

## GLC Early Years Policy

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Directors in :	Autumn 2022
This Policy will be reviewed by the GLC Board in :	Summer 2024

### GLC Mission Statement

The GLC's mission is to develop active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community.

This will be achieved through:

- High quality teaching that deliberately develops competencies of curiosity, creativity, communication and critical-thinking;
- An inspiring and meaningful curriculum;
- The development of productive relationships by instilling the values of compassion, resilience, responsibility and aspiration to prepare our young people for learning and life;
- A commitment to the wellbeing of our staff;
- A culture of professional generosity, collaboration, challenge and support throughout the GLC;
- The development of effective external partnerships for the benefit and wellbeing of our community.

### Equalities Statement

The GLC's commitment to equality is enshrined in our mission statement to develop 'active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community'.

We are a vibrant, innovative and successful organisation: we work hard to be the place of choice to work and to learn. Across the 5 academies of the GLC, we pledge that everyone enjoys an equality of opportunity. We work tirelessly to ensure that individual characteristics including age, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, disability, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation are not discriminated against in any way. We create inclusive environments characterised by mutual respect where difference is celebrated.

## EARLY YEARS POLICY

### CONTENTS

Item	Page No.
1. Introduction/Aims	3
2. Legislation	3
3. Admissions/Structure	3
4. Curriculum	4
4.1 Planning	5
5. Assessment	8
6. Parents and home learning	9
7. Welfare and safeguarding	9
8. Policies and procedures	11

## **1. Introduction/ Aims**

This policy will provide a clear indication of the GLC's expectations and will act as a key vehicle to achieve outstanding outcomes for every child.

This policy aims to ensure that in every academy within the GLC:

- A consistently rigorous approach to teaching for learning so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind;
- Children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life;
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers;
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

## **2. Legislation**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#). This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## **3. Admissions/ Structure**

Entering a new situation can be a daunting experience for a young child and/or parent. Within the GLC we believe in the importance of a smooth transition between settings (home/pre-school/nursery).

### **Nursery**

Pupils can start in Nursery once they are 3 and are entitled to 15 hours free childcare. We also have 30 hour provision at LPA/GPFS. In the GLC, pupils can attend morning or afternoon sessions.

Open days will be held to allow parents to look around the setting and talk to staff about how to apply for a place. These sessions will happen in November, February and June. Parents/carers can also make an appointment at other times.

If parents are successful at gaining a place they will receive a phone call with details of the induction arrangements. This may be a home or school visit before the child starts to allow staff to gather information about the child and also to start developing the key person relationship. Staff will collect information about the whole child (development and academic achievement), routines, interests, medical information, family unit and any additional needs that will ensure the smooth transition for the child into the setting.

Parents will also receive an information booklet about the Nursery routines and what their child

will be learning. There will also be information about the members of staff that they will see in the setting.

Pupils will have a staggered entry to allow staff to support each individual child as required, and information will be given in the home visit. This will be specific to each child to ensure each child's individual needs are met.

### **Reception**

Reception pupils start in the September of the academic year that they turn 5. Open days will be held in November and January to allow parents to look around the setting and talk to staff about how to apply for a place. Applications have to be sent to Thurrock and places are allocated according to their criteria

(<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/primary-school-admissions/applying-for-primary-school-place>.)

Once places have been allocated, a welcome letter will be sent to the family, which will include dates for transition and parent information sessions during the summer term. Children will be visited at home and/or their pre-school or Nursery. All visits are to allow staff to gather information about the child and also to start developing the key person relationship. At the visits it is important for staff to collect information about the whole child (development and academic achievement), routines, interests, medical information, family unit and any additional needs that will ensure the smooth transition for the child into the setting.

Parents will be invited to an information session about school expectations, routines and start dates in September. Parents will receive an information booklet [online] about Reception containing information about the academy, members of staff that they will see in the setting and what they will be learning.

Pupils will have a short staggered entry during September but timescales can be variable to meet the needs of the child.

