Wessex Multi Academy Trust
EYFS Policy & Procedures
Damers First School

Approved By:	**Head of School**
Date issued:	**September 2026**
Review Date:	**July 2027**

Statement of Intent

As stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, "*All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.*" DfE July 2026).

At Damers First School and Nursery, we greatly value the importance of the EYFS in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development and understand our responsibilities in ensuring that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant 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.

Through the implementation of this policy we will provide:

● 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.

● Quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.

● Partnership working between practitioners and parents.

● Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Our Aims and Objectives

At Damers, we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable every child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, morally, physically, creatively and intellectually and reach their full potential. At our school we aim:

● To provide a secure environment where all children have the right to feel safe and happy.

● To provide a stimulating and engaging environment where learning is enjoyable and purposeful.

● To provide a well-balanced curriculum for each child to develop socially, physically and intellectually.

● To observe the children's interests to implement our future planning.

● To encourage all children to become independent learners.

● To promote a child's 'well-being'; ensuring they always feel at ease, are spontaneous and free of emotional tensions.

● To provide equal opportunities for all children to develop to their full potential and to encourage children to be respectful and appreciative of others.

● To encourage the children to develop positive relationships with their peers and adults.

● To establish and maintain a partnership with parents to support the education of their children.

● To ensure smooth transitions from all feeder pre-schools to Reception and from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

● It builds on what our children already know and can do;

● It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;

● It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;

● It provides a rich and stimulating environment;

● It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

● Childcare Act 2006

● Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

● Equality Act 2010

● The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

● Data Protection Act 2018

● DfE (2026) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026)'

● DfE (2026) 'Early years foundation stage profile: 2026 handbook'

● DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'

● DfE (updated 2026) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

- DfE (2026) 'Guidance on screen use in early years settings'

Roles and Responsibilities

The EYFS lead will be responsible for:

● Ensuring all staff members read and implement this policy.

- Ensuring that safeguarding and welfare arrangements are fully compliant with the September 2026 EYFS framework, including safer sleep requirements, appropriate screen use, staff suitability checks and safeguarding notification procedures.

● Ensuring that all staff are up-to-date with current statutory and Ofsted expectations, including the early years team and the SLT.

● Supporting the policies, ethos and vision of the school and actively promoting high levels of achievement in the early years stage.

● Leading the early years team in the planning and delivery of a creative and stimulating curriculum based on the educational programmes of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.

● Ensuring the educational provision and practice is based on the EYFS characteristics of effective teaching and learning, supports a range of learning needs and develops children's independence.

● Taking responsibility for high-quality teaching provision throughout the early years stage.

● Ensuring the requirements for the EYFS, including the arrangement of assessment, are met in line with the relevant statutory requirements.

● Monitoring the progress of children and reporting evaluated data to the headteacher.

● Developing and maintaining effective relationships with parents, colleagues, the governing board and the local community.

● Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development and targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices and procedures.

● Supporting staff development by identifying and/or providing regular training and CPD opportunities.

● Providing regular 1:1 meetings with staff to support professional development.

● Assigning a key person to support the needs of each child and family.

The key person will be responsible for:

● Ensuring that the children they support receive learning tailored to their needs.

● Engaging with parents to support them in guiding their child's development at home.

● Helping families with more specialist support, where required.

● Helping children become familiar with the school and acting as a point of contact for children and their parents.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS). This document encompasses 'The Characteristics of Effective Learning' and 'The Early Years Outcomes'. As a result of including these areas it has produced a concise document which shows developments from birth to Children in Reception.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

• Be Healthy

• Stay Safe

• Enjoy and Achieve

• Make a Positive Contribution

• Achieve Economic Well-being

The EYFS is grouped into four themes:

•A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
•Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
•Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.

•Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

A Unique Child

At Damers, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates, whilst their 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.

Inclusion of all children is a priority at our school and value the diversity of individuals and believe that every child matters. All children at Damers are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage.

We do this 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.

● Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.

● Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.

● Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

● Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

● Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.

● Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met, and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Damers, we recognise that children need to learn to form strong, independent, and secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, and professional relationships with children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators, and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, as well as their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

• Holding parents and child 'school readiness' sessions to begin their transition into school

• Inviting parents to *stay and*... sessions each half term. These are an opportunity for parents to support their child at an activity in the classroom and have a specific focus such as phonics, number, letter formation...

• Offering phonics workshops to all parents as soon as their child starts school

• Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through morning and afternoon drop-in sessions.

• There is a formal parent consultation meeting each term in the reception year, at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and whether they are on track to meet their Early Learning Goals. Teachers give parents small practical targets to work on with children.

• Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;

• Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;

• Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child and parent.

• School and parents: Stay and Play sessions, Class sharing assemblies, Sports Day, Nativity performances etc.

Within the classroom there is one class teacher and one teaching assistant. All staff in the foundation stage aim and endeavour to develop good relationships with all children and parents/carers, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Enabling Environments

At Damers First School and Nursery, 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

Assessment plays an important part in helping our school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities and assess the need for support. Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development throughout the school year. 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. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

For more information, please refer to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage.

