


EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

Status:	Non Statutory
Updated:	September 2024
Reviewed and ratified by:	SECAT Leadership Team
Signed by CEO	
Next review date:	September 2025
Published location:	www.secat.co.uk



Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation.....	2
3. Structure of the EYFS	2
4. Curriculum.....	3
5. The Learning Environment.....	5
6. Assessment.....	5
7. Working with parents.....	6
8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures	6
9. School Lunches and Snacks.....	6
10. Monitoring arrangements	7

1. Aims

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five years. At SECAT this includes Nursery and Reception classes.

This document aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This Document is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

Across SECAT schools we have a mix of Reception and Nursery provisions who provide care for children aged 2 and upwards. Our nursery provisions offer a mix of 15 hour and 30 hour government funded places as well as offering privately funded places. All our nurseries operate in term time only and follow the schools' respective calendars.

Nursery

Our Nursery settings operate for 38 weeks per year and mirror the main school holiday dates. In response to parental demand, we are offering options for universal 15 hours funding as well as those entitled to the additional 15 hours funding as well as privately funded places.

Our Nursery children attend in several different patterns, including whole days, or sessional options of all mornings or all afternoons.

Reception

Children join us in their Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five years old. All children start full-time on the first day of the autumn term unless a part time approach is agreed in the interest of the child. Where possible before starting in Reception, children will have a visit from a member of staff at their nursery setting and will have visited their new classroom for transition visits including stay and play sessions. Our school staff also liaise closely with a child's prior setting, where appropriate, for information regarding each child's progress, achievements and interests and share Early Years transition documents .

4. Curriculum

Teaching and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage at SECAT schools focusses upon:

- The partnership between teachers and parents/carers, so that our children feel secure at our schools 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 and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- Making optimum use of the local community as an educational resource, taking the children on a variety of trips throughout the year
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children secure the Early Learning Goals (ELG) and achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of Foundation Stage, extending into National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 where appropriate
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, social and emotional abilities
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence, self-management, and the ability to resolve personal conflict and disagreements with others
- 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 regularly shared with parents/carers
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school
- The regular reflecting and monitoring between EYFS staff throughout our MAT, individual School Senior Leadership Teams and the Trust Central Executive Team to evaluate and improve what we do
- The close communication between parents/carers and staff including workshops/open sessions to facilitate understanding of teaching and learning approaches.

Our early years settings follow the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social, and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

4.1 Planning

All our settings plan using a mixture of child initiated and adult led activities.

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Effective Practice

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. We offer effective EYFS practice in the following ways:

Playing and Exploring

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

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas, and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Characteristics of Learning

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area, the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage prior to moving to Key Stage One.

5. The Learning Environment

The planning within the EYFS is based around different themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers and staff as a guide for weekly planning, however the teachers will adapt these in response to the needs, progress, and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. Staff make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

The EYFS classes are organised to allow children to explore and learn in a safe and secure environment. There are areas within their classroom where the children can be active, be quiet and rest, engage in solitary play, engage in cooperative play as well as direct teaching as whole class and in small groups or 1:1 with an adult. Each classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Every class, both in Nursery and Reception, have access to their own enclosed early years outdoor area. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all areas of learning. We also ensure that children experience a range of trips offsite to develop their experiences and learning further.

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play. Opportunities include first-hand experience, developing independence and resources to encourage children to initiate their own activities. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Small world resources for retelling stories
- Role play area
- Large and small construction
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Writing table with a range of writing resources
- Making area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources
- Technology
- Interactive screen
- Malleable materials
- Musical instruments
- Painting and creative equipment
- Maths games and equipment
- Outside classroom – a safe, fenced area including sand, den making, mud kitchens, planting equipment and areas, water trays and outside toys including trikes.

6. Assessment

At SECAT Schools, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation, we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, in order to plan challenging, achievable, and exciting activities and experiences to extend the children's learning based on their interests.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation and is recorded on Tapestry, an online record of the children's learning. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform ongoing assessments as well as end of year judgements for each child in all areas of learning. Some writing and maths activities are also recorded in books to show children's learning and progress over time.

In our nursery settings, when a child is aged between 2 and 3, staff review their progress and provide parents/carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

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

The profile is moderated internally by each school (referring to the Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters guidance documents) and in partnership with the other SECAT schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

7. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check, EYFS profile updates and shared observations on Tapestry help to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child in our nursery settings is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Each of our Early Years

settings also offer regular 'stay and play' sessions where parents and carers are invited in to a session to join in with a range of activities with their child.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

It is important to us at SECAT that all children in all our schools are safe. We aim to educate children about boundaries, rules, and limits and to help them understand why they are special. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards and to ask for help, where needed. We are committed to protecting and promoting the physical and psychological well-being of all children. In addition, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships.

We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families and children's safety and welfare is paramount at all times. Safeguarding is of paramount importance and all staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff have completed Child Protection training and know about possible indicators of abuse and their responsibilities within Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

9. School Lunches and Snacks

All children in the EYFS are provided with free fruit, daily. Nursery children can order a school lunch or are asked to bring a school packed lunch, daily. Nursery children eat within their class and are supported by appropriate adult ratios and qualified staff during the lunchtime period.

All Reception age children are entitled to a universal free school meal. These are cooked on-site by SECAT. Reception children eat together in the main school hall.

10. Monitoring arrangements

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage teachers and staff to follow the principles stated in this document. Trust Headteachers and Senior Leaders carry out monitoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage through observation and discussion as part of each school's whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Early Years Lead and approved by the CEO annually.

At every review, the amended document will be shared with the Trust Board.