



Ravenswood School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Ravenswood School is an “all age” school for four to nineteen-year-olds with an Educational Health Care Plan. Most children start their learning journey from the age of four and a phased introduction is designed according to the child’s needs, circumstances, parental views and the context of the class at the time. Before a child starts at Ravenswood the early years teachers and support staff will visit the child’s current pre-school/ Springboard and arrange opportunities for their key worker to bring them to Ravenswood too. This enables children and their families, to familiarise themselves with the staff and environment.

Children generally remain in one of our early year’s classes for both the foundation stage and key stage one. All children follow an early year’s curriculum, focused on learning through play, as a context for learning which encompasses the requirements for key stage one, considering the diversity of the special educational needs of our children.

The early years foundation stage sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five years, and describes the curriculum used in our EYFS classes.

Aims:

By the end of EYFS we aim to have ensured that each pupil can:

- Use at least one functional communication method with support
- Improve their attention and listening skills to attend to a 1:1 activity for short periods of time.
- Play alongside adults.
- Express a like or dislike.
- Identify the classroom and at least 1 familiar adult in the class.

We achieve this by:

- Providing quality and consistency; a secure foundation; partnership.
- Working and equality of opportunity so that every child makes good progress.

To deliver this we will:

- Provide a safe and secure learning environment for the children, which stimulates an appropriate level of enticement for the pupils in our early year’s classes, particularly as due to the needs of our children, the transition to school may be particularly daunting.
- Provide a secure foundation, by planning fun and practical learning opportunities based around the needs and interests of each individual child (personalised learning).
- Promote a safe, challenging, rich and varied learning environment both indoors and outdoors, as well as within the wider local community.
- Promote independent skills including basic self-help and self-care skills.
- Provide each child with an appropriate and preferred communication system that will work for them as they progress through the school.
- Ensure all seven areas of learning and development, as detailed in the early year’s foundation stage, are given appropriate coverage, providing an appropriate balance between adult led and



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child led activities, and that planning is based on observations of the children and their interests, as well as building on prior knowledge and forming clear next steps in their learning.

- Work closely with parents/carers and recognise that parents/carers are partners in their child's learning.
- Ensure that all children have an equal opportunity, so that every child is supported and included and allowing all children to develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.
- Ensure that learning through play underpins the delivery of the early year's foundation stage.

Teaching and learning

All teaching and learning are based on a sound knowledge of child development, the early years and the key stage one curriculum and how development is affected by different categories of special need and vulnerabilities.

Planning opportunities build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests to develop self-esteem and confidence, whilst monitoring their progress and acting to support or extend where necessary. Children's learning will also be supported by individual learning targets based around their statements of educational needs or educational healthcare plan which families can practise at home.

The activities planned reflect the different ways in which the children at Ravenswood learn. There are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning, which underpin all activities;

- **Playing and exploring-** we encourage children to engage in investigating and experiencing things and to 'have a go'.
- **Active learning-** we motivate children to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically-** we encourage children to have and develop their own ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Due to the needs of the children part of our classroom is divided into designated areas for personalised tasks following the workstation approach. The classroom includes a group work area, circle time area, and choosing play areas. Each child has an individual timetable to be used for transitions between activities and the classroom will have opportunities for communication at various places around the room, e.g. communication boards, 'chat mat's', toilet symbols around the classroom etc.



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Play based learning

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative play and role play but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital component of children's lives. It is an important way that skills are developed and practiced. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, and behavioural and social development.

Principles of high-quality play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children's learning and development.
- Play has many possible, but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills.
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play encourages children to take risks and to become resilient learners

Role of the adult in play

- To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for children's interests and needs
- To plan, and resource, a challenging indoor and outdoor environment
- To support children's learning through planned play activity
- To extend and support children's spontaneous/self-initiated play
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play
- To plan and deliver high quality focused sessions based on prior learning and next steps of individual children

Independent learning

All pupils are encouraged to develop independent learning skills, and this is at the heart of Ravenswood's early years classes. The learning environment supports pupils in achieving this, as well as adults providing opportunities for this by adjusting the level of scaffolding they offer. Adults continually provide support to assist self-help and self-care skills to promote independence in familiar routines.

