



## Sacred Heart School

### EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

*'At Sacred Heart School we all aspire to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which every child is encouraged to achieve their full potential within an inclusive community....' (School Mission Statement)*

#### 1. Introduction

This Policy informs practice in the Nursery and Reception classes within the School.

The Early Years are a critical stage of development for every child. During this time children develop rapidly physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally. The Early Years Foundation Stage aims to build on what children already know and develop key skills such as listening, speaking, concentration, persistence, learning to work together and to co-operate with others. It is also about developing early communication, literacy and numeracy skills and forming a secure foundation for learning, as preparation for the next stage in their education.

At Sacred Heart our Early Years Foundation Stage Department consists of a Nursery and Reception class, each led by qualified and experienced Teachers and supported by qualified and experienced Foundation Stage practitioners.

Safeguarding is a high priority for all our staff who will abide by the terms of the school's policy on the use of Mobile Phone and Photographic Devices (Appendix 1). Parents and visitors are requested to adhere to this protocol also.

#### 2. Admission

In Nursery admission takes place from the term in which the child is 3 years for a minimum of 3 sessions per week (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings). Parents are encouraged to build up sessions as the child approaches Reception age.

The school welcomes children into Reception from other settings at any stage during the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children joining at the start of Reception year are invited to visit for taster days and encouraged to attend a regular session(s) in the Summer Term prior to joining to ensure a smooth transition. If children start during the Reception year they also attend taster sessions.

#### 3. Aims for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The most important element of any school is the people, whether they are pupils, staff, parents or visitors. A welcoming atmosphere is offered to all, in the firm belief that happiness, satisfaction and contentment in any environment leads to improved performance. Importance of the role played by parents as educators of their children is recognised. Every endeavour is made to work closely with parents, informing and involving them in every aspect of their child's education both academic and emotional.

At Sacred Heart we believe that childhood is a time of play, and through play we discover the excitement of learning, the rewards of achievement, and acquire our life skills. The Foundation Stage

setting, with its bright, colourful, well-planned, busy environment, encourages children in the development of skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to become confident, useful, active members of a diverse, constantly-changing society. It is through this process that children will work towards, achieve and in many cases exceed the Early Learning Goals.

Children need to be guided to become independent learners, to think wisely, be confident, balanced and compassionate while developing their own particular talents and abilities to the full. Such ideas are best achieved in an environment that is stable, secure and safe but at the same time, one which is exciting, stimulating, rewarding and fun. At Sacred Heart there is firm commitment to these principles and the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering and promoting investigation, exploration and experimentation.

#### **4. Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

We acknowledge and firmly believe that play and exploration is the most important role in the network of learning and this should be cross curricular.

Opportunities within our setting are numerous:

- Well-equipped classrooms which are appropriate to age groups.
- Indoor and outdoor play areas
- A varied curriculum offering a good balance between child initiated and teacher led activities

#### **5. Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

Teaching and learning:

- We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, caring and professional Teachers and Practitioners in the EYFS who plan and work together to provide a high quality curriculum.
- Our 'Open Door' policy gives parents the opportunity to talk to teachers at the regular early morning drop off and pick up, or to make an appointment if further consultation is necessary. This allows for continuous sharing of information about every child, and develops good partnerships between school and home.
- Class sizes are small: this enables us to meet the needs of each child academically and emotionally, and helps us to develop each child's confidence and independence.
- We provide a variety of academic, social, artistic, musical and sporting experiences, including visitors to the school and trips off site.
- Whatever the objective, teachers aim to make each session a rewarding and inspiring experience for the children through play, teaching and practical activities. Children are encouraged to 'have a go', so allowing children to push their own learning forward and also to experience for themselves their own limitations and strengths, taking risks in a secure environment.

#### **6. Parental Involvement and Community Links**

We provide a happy and supportive environment, forging strong partnerships between home and school.

- Parents/carers have contact with teachers on a daily basis.
- Parent consultations are held termly.
- Pete the penguin is displayed in both rooms to highlight aspects of the children's learning each week.
- Parents' expertise is used to enhance curriculum work when applicable. (e.g. People who help us; Around the World topics)

- Home/school books are used to communicate with parents.
- Term dates are issued termly to inform parents of all forthcoming events.
- Weekly newsletter captures the previous weeks activities and highlights future events.
- The PTA of Sacred Heart School works to enhance the life of the school and fund educational resources and experiences for the children. They arrange many events throughout the year for parents and children alike and keep in touch via their termly newsletter.
- Sacred Heart supports charities, both locally and abroad, through different events throughout the year, involving all children.

## **7 Personal, Social and Emotional Education and Dispositions for Learning**

Each child has the opportunity to visit the school prior to starting.

The children are encouraged to explore and experience a wide range of resources and facilities, enabling them to enjoy varied, stimulating and absorbing activities. Playing and sharing with others encourages communication and fosters good relationships.

Children experience regular routines and learn that there have to be agreed rules of behaviour and conduct to ensure school is a happy place for everyone.

