

Woodsetton School



Early Years Policy

This policy was reviewed and updated in September 2026

The next anticipated review date will be September 2027

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1. Aims

At Woodsetton School, we aim to provide a safe, stimulating, inclusive and nurturing learning environment where every child can thrive and achieve their potential.

Through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we seek to ensure that:

- Every child has access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that provides the foundations for future learning, development and success.
- Children make good progress from their individual starting points through high-quality teaching, meaningful experiences and personalised support.
- The unique strengths, interests, needs and backgrounds of every child are recognised and valued.
- Strong partnerships are established between school, parents/carers and other professionals to support children's learning and well-being.
- Children develop positive attitudes to learning, resilience, independence and confidence.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice underpin all aspects of provision, ensuring that every child is fully included and supported to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Appropriate support is provided for children with regards to their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), enabling them to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements of the **Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework** (effective from 1 September 2025) and relevant legislation relating to safeguarding, welfare, special educational needs and disability, equality and data protection.

The school has regard to:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- The Equality Act 2010.

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years.
- The Childcare Act 2006.
- This policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, attendance, health and safety and data protection policies.

3. Structure of the EYFS

At Woodsetton School, the EYFS applies to children in the Reception year and is delivered in accordance with the statutory requirements of the EYFS Framework.

For the academic year 2026-2027, children in the Caterpillars and Moles class are educated within a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Reception-aged children continue to access the EYFS curriculum and assessment requirements appropriate to their age and stage of development.

As a primary special school, we recognise that children may have complex learning, communication, sensory, physical, social, emotional or medical needs. Provision is therefore adapted to ensure all children can access learning, engage meaningfully in the curriculum and make progress from their individual starting points.

The EYFS curriculum is delivered through a combination of adult-led, child-initiated and play-based learning opportunities, supported by a total communication approach and a highly personalised curriculum.

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment and Early Years Foundation Stage Profile are completed in line with national requirements.

4. Curriculum

The curriculum at Woodsetton School is underpinned by the four guiding principles of the EYFS:

- 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 responsive support from skilled adults.
- Learning and development are interconnected and are supported through experiences that promote engagement, curiosity and sustained learning.

As a primary special school, we recognise that children develop at different rates and may require varying levels of support to access learning. Our curriculum is therefore personalised to meet individual needs whilst maintaining high expectations for all learners.

We place particular emphasis on the development of communication, interaction, emotional well-being, physical development and independence, recognising that these areas provide the foundations for future learning and life skills

We provide a language-rich, communication-focused environment that promotes:

- Communication and interaction skills.
- Vocabulary development.
- Social communication.
- Attention and listening.
- Emotional expression and regulation.
- Functional independence.

The curriculum is delivered through meaningful, engaging and appropriate experiences that reflect children's interests, developmental needs and individual outcomes identified within Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), where applicable.

Adults play a vital role in supporting learning through high-quality interactions, modelling language, shared attention, storytelling, structured play, sensory experiences and responsive communication strategies.

The learning and development requirements of the EYFS comprise:

- The seven areas of learning and development and associated educational programmes.
- The Early Learning Goals.
- Assessment arrangements and reporting requirements.

The seven areas of learning and development are:

Prime Areas

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

These prime areas are particularly important in supporting children's development and readiness for future learning.

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Learning opportunities are planned across all seven areas and delivered through an inclusive curriculum that enables children to explore, investigate, communicate, create and develop independence within a supportive environment.

4.1 Planning

At Woodsetton School, practitioners are ambitious for all children and provide a curriculum that is broad, balanced, engaging and responsive to individual needs. Planning is informed by children's

starting points, interests, strengths, developmental needs and individual outcomes, including those identified within Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), where applicable.

Practitioners use their knowledge of each child to provide meaningful learning experiences that support progress across all areas of learning and development. Learning opportunities are adapted to ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can access the curriculum and achieve their potential.

Planning is flexible and responsive, enabling staff to follow children's interests, build on existing knowledge and skills, and provide appropriate challenge and support. Practitioners carefully consider the different rates at which children develop and adapt provision accordingly.

Where additional or specialist support is required, staff work collaboratively with parents/carers and relevant professionals to ensure children's needs are identified early and appropriate interventions are implemented.

