

	Merridale Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy 2025-2027
---	---

Agreed by Governors 11.6.26

Policy Statement

This policy sets out how our nursery and Reception class deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory requirements in line with the framework effective from 1 September 2025. We are committed to providing the best possible start in life for all children, ensuring they are safe, healthy, engaged, and ready for future learning.

Aims and Principles

- To provide a safe, stimulating, and enabling environment where children can learn and develop.
- To support each child as a unique individual with their own needs, interests, and abilities ensuring that every child is included and supported.
- To ensure safeguarding and welfare are at the heart of our practice.
- To foster strong partnerships with parents and carers.
- To deliver a broad and balanced curriculum covering all seven areas of learning which gives children the skills and knowledge for good progress through school and life.

Statutory Framework

This policy is based on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), published by the Department for Education, which applies to all early years providers in England. It incorporates the updated statutory requirements from September 2025.

Structure of the EYFS at Merridale

At Merridale Primary School we have one Nursery class and one Reception class.

The Reception class teachers are Mrs Hughes (EYFS Lead) who teaches Monday to Wednesday and Mrs Craggs who teaches Wednesday to Friday. The teaching assistant is Mrs Khela.

The Nursery class teacher is Mr Newcombe and the teaching assistant is Miss Wakeman.

Children can start nursery from the term after they are 3 years old. We accept universal and extended nursery vouchers.

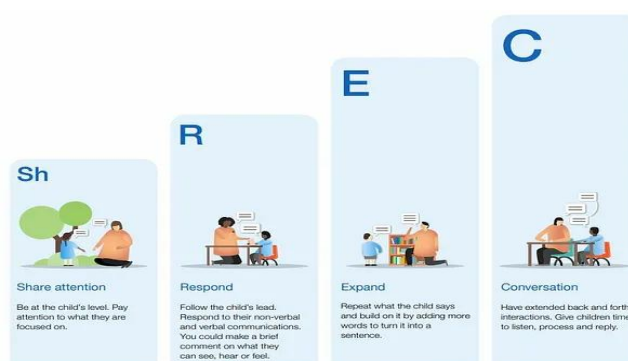
There are various sessions that children can attend:

- 8.30am – 11.30pm (AM session at 3 hours per day)
- 12.15pm – 3.15pm (PM session at 3 hours per day)
- 8.30am – 2.30pm (Full 30 hours day at 6 hours per day – 30 hours funded)
- 8.30am – 3.15pm (Full 30 hours per week 6 hours per day plus extra 45 minutes to finish at the end of the school day – the additional 45 minutes requires a payment).

Provision and Planning for Play

We prioritise play as, for young children, play is a tool for learning. Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Children practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules thereby developing emotional resilience and self-regulation. Through play children can think creatively, and problem solve alongside others. Children will have access to indoor and outdoor provision throughout the day. We call this time “Play to Learn”. During “Play to Learn” adults spend time with the children developing their skills. During this time the quality interactions between children and adults is vital. We use the ShREC approach to support interactions.

Provision is age-appropriate the development of skills. Staff plan experiences for children to develop



organised to ensure learning, through knowledge and activities and children that enable and learn

effectively across all areas of learning, as well as offering them opportunities to develop their cultural capital. Practitioners working with the youngest children focus primarily on the three prime areas – Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. The individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care is considered, and teachers use this information to plan a supportive, challenging and enjoyable experience. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their

practice. We develop a strong continuous provision which is available to children all the time and continues the children's learning through play. We also plan enhanced provision and additional adult directed activities to support learning. These enhancements or directed activities are linked to skills and knowledge and topics to engage and motivate children. As children progress through the early years foundation stage, small group work, adult-directed and whole class work will be planned and delivered, as appropriate for the age and stage of the pupils.

Learning and Development

Learning is planned through play and exploration, direct teaching, adult-led activities, continuous and enhanced provision linked to topics, and guided by children's interests. We use Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals to guide our long-term planning together with half termly topics.

We follow the EYFS learning and development requirements which includes 7 areas of learning and development that are split into Prime and Specific areas. These are equally important and inter-connected. However, the 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important as they underpin all future learning, foster the core skills needed to engage with the world and build positive relationships.

Prime Areas of Learning:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Specific Areas of Learning:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum are the three Characteristics of Effective Learning. These characteristics describe how children learn rather than what they learn and many or all of these elements are in action at the same time as children interact, play and explore.

