



**ATHENA**  
LEARNING TRUST

# Athena Learning Trust

## Primary Cluster

### Early Years Policy

#### **Review**

Reviewed on: November 2023

Reviewed by: Local Governing Body

Review Period: 3 years





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## **Statement of intent**

At Athena Learning Trust, we greatly value the importance of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. This encompasses four themes; A Unique Child, Learning and Development, Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.



## **1. Legal framework**

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Childcare Act 2006
  - The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
  - The GDPR
  - Data Protection Act 2018
- 1.2. This policy has due regard to statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:
  - DfE (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
  - DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education'
  - DfE (2018) 'Working together to safeguard children'
  - DfE (2015) 'The prevent duty'
- 1.3. This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following school policies:
  - Assessment Policy
  - Behaviour Policy
  - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
  - Teaching and Learning Policy
  - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
  - Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
  - Drug and Alcohol Policy
  - Whole-School Food Policy
  - Equal Opportunities Policy
  - Administering Medication Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Recruitment Policy
  - Data Protection Policy
  - Photography Policy
  - Complaints Procedures Policy

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The Athena Learning Trust governing body has the overall responsibility for ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Photography Policy.



### 3. Aims

3.1. Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

3.2. Four guiding principles shape our practice:

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between the school and parents.
- Children's **learning and development** occurs in different ways and at different rates.

3.3. To put these principles into practice, the school:

- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Implements a key person approach to develop close relationships with children.
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

### 4. Learning and development

4.1. The EYFS curriculum is based on the new EYFS Statutory framework (September 2021) and observations are completed of the children's needs, interests and stages of development. The EYFS curriculum is based on an observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development.

4.2. In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of



pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education. Parents are kept up to date with their children's observations and progress through the observation tool Tapestry.

## **5. Inclusion**

- 5.1. Activities are planned to reflect children's interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.
- 5.2. The EYFS lead will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress, especially in the prime areas of learning, with the child's parents. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have a special educational need or disability which requires additional support.
- 5.3. The school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if a child is found to not have a strong grasp on English, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to assess if there is cause for concern about a language delay.
- 5.4. Each area of learning and development will be implemented through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

## **6. The learning environment and outdoor spaces**

- 6.1. The classroom is organised in such a way that children can explore and learn in a safe environment.
- 6.2. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area, and daily outdoor activities are planned, unless circumstances, such as the weather, would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe.
- 6.3. There are toilet facilities available to the EYFS, and there are hygienic changing facilities located near the Reception class containing a supply of towels and spare clothes.

## **7. Assessment**

- 7.1. Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support. Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork.
- 7.2. Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.
- 7.3. Formative assessments are used to assess the learning and development of children in the EYFS. Staff members will observe children to understand their level of achievement,



interests and learning styles. This information will then be used to shape learning experiences for each child. Assessment should inform an ongoing dialogue between EYFS practitioners and Year 1 teachers about each child's learning and development.

- 7.4. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.
- 7.5. Assessment procedures are set out in full in the schools Assessment Policy. Statutory assessments include:
  - On entry to EYFS; The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception.
  - In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile is be completed for each child.

## **8. Safeguarding and welfare**

- 8.1. All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well.
- 8.2. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.
- 8.3. The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate.
- 8.4. The deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL.
- 8.5. The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required.
- 8.6. Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect

## **9. Mobile phones and devices**

- 9.1. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'mobile phone' refers to any electronic device that can be used to take images or record videos, including tablets.
- 9.2. Photography policies and procedures are addressed in full in our Photography Policy.

### **Use of mobile phones by staff members**

- 9.3. Staff members must not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present.
- 9.4. Staff may use mobile phones on school premises outside of working hours when no



children are present.