4.2 Teaching

Teaching within the EYFS is delivered through a balance of adult-led, child-initiated and play-based experiences. Practitioners ensure that children experience the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Practitioners support learning through high-quality interactions, responsive teaching and positive relationships. They observe children's interests and developmental needs and use these to extend learning, model language, develop communication skills and promote curiosity, independence and resilience.

In our specialist setting, teaching approaches are tailored to meet individual communication, sensory, physical, social and emotional needs. Staff use a total communication approach and a range of evidence-informed strategies to enable every child to engage, participate and make progress.

As children develop, practitioners provide increasing opportunities for the direct teaching and application of essential knowledge and skills, supporting successful transition into Key Stage 1 and future stages of learning.

5. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of learning and development within the Early Years Foundation Stage. At Woodsetton School, assessment is ongoing and is based on practitioners' day-to-day interactions, observations and professional knowledge of each child.

Assessment is used to identify children's achievements, interests and next steps in learning. This information informs future planning and ensures that teaching and provision remain responsive to individual needs. Assessment arrangements are proportionate and do not involve unnecessary paperwork or excessive data collection.

Practitioners work closely with parents/carers and relevant professionals to develop a holistic understanding of each child and to ensure that learning and development needs are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity.

Within the first six weeks of starting Reception, children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) in accordance with national requirements.

In the final term of the academic year in which a child reaches the age of five, practitioners complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). Each child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals and recorded as:

- Meeting the expected level of development; or
- Emerging towards the expected level of development.

EYFS Profile outcomes are shared with parents/carers and with the child's Year 1 teacher to support effective transition and continuity of learning.

Assessment judgements are subject to internal moderation and, where required, external moderation arrangements to ensure accuracy and consistency. EYFS Profile data will be submitted in accordance with statutory requirements.

6. Working with parents and carers

Woodsetton School recognises that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators. Positive and respectful partnerships between home and school are fundamental to children's learning, development and well-being.

We actively encourage parents/carers to contribute to their child's learning journey by sharing information about achievements, interests, experiences and development at home. This information helps practitioners gain a comprehensive understanding of each child's strengths and needs.

Parents/carers are kept informed about their child's progress, development and well-being through regular communication, review meetings, reports, consultations and informal discussions.

Each child is assigned a key person who works alongside the class teacher to ensure that learning, development and care are tailored to the child's individual needs. The key person supports children in forming secure relationships, promotes emotional well-being, and acts as a key point of contact for families.

Where appropriate, staff work collaboratively with external agencies and the school's Family Support Worker to ensure children and families receive appropriate guidance and support.

Parents/carers are encouraged to participate in school events, workshops, reviews and celebrations of learning.

To support safeguarding arrangements, parents/carers are asked to provide at least two emergency contact numbers whenever possible and to keep all contact information up to date.

7. Staff

7.1 Staff training

Woodsetton School is committed to ensuring that all staff are appropriately trained, supported and equipped to fulfil their responsibilities within the EYFS.

We will:

- Ensure all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training that enables them to understand and implement the school's safeguarding procedures in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- Ensure safeguarding knowledge remains current through regular updates, briefings, professional development opportunities and statutory training.
- Provide induction training for all new staff to ensure they understand safeguarding responsibilities, child protection procedures, staff behaviour expectations and whistleblowing arrangements.
- Promote a culture in which staff feel confident to raise concerns, seek advice and access support when required.
- Ensure all staff undertake mandatory compliance training and participate in regular safeguarding updates, including face-to-face training, online learning and staff briefings.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will:

- Undertake training appropriate to the role and refresh this in line with statutory requirements.
- Maintain an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding legislation and guidance.
- Provide ongoing advice, support and guidance to staff.
- Liaise with children's social care, local safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies as required.

7.2 Safer recruitment

Woodsetton School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

The school follows safer recruitment procedures in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework, Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant employment legislation.

This includes:

- Obtaining and scrutinising suitable references.
- Conducting appropriate identity, qualification, right-to-work and employment history checks.

- Undertaking enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, including barred list checks where appropriate.
- Maintaining a Single Central Record in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Ensuring that staff, volunteers and students are suitable to work with children.

Further information can be found in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Recruitment and Selection Policy.

7.3 Whistleblowing

Woodsetton School promotes a culture of openness, honesty and accountability. All staff are encouraged to raise concerns about poor practice, safeguarding matters or behaviour that may place children at risk.

