



Early Years Policy

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Preston Primary Academy Trust

Early Years Policy

1. Rationale

Preston Primary Academy Trust (PPAT) believes that Early Years provision provides a secure foundation for future learning and development and should be recognised, valued, and resourced accordingly.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that every child in our schools 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 PPAT will ensure:

- That children in its schools access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for 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

The policy is based on requirements set out in the [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#), effective from 1 September 2025.

2. Early Years Provision

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

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. 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

All children have daily access to high-quality outdoor play and learning opportunities, as required by the EYFS framework. Outdoor experiences are planned to complement and extend indoor learning.

3. Planning

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. Teaching

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.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

5. Assessment

Across the PPAT, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

In our schools with provision for children **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' which happens at 2, highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed. All settings across the trust should also provide a transition report covering all 7 areas of learning which is shared with parents and the schools. Many settings also have regular nursery parents' evenings.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) as set out in Annex B of the statutory Framework. The six-week period applies for autumn, winter and summer intakes, or any pupil that joins a school mid-term and has not previously taken the 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 and gives a good idea of the pupil's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness to start Year 1. Year 1 teachers will be provided with a copy of the profile. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the [Development Matters guidance](#)) and in partnership with other Trust and local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority should they request it.

In addition, where children transfer to another school or setting before the end of the EYFS, records and assessments are shared securely with the new provision to support a smooth transition

6. Working with parents and carers

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 and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child in our nursery or pre-school 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.

7. Staff

7.1 Staff training

PPAT settings 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 year, or more often when it is needed to help maintain skills; keep up to date with any changes to our safeguarding procedures; or because of any safeguarding concerns

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) in each setting 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

All staff working with children in EYFS have access to regular supervision sessions, providing opportunities to reflect on practice, discuss children's development and wellbeing, and address safeguarding issues.

7.2 Safer recruitment

PPAT's Recruitment and Selection policy (published on the Trust website) will follow the procedures set out in the latest EYFS framework guidance on checking the suitability of new recruits, including:

- Obtaining a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited

- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references

7.3 Whistleblowing

We make sure that all staff are aware of our whistleblowing 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 a member of staff feels that they need to blow the whistle on misconduct, they should report their concern to their line manager or Head Teacher. If the concern is about the line manager or 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 Local Governing Body or Chair of the Trust Board.

The Trust whistleblowing policy is published on the Trust website

7.3.1 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.

8.1 Responding to 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 any allegation is made of serious harm or abuse by anyone working or looking after children on PPAT premises or elsewhere, e.g. on a visit, we will inform within 14 days of the allegation being made. We will also inform them of any action we have taken in response to the allegation(s).

8.1.1 Investigating the concern

When a concern is received all settings will follow the process set out in the Trust policy Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns about Teachers and Other Staff published on the Trust website

8.2 Staffing ratios

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff:child ratios are maintained in our settings to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

- For children aged under 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 3 children.
- For children aged 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 5 children
- For children aged 3 and over:
 - Where a person with qualified teacher status, early years professional status, early years teacher status, an instructor or suitability qualified, overseas-trained teacher is working directly with children:
 - For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 30 children
 - For all other classes, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
 - At least 1 other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status
 - Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we will have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children.
 - At least 1 member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification, or has received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status
 - At least half of all other staff hold an approved level 2 qualification
 - We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils in our reception classes
 - We determine ratios guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of the children within mixed age classes

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. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

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 are required to promptly follow up on absences.

If a child is absent for a prolonged time or if their parents/carers have not told us about the absence, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts. Where possible, we require more than 2 emergency contact numbers for each child (paragraph 3.96)

See individual schools' attendance policies 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 talking about good oral health and ways to keep healthy, promoting healthy eating/healthy snacks, visits from professionals, signposting parents to information about being healthy and good oral hygiene.

8.7 Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid 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 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
- Work with them to move on to the next stage at a pace that is 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](#)

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.

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.

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
- An adequate supply of necessary items such as clean bedding, towels, and spare clothes
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

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

In our nursery provisions, staff record all nappy changes, including the time, staff member, and any observations such as rash or discomfort. These records are shared with parents and/or carers daily to support continuity of care and to monitor children's health and wellbeing.

8.11 Safe Sleeping

Staff follow guidance to ensure that all children rest safely during designated rest periods. Sleeping areas are kept clear of hazards, children are monitored regularly, and routines are consistent with each child's needs and comfort

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors every two years.

Alongside Board review, EYFS provision is monitored regularly by Trust and school leaders through observation, moderation, and staff development activities to ensure consistent quality across all settings.

Appendix A
Statutory Policies and Procedures for the EYFS

Statutory EYFS policy or procedure	Where this is contained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding policy and procedures • Procedure for checking the identity of visitors • Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children 	See: Trust child protection and safeguarding policy and our schools' own procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness procedure • Emergency evacuation procedure 	See Trust health and safety policy and individual schools' health and safety policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administering medicines policy 	See Trust medical policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints 	See Trust complaints policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Policy 	See schools' own policy

Appendix B - Induction to School

- 1 Parents of pupils joining Reception are very welcome to visit the school by appointment.
- 2 We hold an information evening for parents of new pupils to explain our ethos and the curriculum.
- 3 Parents receive an information pack. All new entrants are invited to visit the school to meet their classmates and teachers.
- 4 We visit our feeder pre-schools to meet the children and share information.
- 5 In September the children attend school on a part-time timetable in the first few weeks. During this time parents are invited in for a meeting with teachers. This is to explain the curriculum and how we can work as a partnership to provide the best education for their child.