- 9.5. Staff may use mobile phones in the staffroom during breaks and non-contact time.
- 9.6. Mobile phones should be safely stored and in silent mode whilst children are present.
- 9.7. Staff may take mobile phones on trips, but they must only be used in emergencies and should not be used when children are present. Mobile phones must not be used to take images or videos at any time during trips.
- 9.8. Staff who do not adhere to this policy will face disciplinary action.
- 9.9. Staff may use their professional judgement in emergency situations.
- 9.10. Staff must report any concerns about another staff member's use of mobile phones to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

#### **Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors and contractors**

- 9.11. Posters are used around the school to indicate that it's a mobile free zone.
- 9.12. Parents, visitors and contractors are not permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission.
- 9.13. Parents may take group photographs at school events but only with the informed consent of the parents of the children involved.
- 9.14. The school strongly advises against the publication of any photographs or videos taken at the school or school events on social media
- 9.15. Staff must report all concerns about parents, visitors and contractors to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

#### **Use of the school's mobile phones and cameras**

- 9.16. Staff are provided with a school device to ensure that only school devices are used to take photographs and videos.
- 9.17. School devices must have passcode protection.
- 9.18. School devices must only be used for work related matters.

### **10. Health and safety**

- 10.1. A first-aid box is located in the Reception classroom.
- 10.2. Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered.
- 10.3. The school's Administering Medication Policy outlines the procedures for administering medicines.
- 10.4. The EYFS lead will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents.





- 10.5. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book.
- 10.6. The principal will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.
- 10.7. The school has a Fire Evacuation Plan in place.
- 10.8. Any food or drink provided to children is healthy, balanced and nutritious as outlined in the Whole-School Food Policy.
- 10.9. The principal will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident.
- 10.10. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded.
- 10.11. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- 10.12. Smoking is not permitted on the school premises.
- 10.13. The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

## **11. Staff taking medication or other substances**

- 11.1. The school implements a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and alcohol misuse, as outlined in the Drug and Alcohol Policy.
- 11.2. The use of alcohol or any other substance that may affect the ability to care for children by a member of staff will not be tolerated. If there is a reason to believe a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance, they will not be allowed to work directly with children and further action will be taken.
- 11.3. Any member of staff taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children will seek medical advice. Staff will only be allowed to work directly with the children if it is confirmed that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.
- 11.4. Any medication used by staff is securely stored in the school office.

## **12. Staffing**

- 12.1. A robust Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.
- 12.2. Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.
- 12.3. Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.



- 12.4. All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to: Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
  - Identify solutions to address issues.
  - Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.
- 12.5. The EYFS lead holds at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification alongside at least two years' experience working in an early years setting. At least half of the other EYFS staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.
- 12.6. Any cover provided in the absence of the EYFS lead will be by individuals deemed fully qualified to do so by the EYFS lead and principal.
- 12.7. There will be at least one member of staff on the school premises at all times who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate.
- 12.8. Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will also hold a PFA certificate.
- 12.9. All newly qualified staff with a level 2 or 3 qualification will be PFA trained.
- 12.10. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years.
- 12.11. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the school office.
- 12.12. The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.
- 12.13. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.
- 12.14. The school adopts the following staffing ratios:
- For children aged three and over:
    1. For children aged three and over in independent schools (including in nursery classes in free schools and academies), where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification, an instructor, or another suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, is working directly with the children:
    2. for classes where the majority of children will reach the age of five or older within the school year, there must be at least one member of staff for every 30 children - for all other classes there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
    3. at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification Some schools may choose to mix their reception classes with groups of younger children (nursery pupils, non pupils or younger children from a registered provider), in which case they must determine ratios within mixed groups, guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of individual children within the group. In exercising this discretion, the school must comply with the statutory requirements relating to the education of children of compulsory school age and infant class sizes. Schools' partner providers must meet the relevant ratio requirements for their provision.



12.15. Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios.

12.16. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.

12.17. Each child is assigned a key person whose role it is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs.

13.18. The EYFS lead will inform parents of whom their child's key person is and will explain the role of the key person when their child begins attending the school.