Staff are made aware of the school's whistleblowing procedures during induction and through ongoing training. Concerns raised in good faith will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and handled sensitively.

Any member of staff who has concerns about the conduct of another adult should report them immediately to the Headteacher. Concerns relating to the Headteacher should be reported to the CEO and/or Chair of the Local Advisory Board.

Staff may also refer concerns directly to relevant external agencies, including the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline where appropriate.

7.3.1 Malicious or vexatious allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith, but investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Woodsetton School recognises that children's safety, welfare and well-being are paramount. We provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment in which children can learn, develop and thrive.

All practitioners have a responsibility to safeguard children and are vigilant to indicators that a child may be at risk of harm. Staff understand their duty to act promptly and in accordance with local safeguarding procedures if concerns arise.

Our safeguarding arrangements comply with the EYFS Statutory Framework, Keeping Children Safe in Education and local safeguarding partnership procedures.

Further information can be found in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8.1 Responding to allegations or concerns

Any concern regarding the welfare or safety of a child will be acted upon immediately and managed in accordance with safeguarding legislation, local procedures and statutory guidance.

Concerns about a child will be referred to Children's Social Care and/or the police where appropriate.

Any allegation that a person working with children has behaved in a way that may have harmed a child, committed a criminal offence against a child, or behaved in a manner that indicates they may pose a risk to children will be managed in accordance with Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) procedures.

The school will notify Ofsted and other relevant agencies of significant events and allegations as required by the EYFS Statutory Framework and within prescribed statutory timescales.

8.1.1 Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the Head teacher/DSL– referred to from here as the 'recipient' – they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative or other accompanying person
- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there **is**, then:
 - Arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the CEO if appropriate. In some cases, the recipient may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police
 - Inform the person who raised the concern about how the matter is being investigated and give an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps

8.1.2 Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred.

The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority in line with local reporting procedure, or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the headteacher, governors and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

While we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

8.2 Staffing ratios

As a primary special school, staffing arrangements are also determined by the individual needs of pupils, including their communication, sensory, physical, medical and learning needs.

Additional staffing may be provided where required to ensure children's safety, well-being, access to learning and implementation of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Adults are deployed effectively to support high-quality interactions, supervision, learning and safeguarding throughout the school day.

8.3 Paediatric first aid (PFA)

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

8.4 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

We also have a DSL (Mrs Sarah Allen) who has lead responsibility for safeguarding children. They are also responsible for:

- Liaising with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSPs (local safeguarding partners)
- Providing support, advice and guidance to all other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Attending a safeguarding training course that complies with the criteria set out in annex C of the latest EYFS framework

8.5 Absence

We're required to promptly follow up on absences.

If a child is absent for a prolonged time or if their parents/carers haven't told us about the absence, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts.

See our attendance policy.

8.6 Oral health and tooth brushing

In line with EYFS requirements, Woodsetton School actively promotes good oral health and healthy lifestyles.

Children are supported to develop an understanding of:

- The importance of regular tooth brushing and good oral hygiene.
- Making healthy food and drink choices.
- The importance of visiting the dentist regularly.

- The impact of sugar on dental health.

Oral health promotion is incorporated into the curriculum, daily routines and wider health education activities in a manner that is appropriate to children's age, stage of development and individual needs.

8.7 Safer eating

Woodsetton School is committed to promoting safe eating practices and supporting children's nutritional, medical, sensory and developmental needs. We recognise that some children may be at increased risk of choking or may require additional support during mealtimes due to their individual needs.

During all meals and snacks:

- Children will be appropriately supervised by staff at all times and will remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff.
- Staffing arrangements will be planned to ensure that children's safety and individual needs can be met effectively.
- Children will be seated safely and appropriately according to their age, stage of development and physical needs.
- Mealtimes will provide opportunities to promote independence, communication, social interaction and healthy eating habits.

Before a child starts at Woodsetton School, we will obtain and record information regarding:

- Dietary requirements and preferences.
- Food allergies and intolerances.
- Medical conditions that may affect eating, drinking or swallowing.
- Cultural, religious or family dietary considerations.
- Any identified choking risks or feeding recommendations from health professionals.

This information will be shared with relevant staff and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains accurate and up to date.

Where a child has a known allergy, medical condition or identified feeding risk, the school will work in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals to develop and maintain an individual care plan or allergy action plan. These plans will be communicated to all relevant staff and reviewed whenever circumstances change.

