Early Years Policy
2026-2027

Learn for Life | Believe We Can | Ensure Everyone Belongs

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe
- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them 'school readiness' and a secure foundation for learning, development and good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- This policy is guided by the following principles:
- 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- The importance of learning and development, with a consideration that children develop and learn at different rates

2. Guidance

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS framework), effective from 1 September 2026, and the latest version of the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3. Structure of the EYFS

At Larkspur the Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a 2 year old nursery mixed with a 3-4 year old nursery, Reception are a separate class, however on an afternoon Reception and 30 hour 3-4year old nursery children work together as a unit.

Reception children attend 5 full days from 8.45am until 3.10pm.

We offer 15 hour funded nursery spaces (2-4 year olds) which includes 5 morning sessions 8.30am until 11.30am.

We also offer 30 hour funded spaces, for nursery children, which includes 5 full day sessions from 8.30am until 3.10pm.

A free breakfast club is also available for reception children from 8.15am.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that we must teach. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important 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

We also support children in 4 specific areas which help strengthen and develop the 3 prime areas, and ignite the children's curiosity and enthusiasm:

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

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners 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, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Medium term plans are drawn up based on observations and assessments of the children in the previous term. Key objectives are identified and used as a focus for the adult led activities.

Short term plans are then devised for the adult led sessions each week.

At Larkspur the cycle of observation, assessment and planning is carried out on a moment by moment basis during child-initiated activities. We call this 'planning in the moment'. We work this way because high level involvement occurs in child initiated activity. The adults work alongside children to support, extend and challenge their learning.

4.2 Teaching

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and support what the child is doing. We follow the EEF's SHREC guidance to ensure high quality interactions.

In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world.

They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practice skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

5. Assessment

At Larkspur Community Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their progress, development and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers and keep them up to date with the child's progress and development. Staff will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, staff will draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. Staff are not required to prove this through collection of any physical evidence.

Children aged 2 to 3

When a child is **aged between 2 and 3**, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' will:

- Highlight the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed
- Focus on any areas of possible concern that a child may have a developmental delay, which may indicate a disability or special educational need
- Describe the activities and strategies that the school intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns, involving parents and/or carers and other professionals as appropriate

Where a child moves settings between the ages of 2 and 3, the progress check will usually be undertaken by the setting where the child has spent most time.

Starting reception

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the reception baseline assessment (RBA).

The RBA is a short, practical activity that each child will complete with their teacher during their first 6 weeks in reception. It looks at early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. It provides a starting point

from which the school can measure how much progress pupils make across primary school. Results are compared with pupils' Key Stage 2 outcomes at the end of year 6 to give an overall progress measure for the school as a whole – not for individual children.

The RBA is not used to make judgements about early years provision, either current or retrospective, and the RBA and its data is not used for any other purpose apart from creating primary progress measures.

In the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age 5, and no later than 30 June in that term, staff will complete the EYFS profile for each child. Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

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

The EYFS profile will reflect staff members' own knowledge and professional judgement of a child to inform discussions with parents and/or carers, and any other person whom the teacher, parent and/or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

We share the EYFS profile with the child's year 1 teacher. This helps to inform a discussion between reception and year 1 teachers about the child's stage of development and learning needs, and helps with planning activities in year 1.

The school shares the results of each child's 'progress check' and EYFS profile (but not the reception baseline assessment) with their parents and/or carers.

In exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child might stay in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they turn 5. In these exceptional cases, we will continue to assess the child throughout their time in EYFS provision and complete their profile at the end of the year before they move into year 1.

An EYFS supportive threshold plan or profile will be completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). We will make the appropriate reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with SEND.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. We submit EYFS profile data to the local authority on request.

6. Working with parents and carers

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

Prior to children attending the nursery the class teacher will visit the child in their own home wherever, possible, to get to know them and their families. Nursery children then attend the nursery for a short stay and play session before their normal session hours on their first day. Staff then work with the parents/carers to devise an appropriate transition schedule suited to each individual child. This could mean that some children attend full sessions very quickly and some have a longer transition period. We strongly believe that the transition period should be based on the individual needs of each child.

Parents are invited to stay and play sessions regularly to play with their child and speak with the staff. Regular craft mornings, performances and parent workshops are held throughout the year to encourage good relationships between the staff and families.