## **8. Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Special Needs**

We promote inclusive practice.

We aim to make 'reasonable adjustments' for any child with learning difficulties and disabilities:

- Ramps and disabled toilet are available within the school to cater for children with physical disabilities
- Our curriculum respects a child's ethnic faith and cultural heritage, and the special needs of each child. Opportunities are planned within circle time and assemblies, festivals, stories, indoor and outdoor activities. We are a Catholic School but in order to teach tolerance, understand and respect we learn about, value and celebrate differences.
- We have a SENCO on our staff, who assesses and devises individual setting based support plans as necessary and advises teachers. We communicate with parents if we have any concerns and, with consent, will seek the support of outside agencies where appropriate.
- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that we identify and help those children with special educational needs, including gifted children.

## **9. Contexts for Learning**

Planning a curriculum should be a starting point which supports children's learning but provides the freedom to experiment, investigate and pursue personal interests.

The curriculum should:

- Be appropriate to children's stages of development
- Cover all aspects of the 7 areas of learning
- Help all children progress towards the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage and beyond.
- Build on what children are interested in and want to practise, explore and find out more about.
- Support children with SEN
- Promote children's safety and well-being.

- Encourage other people, e.g. parents, visitors etc., to know about and contribute to the work of the setting.

## **10. Teaching and Learning Styles**

Children are individuals and we plan to build on the children's prior experiences and interests, their skills and knowledge

We recognise that children have different learning styles:

- Teachers need to observe and recognise that these opportunities must be created to match children's preferred styles of learning
- Diverse methods of teaching are therefore needed
- Activities may need to be adapted to extend/suit individual children.
- We observe, record and assess children's development in all areas.
- Some children will need skills/information presented in several ways before learning is secure.
- We aim for teaching which engages and involves children to interact and contribute positively.

## **11. Independence**

We give a high priority to fostering a sense of self-worth, well-being, confidence and positive learning dispositions in all children.

We encourage self-esteem, making success possible by:

- Child friendly indoor and outdoor areas.
- Routines.
- Labelled pegs.
- Clearly labelled classrooms.
- Encouraging good table manners, correct use of knife and fork to make eating a successful and sociable experience.
- We value and praise independence.
- We encourage parents to help children achieve independence at home with dressing, sharing targets/next steps and celebrating achievements (WOWs).

## **12. Continuity and Progression**

Through team discussion and planning we continually monitor continuity and progression. We track children's achievements and progress through planned and spontaneous observation, focused assessment, listening and talking to the children, work produced and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. A combination of summative and formative assessment informs planning and teaching to take each child forward in their learning.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage Unit has been designed to give the children an environment which is secure, happy and stimulating.

Children are taught through topics which incorporate their interests.

The curriculum is delivered through a combination of child/teacher led activities.

The transition between Nursery and Reception is calm and happy, well managed and organised.

### **13. Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

The role of observation is to inform planning and so facilitate learning. At Sacred Heart in the Foundation Stage we assess, record and report in the following ways:

- Daily communication between teachers, EYFS practitioners and parents
- Termly parent consultations where next steps and Learning Journeys are shared with parents.
- A 2 year check if children have not had an assessment prior to entering the Nursery.
- Summative assessment/report as children move from Nursery to Reception.
- Reporting to parents takes place twice yearly in Reception.

### **14. Conclusion**

We are a reflective staff and evaluate our practice. This policy should be read in conjunction with Admissions, Equal Opportunities, Behaviour and Discipline and Anti Bullying policies. Further details on the organisation and daily practice of the setting can be found in the EYFS booklets and new parents' information pack.

Updated June 2017



## **Sacred Heart School Mobile Phone and Photographic Devices Policy**

*'At Sacred Heart School we all aspire to provide a happy, safe and secure environment....'*

The following rules apply for the use of personal mobile phones:

- Children are **not** permitted to bring mobile phones to school
- The school accepts that employees will bring their mobile phones to work
- Employees are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during work time (excluding break times)
- Staff mobile phones must be switched off during teaching times, including during staff meetings. Devices must be kept in a locker or bag and not be left on display. In the Foundation Stage personal mobile phones are kept out of sight and use, in a store cupboard
- In the event that an employee has a particular reason, for a specified period of time, they may request via the Head that they leave their phone on during working hours. In such instances the phone should be left in the school office to receive calls, alternatively the caller should be asked to use the office number
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take photographs or videos of children; or to use personal cameras or recording equipment; or to store images of children on their personal computers
- Staff mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. Classroom, playground) and may only be used during rest periods.
- Visitors to the school are advised that mobile phones and other photographic devices must be switched off whilst on the school premises. Visitors to the school are not authorised to take photographs of our children. Visitors who wish to photograph their own children (eg at sporting fixtures) must similarly have agreed at their own schools that the publication of such material on social media sites is not authorised.
- Parents who take photos of their child at school events (assemblies, sporting events) must agree that such materials will not be displayed on social media, such as Facebook. This undertaking is included in the Photo Permission Form which parents are requested to sign when they join the school.

*Reviewed June 2017*