Staff will receive appropriate training and guidance to enable them to:

- Recognise the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.
- Follow individual healthcare and allergy management plans.
- Understand and implement safer eating practices.
- Recognise and respond appropriately to choking incidents.
- Follow school procedures for the administration of emergency medication where required.

Food and drink provided by the school will:

- Meet children's individual dietary, medical and developmental needs.
- Be prepared, stored and served in accordance with food hygiene and safety requirements.
- Minimise identified choking risks.
- Support healthy eating in line with current government guidance.

Where children are developing eating, drinking or feeding skills, staff will work closely with parents/carers and relevant professionals, including Speech and Language Therapists and other healthcare professionals, to ensure approaches are consistent, safe and developmentally appropriate.

Any choking incident or significant eating-related concern requiring intervention will be recorded, reviewed and communicated to parents/carers as soon as reasonably practicable. The school will review incidents to identify any necessary changes to practice, risk assessments or individual support plans.

Information is in line with the DfE's [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

8.8 Accident or injury

Woodsetton School takes all reasonable steps to protect children from harm and to promote their health, safety and well-being.

We will ensure that:

- Appropriate first aid equipment is readily accessible at all times.
- A sufficient number of staff hold current Paediatric First Aid qualifications in accordance with EYFS requirements.
- All accidents, injuries and first aid treatment are recorded promptly and accurately.
- Parents/carers are informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable, of any accident, injury or first aid treatment involving their child.

Records will include details of:

- The nature of the incident or injury.
- Any first aid or treatment administered.
- The date, time and location of the incident.
- The name of the member of staff dealing with the incident.

The school will notify Ofsted, local child protection agencies and other relevant authorities of any serious accident, injury, illness or death of a child in accordance with EYFS statutory requirements and prescribed reporting timescales.

Accident and incident records will be monitored regularly to identify patterns, recurring risks or areas for improvement in health and safety practice.

8.9 Safety of premises

Woodsetton School provides a safe, secure and suitable environment that supports children's learning, development and welfare.

We will ensure that:

- All indoor and outdoor areas used by children are safe, secure, suitable for their intended purpose and maintained to a high standard.
- Premises, furniture, equipment and resources are fit for purpose and appropriate to the age, stage of development and needs of the children attending.
- Regular risk assessments are undertaken and appropriate action is taken to minimise hazards.
- Security arrangements help to safeguard children and prevent unauthorised access to the site.
- Appropriate procedures are in place for fire safety, emergency evacuation, infection prevention and hygiene management.

All staff have a responsibility to maintain a safe environment and must report any hazards, defects or concerns immediately in accordance with school procedures.

The school complies with all relevant health and safety legislation and statutory guidance relating to the welfare of children.

8.10 Toileting and privacy

We recognise that children have differing levels of independence with toileting and personal care. We are committed to supporting these needs in a manner that promotes dignity, privacy, well-being and safeguarding.

We will ensure that:

- Suitable toilet and handwashing facilities are available and accessible to children.
- Appropriate nappy changing and personal care facilities are provided where required.
- Necessary resources, including changing materials, hygiene products, spare clothing and towels, are readily available.
- Separate toilet facilities are available for adults.
- Good hygiene procedures are consistently followed by staff and children.

Personal care, toileting and nappy changing will be carried out in accordance with the school's Intimate Care Policy, individual intimate care plans and safeguarding procedures.

Staff will:

- Respect children's dignity, privacy and individual preferences wherever possible.

- Encourage independence and self-care skills appropriate to each child's stage of development.
- Take account of any medical, physical, sensory or communication needs (Intimate Care Plans)
- Maintain appropriate levels of supervision to ensure children's safety and welfare at all times.

Parents/carers and relevant professionals will be consulted where individual toileting or personal care arrangements are required to ensure consistency and meet the child's specific needs.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Chair of the Local Advisory Board annually.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the Local Advisory Board/Trustees.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This isn't an exhaustive list of policies and only includes policies specific to the EYFS. For a full list of our policies:

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS
Safeguarding policy and procedures Child Protection & Safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness Health & Safety policy
Administering medicines policy Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure Emergency Evacuation Plan
Procedure for checking the identity of visitor Child Protection & Safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent/carer failing to collect a child and for missing children Child Protection & Safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints Complaints Policy