Parents are also invited to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher at parent's evenings during the autumn, spring and summer terms.

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

We ask parents/carers to provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers for their child (where possible).

7. Staff

7.1 Staff training

We will:

- Train all staff in safeguarding procedures in line with Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance
- Support all staff to feel supported and confident in implementing our safeguarding policy and procedures
- Renew training every 2 years, or more often when it's needed to help maintain skills; keep up to date with any changes to our safeguarding procedures; or because of any safeguarding concerns
- Outline how training is delivered, and how staff are supported to put it in place, in our child protection and safeguarding policy

Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will:

- Provide ongoing support, advice and guidance to all staff
- Attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework
- Liaise as needed with local statutory children's services agencies and our local safeguarding partners

7.2 Staff Supervision

Staff working in the EYFS receive appropriate supervision that provides opportunities to discuss children's development and wellbeing, identify solutions to issues as they arise and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

7.3 Safer recruitment

When recruiting staff, we will follow the procedures set out in the latest EYFS framework guidance and KCSIE on checking the suitability of new recruits, including:

- Obtaining at least 1 written reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited
- Carrying out the necessary checks, including the appropriate level of DBS check
- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references
- We obtain the appropriate enhanced criminal records checks, including for volunteers where required by the EYFS statutory framework. **New employees will not commence employment until the required criminal records check has been received.**
- Staff must disclose any information that may affect their suitability to work with children. The school will respond to any information or concerns regarding suitability in accordance with the EYFS statutory framework, KCSIE and the school's safeguarding procedures.

See our safeguarding policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures

7.4 Whistle-blowing

We make sure that all staff (including trainees) and volunteers are aware of our whistle-blowing procedures; feel able to raise concerns about any poor or unsafe practice; and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

In the event that an individual feels that they need to blow the whistle on misconduct, they should report their concern to the Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher. If the concern is about the Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of the governing body.

See our Whistleblowing Policy for further details of our procedures for raising and responding to concerns.

7.4.1 Malicious or vexatious allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith, but investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that 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. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives at home or elsewhere.

See our child protection and safeguarding policy, Safeguarding-Child-Protection-Policy-2025-26.pdf for more information.

8.1 Reporting allegations or concerns

If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will immediately notify our local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures. In emergencies, we will also inform the police.

If a concern or allegation is about:

- A member of staff (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors) posing a risk of harm to children, we will report it to the headteacher as soon as possible
- The headteacher, we will report it to the chair of governors, Ms S Waugh.

Where we believe there's a conflict of interest in reporting to the headteacher, we will report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will then follow the procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy for managing the allegation.

8.2 Staffing ratios

We ensure that appropriate statutory staff:child ratios are maintained at all times in accordance with the current EYFS statutory framework. Ratios are determined according to the age of the children, the qualifications and roles of staff working directly with them, and the needs of the children. We will always ensure that children are adequately supervised and that their needs are met.

Children aged two

For children aged two, there must be at least **one member of staff for every five children (1:5)**.

Children aged three and over

For children aged three and over, staffing arrangements will meet the qualification and ratio requirements set out in the current EYFS statutory framework.

Where a person with **Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status or another suitable Level 6 qualification** is working directly with the children:

- there must be at least **one member of staff for every 13 children (1:13)**; and
- at least one other member of staff must hold an approved **Level 3 qualification**, or meet the relevant experience-based route requirements.

Where no suitably qualified Level 6 member of staff is working directly with the children:

- there must be at least **one member of staff for every eight children (1:8)**; and
- at least one member of staff must hold an approved **Level 3 qualification**, or meet the relevant experience-based route requirements;
- at least half of the other staff must hold an approved **Level 2 qualification**.

Reception classes

Where the majority of children in a class will reach the age of five or older within the school year, staffing arrangements will comply with the statutory requirements relating to **infant class sizes**, including the requirement for no more than 30 pupils to one school teacher, subject to the permitted exceptions within the relevant legislation.

In determining staffing arrangements, we will consider not only the statutory minimum ratios but also the **individual needs of the children, including children with SEND or additional needs, the nature of the activities being undertaken and the need to ensure children's safety and wellbeing**.

Parents and carers will be informed about how staff are organised within the provision where appropriate.

