Learning Community Trust

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Date	September 2025
Version	1
Circulation	Public
Owner	Severndale Specialist Academy
Date approved	December 2025
Approved by	Local Governing Board
Review date	2026
Status	Approved

Contents

1. Aims 3
2. Legislation 3
3. Structure of the Early Years Foundation Stage 3
4. Curriculum and planning 4
5. Assessment 4
6. Working with parents and carers 5
7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures 5
8. Nutrition and healthy eating 6
8.1 Allergy and special diet management 6
8.2 Safe eating practices and Dysphagia support 7
8.3 Acknowledging individual preferences 7
8.4 Paediatric first aid 7
10. Personal intimate care 7
11. Monitoring arrangements 7
11.1 The board of trustees 7
11.2 Local governing bodies 7
11.3 The headteacher 7
11.4 Staff 8

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That effective, child-centered provision is in place for all students within the Foundation Stage.
- That children access a broad, balanced, creative and developmentally appropriate curriculum which is centered around their needs.
- That children make progress and are inspired by environments so that they are curious, active and engaged.
- Quality and consistency of teaching in order that all children make progress from their individual starting points.
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers, as well as multi-agency working.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers for 2025.

As a Specialist setting, Severndale Academy also refers to a range of documentation in developing and planning effective Foundation provision. This includes:

- SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf
- Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK
- Keeping children safe in education 2025
- Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance
- Early Years Choking Hazards Table_English.pdf
- Early years qualification requirements and standards 2025

3. Structure of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Severndale's Early Years Foundation Stage approach is unique because it extends to include Key Stage 1 learners. Evidence shows that Key Stage 1 pupils benefit from an EYFS-based approach to education. A flight path for pupils is not defined until the end of Year 2, in preparation for their transition to Key Stage 2. During their time within the Foundation Department, pupils are grouped based on their developmental and learner profiles. This ensures pupils have suitable peer cohorts to ensure progress is aspirational and aligned to individual outcomes.

Class ratios are determined by the individual needs of pupils and the overall cohort. Staffing levels are higher than the minimum requirements set out in the EYFS Framework for Nursery and Reception pupils. Each class is led by a qualified teacher.

The Foundation Department is led by a Foundation Lead and a Foundation Co-ordinator. Both hold responsibility as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs), ensuring compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 and the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. They support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in promoting a safeguarding culture, managing referrals and ensuring staff understand their responsibilities for child protection.

All pupils in the Foundation Department have continuous access to high-quality outdoor environments, in line with the EYFS requirements for outdoor learning. These spaces include large-scale play equipment, a bespoke natural habitat, and resources designed to foster physical development, encourage movement, and promote a lifelong love of active, healthy living.

Classrooms are carefully designed and resourced to meet the individual needs of each learner, creating environments that spark curiosity and motivate engagement in learning. In line with the EYFS principles of enabling environments, the Foundation Department also provides a range of specialist spaces that support sensory regulation, deliver pastoral interventions, and offer safe, nurturing areas for exploration and learning beyond the classroom.

4. Curriculum and planning

The Foundation Department's curriculum at Severndale provides a holistic, child-centred approach to learning and development, fully aligned with the EYFS statutory framework. It ensures all pupils access high-quality provision that supports progress across the seven areas of learning and development.

The curriculum prioritises the three prime areas of learning, which are fundamental to building strong foundations for future learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (including RSHE)

Alongside these, pupils are supported to engage with the four specific area through meaningful, play based and experiential learning opportunities:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World (including RE, Technology, and knowledge of People and communities)
- Expressive Arts and Design (including Art and Music)

Our approach is highly individualised, recognising the diverse needs of pupils within our specialist setting. The curriculum acts as a vehicle for progress aligned to each pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Long-Term Outcomes (LTOs) are broken down into smaller steps within Individual Education Plans (IEPs), which inform classroom provision.

All areas of learning are interconnected and taught in a practical, engaging, and developmentally appropriate way to ignite curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. This reflects the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning set out in the EYFS Framework: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically.

