The Dales School
North Yorkshire

EYFS Policy

Person responsible:	Headteacher
Reviewed and approved by Full Governing Body:	October 2026
Next Review Date:	October 2027

Signed……... **Date**: ……..

The Dales School EYFS Policy

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- *Quality and consistency in all early years 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.*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year."

At the Dales School children can join EYFS from the age of 2 according to their needs and if they are in receipt of an EHCP.

The EYFS is based upon four guiding principles:

- A Unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

A Unique Child

At The Dales School we recognise that every child is a learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and 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, to encourage children to develop positive attitudes to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at The Dales School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and their additional complex needs when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging

expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs all pupils regardless of race, gender and SEND.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- robust observation of their self - initiated and engagement in adult led activities, which provides a foundation for our planning
- 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 and approaches based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate, encourage and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping and support the ethos of British values
- ongoing monitoring of children's progress and the provision of appropriate support

It is important to us that all children in school are safe. We aim to provide a safe and supportive environment that includes resources and staffing to facilitate and enable children's wellbeing and learning.

Safeguarding and Welfare

"*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."*

At The Dales Schools we understand that we are legally required to comply with safeguarding and welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2026/27 We understand that we are required to:

- ensure our school culture for safeguarding confirms the policy, principles and practice are applied robustly.
- promote the welfare of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill. Promote healthy eating following the EYFS framework 'Nutrition Guidance' DfE May 25 within the context of each pupil's individual needs and to regulate the use of screen time as appropriate, EYFS framework Sept 26 'Help for early years providers- Screen use'.
- support behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. Staff are trained/recruited to recommended standards and receive robust safeguarding training.
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives motivating, engaging and challenging learning experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- to observe, support and assess children's well-being and mental health using a range or strategies and referencing the Leuven well-being scale.

Positive Relationships
At The Dales School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

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

- EYFS information on the school website
- new starters pre-admission meeting
- key workers complete ongoing assessments together with families
- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's key worker teacher if there are any concerns.
- encouraging parents to contribute to the individual learning journey records (Tapestry) kept for their child
- parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Foundation Stage [EYFSP]. There is also an opportunity to come to a meeting after these reports have been sent home if the parents wish it.
- each pupil is allocated a key person [class lead/teacher]
- termly parental engagement sessions e.g. coffee and activity mornings
- 6 monthly EHCP interim review
- annual EHCP PCR
- Home school communication diaries/face to face daily contact
- Newsletters each term
- Individually planned induction and packages, including 'stay and play'
- Sharing of individual learning outcomes each term

Enabling Environments
At The Dales School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess each child's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning
The planning within the EYFS is based around termly themes and half termly planning. These plans are used by the teachers as a guide for weekly planning and to support each child's individual learning intentions. We make ongoing formative assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the whole class team and multi-disciplinary team as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFSP. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Dales Tracker and Assessment system (taken from Birth to 5 Matters 2021]. Pupils are assessed individually when considering meaningful access to the RBA [reception baseline assessment] if appropriate to their developmental needs. The parents are given the opportunity to contribute to and discuss these judgements with the teacher.

The Learning Environment
The classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The range of play provision opportunities includes:

- Outdoor areas [including Forest School activities]
- Role play
- Construction
- Small word
- Sensory
- Creative
- Malleable
- Physical
- Mark Making

Throughout the week continuous play activities are rotated and accessible for self-initiated and directed play, taking into account pupil interests and schemas.

Learning and Development

At The Dales School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles and strengths. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in the rest of our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that staff have of how children develop and learn, and how this impacts on their teaching;
- early development and the range of approaches used that provide first-hand sensory learning and concrete experiences or use total communication approach;
- the carefully planned curriculum with their own individual learning outcomes supports children to develop within the context of the Early Learning areas throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and make choices about their life and to develop independence;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our schools.

Playing and Exploring

"children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which helps them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

"Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn

to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking
"Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning and have access to sensory learning not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections and develop early schemas by showing interest and with support children can access resources.

Areas of Learning and Development
There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the *prime* areas, are:
• communication and language;
• physical development;
• personal, social and emotional development.

Providers must also support children in four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:
• literacy;
• mathematics;
• understanding the world;
• expressive arts and design.

Monitoring and review
It is the responsibility of each class team with EYFS pupils to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head teacher and Deputy Head carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation, planning, assessment scrutiny and discussion as part of the whole school quality assurance schedule.

All quotations included in this document are taken 'Early years foundation stage statutory framework: For group and school-based providers. Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.' September 2026

School Organisation and Groupings of children
Using information from previous settings, other professionals and families, a pupil is given a place within a class that can best meet their learning needs. Pupils are placed within an age range, class environment and cohort that supports their individual holistic needs and access to an EYFS curriculum.