The Learning Environment

The classrooms and rooms in nursery, are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest.

The reception classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. In addition, the reception classrooms have their own enclosed outdoor area. The outdoor learning environment is seen as incredibly important at Damers, with its impact on health and wellbeing being a significant factor, especially for young children.

Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning. Reception class children also have access to other areas of the school grounds such as the field, bird hide, nature area, pond and chickens as well as participating in half a term's Forest School learning, which further develops their opportunities for learning outdoors.

Digital technology may be used where it enhances children's learning experiences. Staff will have regard to the statutory guidance on screen use in early years settings, ensuring that screen-based activities are purposeful, developmentally appropriate and balanced with direct interaction, physical activity, outdoor learning, exploration and play-based experiences.

Learning and Development

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 inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. Features that are specific to the EYFS are:

• The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.

• The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching.

• The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions to extend and develop play, and talk or utilise other means of communication.

• The carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout 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 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.

• The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." (EYFS, 2014)

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which enable them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Our children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own, whilst being given the space to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

"Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1." (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2012)

Active Learning and Development

Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. 'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'(EYFS, 2012) Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some

independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas 7 of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. Reception pupils also participate and are assessed

half termly in a daily phonics session, following the guidance in the Little Wandle 'Letters and Sounds' documentation and in line with school policy.

Creating and Thinking Critically

We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. *"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."*(EYFS, 2012)

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Transition

Starting school or Nursery can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Nursery – Parents are invited to look around the nursery prior to applying for a place. Lead staff will contact parents half a term before the child is due to start to arrange settling in sessions. Parents are asked to complete an 'All About Me' document to aid transition from home to nursery. Parents initially accompany their child for the first one or two one-hour sessions then staff will use their professional judgement to determine how the following session runs either independently or accompanied and for how long. We encourage parents to always talk positively about nursery and avoid using words such as 'scary'. Parents always receive verbal feedback on the gate at the end of a session. Should a child be overly distressed we would ring the parent and ask them to collect them and try again the next day/session.

Starting Reception – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to a 'meet the team' evening in the Summer term to meet their child's new

teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum and life at Damers First School. This is an opportunity for staff to;

- Explain how the school works: the strands and classes
- Talk about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals and Pupil Premium
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction into reception.

Parents can meet their child's teacher and teaching assistant, see their classroom and order school uniform if they wish. There is the opportunity to talk to the SENDCo or book a future appointment.

During taster sessions, parents leave their children with their new class teacher for an hour session. These are run for half a class at a time and means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them. The EYFS Lead and SENCo will already have visited them in their current nursery setting and local pre-schools are encouraged to bring the children to story sessions across the summer term.

Children start Damers from over a dozen different pre-school settings including our own Damers Nursery. Many won't know many or anyone else. To enable families to start to get to know each other the school organises a picnic event in the last week of the summer term.

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report. This sits alongside a meeting of both the reception and Year 1 teacher where

each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning are discussed. This important dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

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 EYFS 2014).

Damers First School and Nursery complies with all safeguarding and welfare requirements contained within the EYFS Statutory Framework (July 2026), including safer sleep guidance, requirements relating to children's screen use, safer recruitment and suitability checks, and safeguarding notification requirements.

At Damers, we understand that we are legally required to provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence; Promote good health; Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.

To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so, we:

- will ensure that all required suitability checks are completed before employees begin work with children. Volunteers will be subject to enhanced safeguarding checks in accordance with statutory requirements and assessed for suitability before undertaking their role.

● Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.

● Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Any allegation involving harm to a child, or risk of harm, involving a person living, working or regularly present on the premises will be reported in accordance with EYFS statutory requirements and relevant safeguarding procedures. Notifications to Ofsted and other agencies will be made where required.

For further information on Safeguarding, please refer to the school policies on the Damers First School website.

Keeping Safe

It is important to us that all children in school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children: Reference Safeguarding Children Policy.

Good Health

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times. Good hand washing routines are monitored and modelled throughout the school day.

Safer Sleep

The school and nursery will have regard to current safer sleep guidance and ensure that babies and young children are provided with a safe sleeping environment. Staff will undertake appropriate training and follow agreed procedures to minimise known risks associated with sleep and rest periods. Sleeping children will be appropriately monitored and checked in accordance with statutory guidance and individual care plans where applicable.

Screen Use

The school recognises the importance of healthy childhood development and balanced use of technology. Digital devices will only be used for appropriate educational purposes and will not replace meaningful interactions with adults, physical activity, outdoor experiences, imaginative play or social communication. Staff will have regard to current DfE guidance regarding screen use in early years settings.

Intimate Care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on

a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practice for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins reception at Damers.

For more information, please refer to the Intimate Care Policy on the school website.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if changes are made to the EYFS Statutory Framework, safeguarding legislation or Department for Education guidance, by the governing board and the headteacher. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders. All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS will be required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is June 2027.