8.3 Paediatric first aid (PFA)

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. The PFA certificate is for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the EYFS framework. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

We display a list of staff who have a current PFA certificate.

8.4 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

We also have a DSL who has lead responsibility for safeguarding children. They are also responsible for:

- Liaising with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSPs (local safeguarding partners)
- Providing support, advice and guidance to all other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Attending a safeguarding training course that complies with the criteria set out in annex C of the latest EYFS framework

8.5 Absence

We're required to promptly follow up on absences.

If a child is absent for a prolonged time or if their parents/carers haven't told us about the absence, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts.

We will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use our professional judgement when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged.

Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

See our attendance policy Attendance-Policy-2026-1.pdf for more on this, including our expectations of parents/carers to report child absences.

8.6 Oral health and tooth brushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by learning about good oral hygiene, routines around oral health and tooth brushing as well as the effects of eating too many sweet things and drinking drinks other than water.

- The importance of regular toothbrushing and good oral hygiene.
- No sweets to celebrate
- Water only in daily water bottles.

Larkspur **promotes oral health and will consider supervised toothbrushing where appropriate**, with implementation governed by the relevant guidance.
The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy, which can be found here; larkspurprimary.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Safeguarding-Child-Protection-Policy-2025-26.pdf

8.7 Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid PFA certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating, and seated safely in an appropriate chair or highchair and, where possible, in a designated eating space.

Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

We will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At each mealtime and snack time it will be clear which staff member is responsible for checking that the food and drink meets all the requirements for each child.

We will make sure 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.

We will consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate
    - We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff
- Discuss their child's progress with solid foods and the textures the child is familiar with and work with them to move on to the next stage at a pace that's right for their child

We will prepare food in a way that:

- Prevents choking
- Meets each child's individual developmental needs
- Is in line with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance. All meals, snacks and drinks we provide are healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible to children

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of the incident and make the child's parents/carers aware. We will periodically review the records to identify whether we can change anything in our practice to make eating safer, and then take action as appropriate.

8.8 Accident or injury

We keep a first aid box (which contains appropriate items for children) always accessible.

We keep a written record of accident or injuries and any first aid treatment.

We will inform parents or carers the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, of any:

- Accident or injury sustained by the child
- First aid treatment given

We will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of any child while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable, but in any event, within 14 days of the incident occurring.

8.9 Safety of premises

We make sure that our premises, including overall floor space and outdoor space, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children we care for and the activities provided on the premises.

We comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.

We take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff, and others on our premises in the case of fire or any other emergency. We have:

- An emergency evacuation procedure
- Appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers) which is in working order
- Clearly identifiable fire exits and fire doors free of obstruction and easily opened from the inside

We do not keep, and do not allow to be present on our premises at any time, any dog of a type banned under section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

We do not allow smoking in or on our premises when children are present or are about to be present, and we make sure that staff do not smoke, vape or use e-cigarettes when children are present, or about to be present.

8.10 Toileting and privacy

We make sure that there are:

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children
- Suitable and hygienic nappy changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies.
- An adequate supply of necessary items such as clean bedding, towels, spare clothes and any other necessary items
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

During nappy changes and toileting, we will balance children's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs.

8.11 Sleeping arrangements and safer sleep

Where children sleep or rest while in our care, we ensure that sleeping arrangements are safe and appropriate to the individual child's age and needs. Staff follow the safer sleeping requirements within the EYFS statutory framework and relevant government guidance. Sleeping children are appropriately supervised and checked in accordance with our procedures. Any sleeping equipment is kept clean, in good condition and appropriate for the child.

8.12 Screen use

We have regard to the DfE's help for early years providers: screen use guidance when making decisions about how and when children use screens in our setting.

8.13 Organising premises for confidentiality and safeguarding

We make sure that:

- There is an area where staff may talk to parents and/or carers confidentially
- There is an area for staff to take breaks away from areas being used by children
- Children are only released into the care of individuals of whom the parent and/or carer has explicitly notified us
- Children do not leave our premises unsupervised

We take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering our premises and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Mrs Wilkinson, EYFS leader, once a year. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This isn't an exhaustive list of policies and only includes policies specific to the EYFS. For a full list of our policies, see Larkspur Community Primary School

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	Medical Conditions Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent/carer failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy