject to permitted exceptions) while an ordinary teaching session is conducted.

'School teachers' does not include teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants or other support staff. Consequently, in an ordinary teaching session, we employ sufficient qualified teachers to enable infant classes to be taught in groups of no more than 30 children per teacher.

Trust Quality Assurance:

The Trust will quality assure all early years' settings against its quality standards on annual basis. These are:

- clear vision and strategic action plan for the early years
- well qualified staff with relevant early years qualifications and/or training
- all welfare requirements specified in the early years foundation stage statutory framework are met
- effective utilisation of indoor and outdoor spaces with a clear rationale
- provision of a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the 7 areas of learning and adheres to the early years foundation stage statutory framework
- assessment is regular and comprehensive and informs pedagogy
- at least 70% of pupils meet the good level of development