### **13. Information and records**

13.1. Information is stored in line with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

13.2. The following information is recorded for each child:

- The child's name and date of birth
- The name and address of every parent or carer who is known to the school, and which parent or carer the child normally lives with
- The emergency contact details of the child's parent or carer

13.3. The following information about the school is recorded:

- The school's name, address and telephone number
- The school's certificate of registration
- The name address and telephone number of anyone who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children
- A daily record of the names of the children being cared for in the school, their hours of attendance, and the names of each child's key person

13.4. The following information is made available to parents:

- The school's privacy notice for parents and pupils
- How the school delivers the EYFS and how parents can access more information
- The daily routine and the activities offered in the school's EYFS and how parents can assist their child's learning at home
- How the school's EYFS supports children with SEND
- Details of the food and drink provided to the children
- Information about the policies and procedures in place in the school's EYFS

13.5. Ofsted will be notified if there are any changes to the following:

- The address of the school
- The school's contact details
- The hours during which care is provided



- Any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the school or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with, children to look after children

#### **14. Parental involvement**

- 14.1. We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parents.
- 14.2. Parents are invited to termly parents' evenings; however, the school has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day.
- 14.3. Parents are asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.
- 14.4. Parents are asked to complete admission forms, a medical form and to write a brief synopsis about their child to help the school to understand their character and personality.

#### **15. Transition periods**

- 15.1. Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and allocation of classes, and to voice any concerns they may want to express.
- 15.2. The children are invited to a number of visits throughout the year to their Year 1 class.
- 15.3. In the Summer term, Reception and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

#### **16. Monitoring and Review**

- 16.1. This policy is reviewed annually by the Athena Learning Trust governing body and the principal.
- 16.2. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 16.3. All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.
- 16.4. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2022.
- 16.5. The Athena Learning Trust Primary Cluster governing body has the overall responsibility for ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. These issues are addressed in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.



- 16.6. The Athena Learning Trust governing body has the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 16.7. The Athena Learning Trust governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 16.8. The Athena Learning Trust governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 16.9. The EYFS/KS1 lead, in conjunction with the principal, has responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.
- 16.10. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- 16.11. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.
- 16.12. The Equal Opportunities Policy ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.
- 16.13. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible.
- 16.14. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.
- 16.15. All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:
  - Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
  - Identify solutions to address issues.
  - Receive coaching to improve their effectiveness.
- 16.16. The EYFS lead holds at least a full and relevant level 3 qualification alongside at least two years' experience working in an early years setting. At least half of the other EYFS staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.
- 16.17. Any cover provided in the absence of the EYFS lead will be by individuals deemed fully qualified to do so by the EYFS lead and principal.
- 16.18. There will be at least one member of staff on the school premises at all times who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate.
- 16.19. Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will also hold a PFA certificate.
- 16.20. All newly qualified staff with a level 2 or 3 qualification will be PFA trained.
- 16.21. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years.
- 16.22. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the school office.
- 16.23. The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation



stage’.

- 16.24. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.
- 16.25. The school adopts the following staffing ratios:
- For children aged three and over:
    - For children aged three and over in independent schools (including in nursery classes in free schools and academies), where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification, an instructor, or another suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, is working directly with the children:
    - for classes where the majority of children will reach the age of five or older within the school year, there must be at least one member of staff for every 30 children
    - for all other classes there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
    - at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification

Some schools may choose to mix their reception classes with groups of younger children (nursery pupils, non pupils or younger children from a registered provider), in which case they must determine ratios within mixed groups, guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of individual children within the group. In exercising this discretion, the school must comply with the statutory requirements relating to the education of children of compulsory school age and infant class sizes. Schools’ partner providers must meet the relevant ratio requirements for their provision.

- 16.26. Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios.
- 16.27. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.
- 16.28. Each child is assigned a key person whose role it is to help ensure that every child’s care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- 16.29. The EYFS lead will inform parents of who their child’s key person is and will explain the role of the key person when their child begins attending the school.