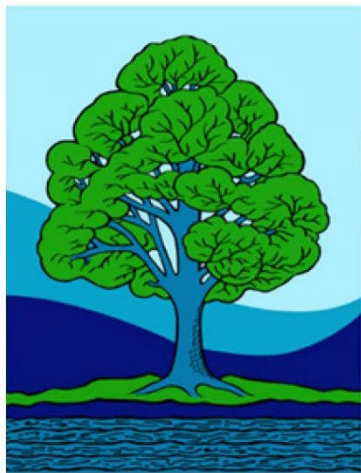




Rivertree Free School

Dream • Discover • Develop

Article 28: *You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.*

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy Status: Statutory

Review Cycle: Annually

Owner: Headteacher

Date: March 2026

Approved by: LGB

Date: March 2026

Review Date: March 2027

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to outline the following for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Rivertree Free School:

- Policy aims
- Curriculum and planning
- Assessment
- Reporting, recording and monitoring
- Working with parents
- Safeguarding and Welfare
- Transitioning beyond EYFS

Policy Aims

At Rivertree Free School we recognise the key features of effective practice of the EYFS (Development Matters & Statutory Framework for the EYFS, September 2021) which are interwoven into our own school ideologies:

- The best for every pupil.
- High quality care.
- The curriculum: what we want pupils to learn.
- Pedagogy: helping pupils to learn.
- Assessment: checking what pupils have learnt.
- Developing and championing self-regulation and executive function.
- Partnership with parents.

Furthermore, these intertwine into our BILTT Ethos and Culture:

- Safeguarding of all our pupils, students and staff is paramount.
- We will build effective relationships with our pupils and use our skills to build their self-esteem.
- We will ensure we differentiate and personalise our curriculum offer to optimise progress for each pupil.
- We will create time and space to reflect on our practice and share our learning.

As a Trust we come together as EYFS and Key Stage 1, alongside other schools from Bedford and surrounding areas for an Early Years and KS1 Development Group. We develop our practice as individual schools and as BILTT in line with EYFS principles. We moderate, build cross school relationships, and share practice, termly.

Curriculum and Planning

At Rivertree Free School we place a strong focus on the ways in which pupils learn. This is emphasised through the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**:

Playing and Exploring	Active Learning	Creating and Thinking Critically
Realise that their actions have an effect on the world, so they want to keep repeating them. Plan and think ahead about how they will explore or play with objects. Guide their own thinking and actions by referring to visual	Participate in routines. Begin to predict sequences because they know routines. Show goal-directed behaviour. Begin to correct their mistakes themselves. Keep on trying when things are difficult.	Take part in simple pretend play. Sort materials. Review their progress as they try to achieve a goal. Use pretend play to think beyond the 'here and now' and to understand another perspective.

aids or by talking to themselves while playing. Make independent choices. Bring their own interests and fascinations into early years settings. This helps them to develop their learning. Respond to new experiences that you bring to their attention.		Know more, so feel confident about coming up with their own ideas. Concentrate on achieving something that's important to them.
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The curriculum is centred around the **3 Prime Areas of Learning** and **4 Specific Areas of Learning**.

Prime Areas	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Communication and Language	Physical Development
	Self-regulation Managing self Building relationships	Listening, attention and Understanding Speaking	Gross motor skills Fine motor skills

Specific Areas	Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding of the World	Expressive Arts and Designs
	Comprehension Word reading Writing	Number Numerical patterns	Past and present People, culture and communities The natural world	Creating with materials Being Imaginative and expressive

Early reading

Rivertree School teaches phonics through the Little Wandle scheme. Early reading concepts are taught in EYFS through Phase 1 of the scheme, called 'Foundations for Phonics'. The 7 aspects of pre-reading are interwoven throughout Phase 1, which includes activities such as listening to environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, rhyme, alliteration and distinguishing between voice sounds. Through ongoing assessment, some children are also identified as being able to access Phase 2 and beyond whilst in EYFS.

Provision

The special educational provision made for a pupil should always be based on an understanding of their particular strengths and needs and should seek to address them all, using well-evidenced interventions targeted at areas of difficulty and, where necessary, specialist equipment or software. Support should be family centred and should consider the individual pupil and family's needs and the best ways to support them (DFE SEND Code of Practice 2015).