## **4. Curriculum**

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Positive relationships**

At the GLC, we know that building positive relationships with young children is an essential task and a foundational component of good teaching. We recognise that all children grow and thrive in the context of close and dependable relationships that provide nurturance, security, and responsive interactions. We aim to have a strong partnership between children, practitioners and parents and carers.

### **Enabling environments**

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

### **Learning and development**

All our learning environments are organised to provide all children, including those with SEND needs, with a rich, varied and safe place to play, explore and learn. We believe that the way the physical environment is designed and configured influences how children feel, act and behave. Our environment allows growth and development through carefully planned activities and resources which children can independently access in defined play areas. We view the environment as the third teacher to facilitate their own learning.

### **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas of learning:

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

There are four specific areas of learning:

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

### **4.1 Planning**

All areas are delivered through a well-planned approach, with a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) which are the goals or targets for children to achieve by the end of Reception. We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs

and interests are taken into account. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. The topics that we incorporate into our planning are:

#### Nursery

Autumn 1 - Sing a Song  
Autumn 2 - We Are Family  
Spring 1 - From A to B (Transport)  
Spring 2 - Food Glorious Food  
Summer 1 - Home Sweet Home  
Summer 2 - Gateway in Bloom

#### Reception

Autumn 1- All About Me  
Autumn 2- People Who Help Us  
Spring 1- An Eye on London/ Dinosaurs  
Spring 2- A is for Africa  
Summer 1- Traditional Tales  
Summer 2- Going Green

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where we believe a child may have a special educational need or disability that has not previously been acknowledged, we will work closely with the parents/carers and any relevant professionals to establish the child's needs and to secure any action that may be required. Reasonable adjustments will be made, on an individual basis, to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for children with disabilities so that they can make full use of our facilities.

#### Phonics

We use a whole school programme to teach phonics which is called Read, Write Inc. It is a programme which helps children learn to read whilst also developing a wide range of vocabulary and encouraging a love of stories. In Reception the sessions last for 30-45 minutes depending on the stage of the programme. In Nursery, Read, Write, Inc. is taught for 20-30 minutes daily. Formal assessments are carried out half termly, however, children are able to move between groups before the end of a half term, if needed. Pinny time and Fred Talk happen throughout Foundation Stage every day.

#### Core Text

A 15 minute core text session is also taught daily. Different texts are explored each half term (see the English policy). The texts link to writing opportunities in the wider curriculum, as well as in focussed, adult led activities.

## **Maths**

Number Basics takes place daily for 10 minutes. Opportunities to practise the skills that are taught are embedded within the enhanced provision (see the Maths policy).

A 15 minute maths session also takes place each day to secure all aspects of mathematics, including number, pattern and shape, space and measures. Opportunities are provided throughout the environment to ensure that the skills being taught are available for children to explore independently.

## **Teaching and Learning**

The Early Years classroom is organised to allow children to investigate and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, explore and investigate, be creative and imaginative or be quiet and reflective. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class also has a stimulating outdoor area which children have access to throughout their day. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children space to explore, the ability to use their senses and to be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 17 areas of learning and believe that the different weather types only add to the experiences that children can be a part of. Appropriate clothing is vital and all parents are reminded of the learning benefits that exploring outdoors brings in all weather conditions.

We ensure all practitioners have appropriate qualifications, training, skills, knowledge, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. All staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training includes information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues. Arrangements are in place for the professional supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. It fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Practitioners have weekly training and support as part of the wider CPD programme. They also attend relevant training specific to the EYFS.

## **Play**

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage and all areas of the curriculum are delivered through a well-planned approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and help them make sense of their world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. Children learn to adapt, negotiate,

communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language. 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, ready for year 1.

We believe that access to an Early Years play based curriculum is essential for all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. For some children with SEND, in reception and beyond, increasingly more personalised approaches are used to ensure that they can access their curriculum alongside more targeted provision with enhanced support. This will be discussed and agreed with

### **Attendance**

At the GLC we believe that children who attend regularly, arrive and are collected on time are more secure and better able to engage with the learning environment. We view good attendance and punctuality as vitally important for the learning and well-being of children. Good habits of attendance and punctuality are key skills for adult life. We support that regular attendance will enable children to make the best start to their education. Poor attendance and punctuality, even at the earliest age, can affect achievement in later life. Establishing good habits from the start is very important.

