



The Federation of Cherry Oak School, Victoria School and Victoria College

Early Years Policy

This policy only applies to Cherry Oak School and Victoria School

Introduction:

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our Early Years classes across the Federation. The Foundation Stage applies to all children from the ages of two years to the end of the Reception Year.

Aim

At Cherry Oak and Victoria Schools we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become as confident and independent as they can paying specific reference to their individual needs. We value the individual child and work alongside parents, carers and other professionals to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.'

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this Policy: Admissions Policy, Health and Safety Policy incl. Risk Assessments, Equal Opportunities Policy; SEN Policy; Behaviour Policy; Safeguarding Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Complaints Policy, Manual Handling Policy, Intimate Care Policy and Educational Visits Policy.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

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Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Have a key person(s) approach to develop close relationships with individual children and their parents/carers
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out
- Ensure all medical needs are met and incorporate Communication and Physiotherapy as a natural part of the day and within all teaching and learning.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve their full potential within their time in Early Years.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

In planning and guiding the children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and incorporate these into our every-day practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are; **playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.**

At Victoria;

We have a 3 Year Rolling Programme of termly topics which cover all 7 Areas of Learning which include; 'Me and My Senses, Stories and Rhymes, Out and About' for example. A topic plan is sent home each term, to share with parents and carers what their child is learning at school and how they can help at home. An Early Years booklet with general information is given to parents at the start of the academic year.

Pupils are grouped into largely age related Key Groups for specific activities throughout the day: 'The Ladybirds', and 'The Butterflies'. Each group has Key Workers who lead the sessions as well as liaising closely with parents and carers via the home-school diary and telephone calls. The class teacher is responsible for the overall planning, record keeping and assessment of individual pupils. An HLTA supports the teacher with some of these responsibilities.

A typical day may include;

- Welcoming and sharing diaries
- Toileting programmes
- Choosing lunches
- Key Group registration incorporating a Literacy or Numeracy focus.
- Continuous Provision in small groups indoors and outdoors
- Snack and playtime
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Lunch and playtime
- Outdoor learning and Forest school
- Afternoon activities include soft play, sensory drama, swimming, Snoezelen or art
- Collective Worship at the end of the day

An eclectic range of teaching and learning strategies are incorporated across the day to meet the different needs of each pupil. A Total Communication Approach is used which ensures individual access to all teaching and activities through a wide variety of Alternative and Augmentative modes and systems.

At Cherry Oak;

We have a 4 Year rolling programme of termly topics which cover all 7 Areas of Learning which include; 'Marvellous Me, Animals and their Habitats, Transport, Space, Under the Sea, for example. A topic plan is sent home each term to share with parents and carers what their child is learning at school and how they can help at home.

Pupils are grouped across two Early Years classes, 'Acorns' and 'Berries'. Pupils are split into ability groups for focussed sessions throughout the day based on their needs. Each pupil has a key Worker who liaises closely with parents and carers via the home-school diary and telephone calls. Each member of support staff has the responsibility for a curriculum area. They prepare resources and often take the lead when delivering small group sessions. The class teacher is responsible for the overall planning, record keeping and assessment of individual pupils.

A typical day may include;

- Toileting programmes
- Continuous Provision – where pupils make choices of what they want to do and lends itself to more child initiated activities
- Registration
- Visual timetable – this gives pupils information about what they are doing throughout the day
- Snack and playtime
- Group work eg. ICT Focus, Science Focus, Music and Play- Communication and Play (MACPAC), Art

- Lunch and playtime
- Afternoon activities focus on Literacy and Numeracy Group work
- Collective Worship at the end of the day

Communication is key in all of our sessions and use pupils' individual, preferred methods of communication within our sessions i.e. Speech, Augmentative and Alternative Communication aids (AAC's), such as the GoTalk app on the iPad as well as objects of reference and Makaton signs.

Practitioners working in Early Years focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities where possible and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, Early Years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

Observation, Assessment and Reporting

Each pupil is base lined in their first half term of starting school onto the "Victoria/Cherry Oak Early Years Outcomes" on our SOLAR assessment system. EHCPs are used to identify current areas of need.

Throughout the year all foundation staff make regular assessments of the children's learning, through staff discussion, observations, photographic evidence alongside annotated notes. These are used as the basis of our Learning Journey Folders. This detailed assessment and recording system inform our future planning and ensure that planning is specific to needs of each individual pupil within the setting. Cross Federation moderation takes place to ensure consistency in judgements.

The Learning Journey folders are shared with parents and carers at parents evening. They are also asked to contribute to their child's learning journey by writing 'Wow' stickers, and sending them into school.

Parents and carers receive an annual school report at the end of the Summer Term, this highlights achievement and experiences in each of the Foundation Stage Areas of Learning. The Characteristics of Effective Learning are an integral part of this report.

Reception Baseline Assessment

At Victoria where appropriate our Reception children are also base lined within their first half term in Reception on the Reception Baseline Assessment.

At Chery Oak pupils in reception will be Base lined on SOLAR by October half term.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches aged five, the EYFS Profile will be completed for each child. Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. We will report whether the child is emerging, meeting or exceeding the expected levels of development. We are required to report this information to the Local Authority annually. These may be externally moderated.

Progress check at age two

We report to parents and carers on all the Foundation Stage Areas of Learning in the end of the year report and at the Annual Review of the Education, Health and Care plans.

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Key Person(s)

Each child is assigned a Key Person whose role is to ensure that the child becomes familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and carers.

Health

At Victoria

A dedicated nursing, physiotherapy and speech and language team are based on site at Victoria. Early Years has a named nurse and physio. The Speech and Language Assistants provide support and guidance and a referral system is in place for pupils to be assessed and seen by NHS Speech and Language Therapists. A Speech and Language Therapist is based at the school for 2.5 days per week

At Cherry Oak

A named nurse is based on site for one day a week but is contactable at Victoria. A speech and language Therapist is based at the school for 2.5 days per week and a physiotherapist is linked to the school.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill/accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety and Safeguarding.

Mobile Phone and Camera Policy

Due to the significant advances in mobile phone technology, there is the potential for both mobile phones and cameras to be used inappropriately and compromise the confidentiality of the children in our care. As in line with the school Mobile Phone Policy, which prohibits the use of Mobile phones within the setting, in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in the setting, and to prevent images being recorded and inappropriately used, The Federation prohibits the use of personal mobile phones by staff when working with children both on and off site, and prohibits the use by parent helpers or visitors when on the school premises or on school trips.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals across the Federation, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that they can achieve.

Parents as Partners and the wider context

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways. Parents are encouraged to attend workshops, performances, celebrating their child's achievements and gaining a support network with other parents and carers.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries, children centres and existing Key Workers. Newly admitted children attend introductory sessions to Early Years to develop familiarity with the setting and their Key Worker.

In the final term in the Early Years Class key information is passed to the new class team including; information for new teacher sheet, physiotherapy and communication needs and equipment, EYFSP report, Learning Journey files, end of year reports and SOLAR data. Detailed discussions between staff, parents and carers support a smooth transition process.

Date accepted by Governors:

04/10/2017

Signed by:



Reviewed:

October 2017

Date for Review:

September 2018