The continuous provision of clearly defined learning areas provides the basis for the long-term planning, with each area supporting the Characteristics of Effective Learning and the seven areas of learning. Themes from the EYFS Framework are used within long term planning and to ensure continuity. Provision is planned for daily through discussions as a team as to how we can build on pupils' learning, interests and needs, continuously reflecting our changing pupils. Learning areas are enhanced by the addition of resources that match the current topic focus, to introduce new learning or extend existing knowledge and skills. Engagement in learning through play is at the centre of our planning.

Access to outdoor learning is a statutory requirement for all EYFS pupils. At Rivertree, pupils have daily opportunities to learn outdoors, in a safe, well-resourced environment. Pupils are expected to experience the outdoors in all weathers, wearing suitable clothing, unless unsafe to do so. Outdoor provision is planned with the same level of intention as indoor learning, offering opportunities for:

physical development, exploration, investigation, risk-taking, sensory experiences, social interaction, imaginative play and engagement with nature. Staff support pupils to use outdoor spaces confidently and safely, following risk-assessments and ensuring environments are inclusive for all pupils.

Activities planned for and led by adults are based on observations of pupils' learning and needs to develop existing skills, knowledge and understanding. Activities may also introduce new skills, knowledge and understanding. These may take place individually or in small groups and may be linked to Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) targets or Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBS).

Adults work with pupils across all areas of the provision, including continuous, enhanced and adult led activities, to observe, assess, support and extend pupils' learning.

Whilst we recognise that pupils learn best through play, it is important to consider that some of our pupils may need to learn play skills in a structured setting before transferring to a free flow environment. Additional strategies are used to support individuals' learning, based on their attention levels, interests, motivation, emerging skills and personalised targets. Teaching approaches will follow or take aspects from a bank of well-known and widely used strategies, including but not limited to, Attention Autism, Tac Pac, Intensive Interaction, sensory stories and sensory circuits. Teaching in EYFS, as throughout the school, is supported by the Total Communication Approach.

Assessment

At Rivertree Free School we use a variety of methods to develop our knowledge of each individual EYFS pupil, which is then used to inform planning and provision. This includes:

- Initial meetings and information gathering with parents in a starting school booklet.
- Home visit along with a phased transition – this may look different for each pupil.
- Information from previous setting/school.
- Home to school phone calls and emails.
- Consultation evenings.
- EHCP, multi professional and CIN meetings.
- Regular observations of pupils which are recorded via Evidence Me.
- Reports from other professionals involved with the pupil e.g. SALT, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Educational Psychologists.
- Reviews of Pupil Passports, PBS Plans and EHCP targets, strengths, needs and interests.
- Baseline assessment completed in the first two weeks of school, followed by regular summative assessments.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed at the end of the Reception Year for submission to the Local Authority.
- Parents/carers are also given an end of year report and their pupil's learning journal.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

The Early Years Lead and Deputy Head work together to consider the suitability of the RBA on an individual pupil basis. The suitability for pupils is decided through observations of learning, discussions as teachers with the support of the previous setting information. Where possible we will make reasonable adjustments to support the pupil with accessing the RBA, for example the use of a communication book. We endeavour to allow all pupils to have the opportunity to access the RBA, however carefully discussing the suitability for pupils is important as this type of assessment for some pupils can affect their social, emotional and mental health needs. As a school, we gather a baseline through RBA or if not suitable, observations of learning through Evidence Me.

Evidence Me Assessment

Throughout EYFS, we use the electronic recording software 'Evidence Me'. We record observations on tablets and the website throughout the day. We record long and short observations of learning

alongside photos. These observations range from the COEL, prime and specific areas of Development Matters, EHCP Targets, Physiotherapy, and Occupational Therapy targets etc.

The assessment feature on Evidence Me is used to track pupils' progress in different areas of their learning. Data is entered termly on to the website. We use the feature to identify gaps in learning for our pupils.