- **Playing and exploring** – Engagement - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

- **Active learning** – Motivation- children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically** – Thinking - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

These abilities will support children to learn well and to make good progress in every Area of Learning and Development.

Assessment

Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and the way they learn. These observations are used to shape future planning. We record new learning and special moments in individual 'Wow Books' alongside class floor books to document teaching and learning. Staff also value observations shared by parents and/or carers on our online learning platform Seesaw and these proud moments are shared weekly in our class celebration assemblies.

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Formative observations inform daily teaching, and periodic summative assessments are carried out at three points in the year to support child development and progress. Children are assessed according to their starting points in the 7 areas of learning when they join our Nursery and Reception classes. Additionally, in Reception, staff will conduct the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks that a child starts school.

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

- meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (assessed as 'expected')
- not yet reaching this level (assessed as 'emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and the teacher's knowledge of the child. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority and is also shared with the Year 1 teacher to inform them of each child's development, learning needs and progress to support their transition into Key Stage 1.

The profile is moderated internally (using the Development Matters guidance and the Statutory Framework) and in partnership with other Wulfuna Partnership (TWP) schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements.

Supporting Feelings and Behaviour

In the EYFS at Merridale we have 4 rules which we teach in the moment when opportunities arise through restorative practice. This is a relationship-based approach which resolves conflict by focusing on empathy, responsibility, and repairing harm.

Our rules are:

- We care
- We share
- We are safe
- We listen to our teachers and friends

We teach the children to identify their emotions and through co-regulation we help them to learn strategies to support themselves through the Zones of Regulation. Emotions are grouped into 4 colours and children are taught how they might feel and what they can do to help themselves to regulate and feel better. Children may access a sensory circuit when they are feeling dysregulated through a three-part movement program to include alerting, organizing, calming activities which help them to be ready to learn.

Our Merridale Values

At Merridale the children learn our six values which we believe are important for their holistic development as they grow from children to adults. The children begin to develop an understanding of these in EYFS and we teach them through our curriculum choosing age appropriate books to support their understanding of the following values:

- Kindness
- Respect
- Resilience
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Aspiration

Parent and Carer Partnership

Parents and carers are central to children's learning and development, and we recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We strive to build strong partnerships through open communication starting at the transition process when children first join our school.

Parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through two parent consultations and a written report in the final term. We strive to build good relationships with families to promote a regular two-way flow of information. We welcome

parents to discuss any concerns with the teacher and/or teaching assistants and are regularly available at the end of the school day to listen or to answer any questions.

We communicate with parents and carers regularly on Seesaw by sharing our weekly newsletters. These include information about our learning, activities and experiences the children have had at school and ideas for how parents and/or carers can support their children at home to prepare for the following weeks learning. We also include a proud cloud for parents and carers to complete with any proud moments at home or fun family activities. Videos or photos can be uploaded to Seesaw and are shared each week in our celebration assembly to promote positivity and develop links between home and school. We value the knowledge and understanding parents and carers have of their child and we seek to work together to celebrate every child and to meet their needs.

We provide regular opportunities for parents and carers to come into school to spend time with their children or to attend workshops. We hold celebration craft events at special times as well as story time sessions.

Transitions

We support smooth transitions into Nursery, Reception, and into Year 1. This includes sharing information, visits, and activities to prepare children for new stages. It is also a time for the teacher to discover the unique personality and interests of each child.

In the Summer term, before children start in Nursery or Reception, we will contact parents/carers to confirm their place by phone and letter. We will then arrange a home visit for us to meet families so that parents can share any information about their children and for children to meet their teachers which helps them to feel confident to start school. Parents/carers will receive a welcome pack which gives information about Merridale and a Welcome to Nursery or Reception booklet to fill in with their child.

In the Summer Term, parents are invited to a stay and play session so that they can explore the classroom environment with their child followed by a settling in session where children will take part in a shorter session independently. We will then assess whether children are ready for full sessions or would initially benefit from a modified timetable to support their needs.

When children move Nursery to Reception or from Reception to Year 1, we ensure that they are prepared for this change by arranging transition sessions in the Summer Term. There are meet the teacher sessions where their new teacher will go into class to read stories and to play. The children also invited to visit their new classroom and their teacher and teaching assistant in order for them to feel confident in their new classes.

