**Weald CP School**

**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

EYFS Co-ordinator: Mrs Sally Elbra

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012)*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Weald, children may join us in the Reception Class (Upper Foundation) from the September following their fourth birthday.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

* A Unique Child
* Positive Relationships
* Enabling Environments
* Learning and Development (children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates)

**A Unique Child**

At Weald, we recognise that every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and 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 towards learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement and celebrate success in order to develop the children’s self-esteem and a positive attitude to learning.

***Inclusion***

We value the diversity of all individuals within our school, and children at Weald are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued members of the school community.

In our EYFS setting we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best and be the best that they can be. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences 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 of boys and girls, children with additional educational needs, children who are gifted and talented, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

* Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem, confidence and sustained thinking;
* Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on individual children’s learning needs;
* Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
* Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
* Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
* Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
* Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary, liaising with the Leader of Learning Success (SENco).

It is important to us that all children in the EYFS are safe. We aim to educate children to work within agreed boundaries and the rules and limits of acceptable behaviour and to help them understand why they exist (see school Positive Behaviour policy). We provide children with choices to help them develop these important life skills. Children should be encouraged to become independent learners and to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

***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.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012)*

At Weald we understand that we are legally required to comply with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We understand that we are required to:

* Promote the welfare of children.
* Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
* Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs (see school’s Positive Behaviour policy).
* Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
* Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose
* Ensure that every child receives enjoyable, challenging learning and development experiences planned and facilitated spontaneously to meet his/her needs.
* Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

**Positive Relationships**

At Weald we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent within the framework of secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

***Parents as Partners***

We recognise that parents/carers are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value highly the contribution that they make.

We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, as well as their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

* talking to parents/carers about their child before he/she starts in our school;
* giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher prior to starting at our school;
* offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child’s progress and to share their children’s Learning Journey record books
* an ‘open door’ policy which encourages parents/carers to talk to their child’s teachers about any concerns they may have;
* arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers. These may include fund raising days, themed activity days, opportunities to share cultural festivals and traditions, concerts, plays and special assemblies to which family members are invited;
* providing space in the child’s Learning Journey record book for parents/carers to leave comments relating to the children’s achievements;
* organising regular meetings during the course of each year for staff and parents/carers to discuss the child’s progress and development;
* providing written reports once a year on children’s progress;
* regular newsletters
* questionnaires as part of school self-evaluation

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

**Enabling Environments**

At Weald we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

***Observation, Assessment and Planning***

Planning within the EYFS follows the school’s schemes of work which inform weekly plans based around the individual children’s needs and interests. These take the form of continuous provision plans and planning for key learning activities and next steps. These plans are used and implemented by all staff.

We make regular 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 teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children’s individual School Learning Journals and additional evidence books (e.g. Home Learning Journals) contain information provided by parents/carers and other settings or outside agencies as appropriate.

We use our Assessment Manager system to track our children’s progress in September, December, March and June of each academic year, and this includes the EYFS Profile, which is used to track the progress of children in the Reception year.

EYFS Profile data must be collected or sent within 15 days whenever a pupil transfers between settings.

***The Learning Environment***

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet and rest. The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. All children have access to a large outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children’s development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on a different scale from indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors (most notably the log circle in the corner of the school field) that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

**Learning and Development**

At Weald we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

***Teaching and Learning Styles***

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

* the partnership between staff and parents/carers, 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 informs their teaching;
* the range of approaches and teaching strategies used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
* the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the 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 talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
* the introduction of Philosophy for Children strategies to develop and promote thinking skills;
* 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 which are shared with parents;

***Playing and Exploring***

*“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012)*

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

***Active Learning***

*“Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012)*

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, which provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

***Creating and Thinking Critically***

*“Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012)*

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the Arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the setting to extend their learning.

***Areas of Learning***

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development. Three are called the **prime areas**:

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

There are four other **specific areas** through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are:

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

**David Pyle**

**Headteacher**

**Last reviewed: September 2016**

**To be reviewed: September 2019**