Teachers work collaboratively to produce half-termly medium-term plans, which outline key learning across all areas and are aligned to the long-term plan for the academic year.

Teaching, learning and assessment in the Foundation Department are highly personalised ensuring that pupils make sustained progress at a pace that is ambitious yet responsive to individual needs.

5. Assessment

Staff in the Foundation Department carry out ongoing formative assessments to understand each pupil's development and learning needs. Observations and interactions are integral to daily practice and inform planning for personalised learning experiences, in line with the EYFS statutory framework.

For pupils starting in Reception, whether at the beginning of the academic year or mid-year, staff evaluate the pupil's ability to access the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Continuous assessment ensures RBA facilitators are aware of each pupil's developmental stage, engagement, and cognitive profile, supporting informed decisions about whether the RBA can be completed within the first six weeks of entry.

Severndale uses the Differentiated Early Years Outcomes (DEYO) framework, devised by Bristol, to assess progress in relation to the curriculum. Progress towards Severndale Steps (DEYO) is recorded using SOLAR, an electronic assessment system that captures observations and evidence of learning.

At the end of Reception, practitioners assess each pupil against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as required by the EYFS. Judgements are moderated internally to ensure consistency and accuracy before submission to Shropshire Local Authority. Where pupils are working significantly below ELG expectations, progress is reported using DEYO and EHCP outcomes to reflect individual achievements.

Assessment information is shared with parents and carers regularly and contributes to reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), ensuring a holistic approach to monitoring progress.

6. Working with parents and carers

At Severndale, we are committed to building strong, positive partnerships with parents and carers, recognizing that children learn and develop best when home and school work together. This partnership begins at the initial consultation and continues throughout the transition process, ensuring a smooth and supportive start to school life.

During transition, leaders and teachers collaborate closely with families to understand each child's unique needs, home routines, and family dynamics. This collaborative approach helps identify strategies that promote engagement and learning both at home and in school, creating consistency and security for each pupil.

We actively encourage parents and carers to share observations, insights and aspirations for their child's development. This shared understanding ensures that all stakeholders work in partnership to support each pupil's progress and well-being.

In line with the EYFS framework, we respect parental preferences, cultural and linguistic diversity, and individual circumstances. We provide regular opportunities for communication through meetings, written updates, and digital platforms such as EvidenceMe, ensuring parents and carers are fully informed about their child's progress and involved in decision making.

Our approach ensures that parents and carers are valued as partners in their child's learning journey, contributing to a holistic and inclusive education experience.

Parents, carers, and wider family members are actively encouraged to engage with school life through a range of opportunities, including Stay and Play sessions, coffee morning, parent-led and professional workshops, parent evenings, and events organized by the Friends of Severndale committee. These activities foster strong home-school partnerships.

In addition, parents and carers are invited to contribute to the strategic leadership of the school by joining the Governing Board as co-opted members. Serving as a governor provides a pivotal role in shaping the school's vision, monitoring provision, and ensuring accountability for outcomes. This partnership approach ensures that parental voice is represented at the highest level of decision-making.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

At Severndale, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in line with the EYFS statutory framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) as outlined in Severndale's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and robust procedures are in place to ensure pupils are safe, healthy and protected.

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs oversee child protection and staff training including through the induction process.
- All staff receive regular safeguarding training, including Prevent Duty and whistleblowing.
- Safer recruitment practices are followed, including enhanced DBS checks and ongoing suitability assessments.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs undertake regular safeguarding training and maintain up-to-date knowledge of regional and national guidance, including updates relevant to the EYFS statutory framework.
- Health and safety procedures include risk assessments, paediatric first aid provision, and safe management of medication in line with school policies.
- Information sharing complies with GDPR and statutory guidance, ensuring timely communication with parents, carers and relevant agencies.
- Positive behaviour strategies and safe handling procedures are implemented to promote well-being.
- Trauma informed practice underpins the development of safe, positive, and appropriate relationships, ensuring that staff respond to pupils' needs with sensitivity and promote emotional security.
- Parents and carers are informed of safeguarding policies and are partners in promoting safety, welfare and attendance.