Inclusion and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all children. In consultation and working collaboratively with parents/carers the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) will lead on provision for children who may experience barriers to their learning in line with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (2014) and the school's SEND Policy. These barriers may include sensory or physical needs, learning difficulties, Speech and Language needs or emotional or social development. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from external agencies, where appropriate.

Children with additional needs or disabilities are supported at Merridale through early identification, targeted support, and collaboration with parents and external professionals such as Special Needs Early Years (SNEYS), Outreach Services and Speech and Language Therapy (SALT). We provide specific targets detailed in Individual Provision Plans (IPP) and follow guidance from external agencies. Where appropriate, we may offer a reduced or modified timetable, adapted lessons and additional support from staff as well as a wide range of strategies to support children with additional needs.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

In line with the statutory framework children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. We create a positive and welcoming environment where children enjoy learning.

For children in EYFS, parents and carers are asked to provide a password which is to be given when children are collected by any new adult from school. Passwords are kept securely in school.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- A healthy and balanced diet and exercise
- Sensible amount of screen time
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- Having a good sleep routine
- Being a safe pedestrian

Safeguarding and welfare are central to our provision. We follow the statutory framework requirements, including:

- Safe recruitment practices, including reference checks and suitability requirements.
- Clear whistleblowing procedures for staff, students, and volunteers.

- Attendance monitoring, including prompt follow-up of unexplained or prolonged absences.
- Maintaining up-to-date emergency contact details for all children.
- Safe toileting and intimate care procedures, ensuring privacy balanced with safeguarding.
- Safe sleeping procedures.
- Paediatric First Aid (PFA) - there is always at least one member of staff who is paediatrically first aid trained present on site and available when the children are present and on outings.
- Appropriate staffing ratios and qualification requirements.
- Safer eating practices, including allergy management, food preparation and supervision at mealtimes.

See Appendix A for linked policies.

Food, drink and safer eating

We ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Our meals and snacks are healthy, balanced and nutritious and are prepared in a way that avoids choking. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to the children. We always ensure that children are adequately supervised when eating. This includes ensuring that, whilst eating, children are always in sight and hearing of a member of staff. There is also always a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate during eating times. All staff involved with preparing and handling food receive training in food hygiene. This is all in line with the Safer Eating requirements as part of the EYFS Statutory framework for group and school-based providers from September 2025. This is referenced in Appendix B.

Health and Safety

We maintain a safe, secure, and healthy environment through regular risk assessments, safe equipment and premises, clear infection control measures, and procedures for accidents and emergencies.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required to reflect statutory changes and best practice. Monitoring is carried out through leadership oversight, staff training, and regular evaluation of provision.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Laura Towle (Headteacher), Ellen Hughes (EYFS Lead) and The Local Governing Body annually. At every review, the policy will also be shared with the governing board.

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

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health and Safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Fire, Emergency and Lockdown Policy And Emergency and Disaster Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Child Protection and Safeguarding policy And Attendance and Punctuality Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints policy

Appendix B: Safer Eating requirements for group and school-based providers (Effective from 1st September 2025)

3.63 Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A.

3.64 Before a child is admitted to the setting the provider must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. This information must be shared by the provider with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food. At each mealtime and snack time providers must be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.

3.65 Providers must have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. This information must be kept up to date by the provider and shared with all staff. Providers should refer to the British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) allergy action plan. Providers must ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and

intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods which is sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning. Providers should refer to the NHS advice on food allergies: Food allergy - NHS (www.nhs.uk) and treatment of anaphylaxis: Anaphylaxis - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

3.66 Providers must have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including to understand the textures the child is familiar with. Assumptions must not be made based on age. Providers must prepare food in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs, working with parents and/or carers to help children move on to the next stage at a pace right for the child. The NHS has some advice providers should refer to: Weaning - Start for Life - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

3.67 Providers must prepare food in a way to prevent choking. This guidance on food safety for young children: Food safety - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK (education.gov.uk) includes advice on food and drink to avoid, how to reduce the risk of choking and links to other useful resources for early years providers.

3.68 Babies and young children should be seated safely in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair while eating. Where possible there should be a designated eating space where distractions are minimised.

3.69 Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Choking can be completely silent, therefore, it is important for providers to be alert to when a child may be starting to choke. Where possible, providers should sit facing children whilst they eat, so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

3.70 When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, providers should record details of where and how the child choked and ensure parents and/or carers are made aware. The records should be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action should be taken to address any identified concerns.