Reporting, Recording and Monitoring

At Rivertree Free School we monitor, evaluate and review our provision in a number of ways:

- Pupil progress meetings and folders.
- Attending Early Years specific courses.
- Regular Senior Leader monitoring of teaching and planning approaches.
- Collaborative planning.
- Governor visits.
- Cross-borough Early Years and KS1 development groups and forums.
- BILLT Subject and strategy plan.
- RFS Subject and strategy plan.

We moderate our assessment judgements through:

- In-house moderation in EYFS and KS1.
- Participation in LA moderation groups at least once annually.
- Cluster moderation.
- Moderation at our cross-borough development group.
- External moderation from LA where appropriate.

Working with Parents

At Rivertree, we work closely with parents and/or carers to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. It is widely acknowledged that children learn and develop most effectively when a strong and collaborative partnership exists between staff and parents and/or carers.

In EYFS, we do this by:

- Sending daily updates via email about pupils' learning and engagement, as well as what they have eaten.
- Having face-to-face or telephone conversations as and when needed.
- Sharing photos and videos via 'Parent Share' on Evidence Me.
- Arranging Stay and Play events where parents and/or carers can experience the classroom first hand.
- Arranging other family events throughout the year.
- Holding two parent's evenings throughout the year as well as the pupil's EHCP Annual Review.
- Offering training, workshops and coffee mornings.

Parent Share

We share observations with families through the 'Parent Share' feature on Evidence Me. This enables parents and carers to view their child's progress and learning through weekly updates. Observations may include samples of work, photographs, videos, and both brief and detailed written accounts. Parents are able to comment directly on the observations shared. They can also upload examples of home learning and share experiences from time spent at home, which we can discuss with pupils at school. We actively encourage families to share our observations with their child, as this strengthens the home-school partnership and further supports the development of the pupils' communication and language skills.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is at the heart of our EYFS provision. Rivertree Free School follows the BILTT Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and all statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and the EYFS Statutory Framework (2024). A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) oversees safeguarding across EYFS. All staff receive regular safeguarding training, including induction, annual updates and training appropriate to their roles. Staff follow agreed procedures for reporting concerns about a child's welfare. Any concerns are recorded immediately and shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. Staff understand their responsibility to remain vigilant and to act in the best interests of the child at all times. The use of mobile phones and personal devices is strictly controlled. Staff do not use personal phones in learning environments and only school-owned devices are used for photographing or recording children's learning. All images are stored and managed within the school's secure systems. Safer recruitment procedures are followed for all staff working in the EYFS. All staff are subject to enhanced DBS checks and ongoing suitability assessments. Staff are aware of whistleblowing procedures and know how to raise concerns about colleagues' conduct. Medical needs, allergies and health arrangements are clearly recorded, and staff follow agreed protocols for first aid, medication and emergency procedures. At all times, paediatric first-aid trained staff are available in EYFS.

Health and Safety

We are committed to ensuring the highest standards of health and safety within EYFS. This includes:

- Regularly reviewed risk assessments for indoor and outdoor areas.
- Clear procedures for toileting, intimate care and personal hygiene.
- Safe food handling practices and awareness of allergies
- Supervision at all times.
- First-aid delivered by trained staff.
- Protocols for managing accidents, incidents and medical needs

Our practices prioritise pupils' dignity, safety and independence.

Supervision of pupils

All areas in our Early Years provision are delivered through a balance of adult led and pupil-initiated activities. In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (January 2024), our supervision ratios will always be above national minimum (1:8). In our 2-4 year old provision, ratios will be specifically based around EHCP needs but will never fall below 2 adults per 3 pupils. This is to ensure that learning, safeguarding, feeding and hygiene needs for all pupils can be met safely, even in the case of staff absence.

Transitioning beyond EYFS

As a school we use continuous provision as part of our learning environment in year 1 and beyond. We continue key elements of EYFS practice throughout Year 1, supporting a smooth transition and recognising pupil needs. Pupils experience gradual changes to routines, environments and expectations, aligned with their needs. Staff hold transition meetings with the next class, sharing assessment information and pupil profiles to ensure continuity and consistency across the phase.

Relevant Documents and References

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (January 2024) ([Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#))
- Development Matters in the EYFS 2021
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- EYFS Supervision Policy
- Intimate Care Policy