## **5. Assessment**

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

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) and the Speech and Language Link programme. Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) screener.

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 expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority. In Nursery, each child has an online learning journal and

children in Reception have a WOW book, maths and a literacy book. Each child also has a Learning Journal, electronic records and a maths and literacy book.

All teachers participate in regular moderation activities, in school, across the GLC and as part of Local Authority events.

Within the final term of both Nursery and Reception, we provide a written report to parents, reporting their child's progress against the prime areas and the specific areas of learning and characteristics of effective learning. We provide an opportunity for the parents to discuss this with the EYFS teacher during an open session at the end of the year or alternatively the parents can arrange a meeting.

## **6. Parents and Home Learning**

We strive to create and maintain an effective partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate fully in their child's education. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer termly parent and child sessions to give them the opportunity to share their child's learning environment, have time to talk informally with the practitioners and to meet other parents. We also offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can best support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and discuss their child's learning with the teachers. Formal parent meetings are offered, twice per year, where parents have the opportunity to speak with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's work. At the GLC we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential.

### **Induction/Preparation for Starting at the GLC**

In order to ensure every child makes the best possible start into their school journey, the following activities can be completed at home to get them ready for school:

- Where possible children to be toilet trained;
- Communicate their needs;
- Listen to and follow simple instructions;
- Being able to take off/put on coats and shoes independently;
- Feed themselves using cutlery;
- Recognise their own name;
- Build up finger muscles by doing fine motor activities such as: playdoh, drawing, painting and threading;
- Practise counting to 10;
- Identify basic shapes (square, circle, triangle, rectangle) and colours
- Begin to recognise and say their Set 1 sounds using the RWI programme. Parent pages can be accessed here: <https://www.ruthmiskin.com/parents/>

## **Home Study**

Weekly home study is set which incorporates the whole curriculum but also has a basic skills focus. These pieces of homework build on what has been covered in class so they can further practise and secure this content. There is also holiday homework set so children can continue to practise basic skills and also complete a fun collaborative project which introduces the new topic. Further details can be found within the GLC Home Study policy.

### **7. Welfare and Safeguarding**

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory guidance (2021).

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school ipads to take photographs and videos to use as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's electronic Learning Journeys (Tapestry Target Tracker, Seesaw and EY log), in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork completed at the home visit / parent information sessions.

At the GLC we comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health by:
  - preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
  - ensuring that meals,snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced and nutritious. Information is obtained about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible to children at all times. We record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs.
- We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to our children and parents about:
  - The effects of eating too many sweet things
  - The importance of brushing your teeth,
  - The importance of drinking water.

We have introduced supervised tooth brushing for our 30 hour children and we follow [statutory guidance](#) for safety around supervised tooth brushing.

- Manage 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.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development 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.

Further details are contained in the policies contained in the table at the end of this policy.

### **Inclusion**

Across the GLC we support all children to achieve their full potential. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly and all children and their families are valued.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of the children when planning. In planning we ensure that we meet the needs of all the learners using practitioner's knowledge and both formative and summative assessment procedures.

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 and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and interests.
- 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.

If staff or parents identify a concern regarding a child's progress the school would refer the child to the SENCO or Inclusion team. We use a range of strategies to support children, these may include internal support via Language & Speech Link. All children are screened using language link, EAL team, nurture provision, small group or individual interventions. In addition, referrals can be made to external agencies such as speech therapist, Educational Psychologist, school nurse, health or social services.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See safeguarding and child protection policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See first aid policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy and fire evacuation procedures
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See safeguarding and child protection policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See safeguarding and child protection policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy
Equality Policy	Equality of opportunity policy
Health and Safety [incl release of children]	Health and Safety policy