Severndale has robust arrangements for staff supervision within the Foundation Department. Through regular one-to-one meetings, CPD, line management, and professional discussion, staff receive support, coaching and training tailored to their roles. Supervision promotes the best interests of children and includes safeguarding and child protection as a priority. Leaders and peers foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, enabling staff to engage confidently in confidential discussions of sensitive issues related to learner profiles and family needs. Staff collaborate with specialist colleagues and experts to ensure continuous learning and progress for all pupils.

Severndale ensure that premises, including outdoor spaces, are safe and suitable for all pupils. This includes:

- Conducting dynamic and documented risk assessments of all spaces.
- Maintaining secure boundaries and safe access points (fencing, gates, doors, Paxton locks).
- Ensuring equipment and resources are safe, clean and age-appropriate.
- Full compliance with health and safety legislation (fire-safety, hygiene, PPE and disposal).

Staff and visitors to the Foundation department must not use personal mobile phones while supervising children. Phones are stored securely in a designated classroom cupboard, lockers within the department or lockers at Reception. Personal phone use is restricted to designated areas only e.g. staffroom where pupils do not access. Images of children are never stored on personal devices. Only school approved devices may be used for observations or communication, and images are transferred securely and deleted after use. These measures ensure compliance with EYFS safeguarding and welfare arrangements.

8. Nutrition and healthy eating

At Severndale, we provide healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals and snacks in line with the EYFS Nutrition Guidance (2025). Lunch menus are planned to meet children's dietary, sensory and cultural preferences.
Through transition and EHCP annual review processes, we capture information about individual sensory needs related to eating and drinking. We also gather up-to-date information on medical changes, including new diagnoses, allergies, intolerance, and special diets. This information is held centrally within each individual EHCP and on Severndale's Management Information System (MIS).

8.1 Allergy and special diet management

Procedures are in place to manage, allergies, intolerances, and special diets, including blended diets, nasogastric tube feeding, and gastrostomy feeding.

8.2 Safe eating practices and Dysphagia support

Staff receive training in safe eating practices to minimise choking risks. For pupils identified as medium or high risk of aspiration due to dysphagia, staff follow individualised eating and drinking guidance provided by Speech and Language Therapists trained in dysphagia. Staff are assessed for competency in supporting these pupils. Training records are maintained, with annual refresher training and full re-training every three years.

8.3 Acknowledging individual preferences

We recognise that pupil food preference may not align to mainstream healthy eating concepts. Severndale works in partnership with parents, carers, and health professionals to support pupils who self-restrict food intake, ensuring they eat in a low-pressure, nurturing, and supportive environment.

8.4 Paediatric first aid

A paediatric first aid trained staff member is present during all eating and drinking activities to respond to choking or allergic reactions promptly.

10. Personal intimate care

The personal Intimate Care policy can be found on the school website
https://severndaleacademy.co.uk/our-school/policies/

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance changes. All updates will be communicated to school leaders and incorporated into staff training and induction materials.

11.1 The board of trustees

The Trust Board delegates approval of this policy to the local governing body. Trustees ensure that governance structures hold the headteacher to account for compliance with the EYFS statutory framework, including safeguarding and welfare requirements.

11.2 Local governing bodies

The local governing body approves the EYFS policy and monitors its implementation within the school. Governors report any issues to the Education Director and ensure statutory requirements are met.

11.3 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring consistent application of the EYFS policy across the school.
- Monitoring safeguarding, welfare, and curriculum compliance.
- Reporting implementation progress to the local governing body.

11.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering a broad and balanced EYFS curriculum.
- Planning and delivering high-quality adaptive teaching.
- Monitoring and assessing pupil progress.
- Responding to individual pupil and family needs.
- Upholding all safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the EYFS framework and this policy.