Curriculum

The curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning, three prime areas and four specific areas. Priority is given to the three prime areas of learning which are:

- **Personal, social and emotional development**
- **Communication and language**



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- **Physical development**

These are the core foundations to the school day and curriculum; and underpins all aspects of their learning. In addition, planning provides for all pupils to access the four specific areas: literacy; mathematics; understanding the world and expressive arts and design, at their own level and ability.

Planning is designed to ensure that all areas of the EYFS and key stage one National Curriculum are addressed through a range of topic areas, based on the children's interests and development. Termly topics are chosen with the children through their preferred communication method.

A mixture of indoor and outdoor play underpins the curriculum, children experience balance of structured learning and play alongside less structured learning through play. Our children very often do not have the skills and developmental maturity and cognitive ability to engage in play and exploratory investigations on their own. They need modelling and adult support to make sense of their environments and often require support to manage their own feelings as well as to engage and interact with others.

Assessment, recording and reporting progress

In the early year's classes at Ravenswood, assessment is made in the following ways, all of which contributes to the child's individual learning diary.

- Written observations- both formal and informal
- Photographs
- Dated examples of work
- Parental contributions through Seesaw comments and attached photos
- Comments on planning
- Comments on workstation work
- Comments from speech and language, OT and other specialist programmes
- During reception year, checklists based on the differentiated early years outcomes (DEYO) and Ravenswood Assessment frameworks, are used to record children's progress to inform parents and to identify next steps in learning and play development
- Information from DEYO is used to inform our assessment on the Early Learning Goals as a baseline on entry and at the end of the reception year

Parents' evenings are held in the autumn and summer terms to discuss progress. We also invite parents to three mornings/afternoons a year to meet/network with other parents. In addition to this we offer workshops alongside these sessions linked to feedback from families on how we can support with their child at home.

Reception pupils will receive an end of year report based on the seven areas of the curriculum and the child's EHCP outcomes, as well as a review of these during the year (and then subsequently once a year) to discuss their educational needs and provision.



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Specialist provision

As a special school for pupils with complex learning difficulties and specialist provision for autism, we offer a range of specialist strategies to ensure that all children are included.

Specialist support

- Highly structured environment, including the use of a workstation.
- Communication systems in place including SCERTS, PECs and Makaton.
- Total communication approach used by all staff including the use of Makaton, PECs etc... focused both inside and outside the classroom.
- Communication and attention strategies such as Intensive Interaction and Attention Autism.
- Frequent use of visual timetables and visual schedules.
- Specific input from speech and language team, physiotherapy and occupational therapy team.
- Sensory integration therapy such as TAC PAC, weekly sensory and Creative Arts lessons, and regular use of the Discovery room.
- Staff will call parents if there is relevant important information that needs to be passed on/ discussed e.g. accidents, injuries, challenging behaviours. Parents can also request a phone call from the team if needed. Information and examples of learning are also uploaded to see-saw on a regular basis. Families can view and comment on the learning uploaded.
- Daily phonics sessions for all pupils.
- A specialist classroom and outdoor area.

Medical

- Health care plans to ensure that pupil's care needs are provided for. These plans are formulated through liaison between parents and the school health nurse, before your child starts school. Specialist equipment such as standing frames, work chairs and hoists etc are used for those pupils whom medical and access needs are relevant.
- Healthcare Assistant on site to provide or support pupils' medical needs.
- School dinners cooked on site, special diets due to medical or religious needs can be provided.
- All EYFS staff Paediatric first aiders.
- Children must be seated safely when eating within sight and hearing of an adult. At least one adult in the room must hold a PFA (paediatric first aid) certificate. Where possible, staff should sit facing children to prevent incidents (including choking) and to be aware of unexpected allergic reactions. There must be ongoing discussion with parents/carers about weaning and food provided to match each child's developmental needs.

Behaviour support

- A behaviour support team in school, who devise Personal Behaviour Plans/Risk



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Assessments to promote good behaviour and regular contact with the CAMHS/Learning Disabilities Team to help deal with challenging behaviours/ issues across home and school.

- Social stories are individually created and used to support children with difficult issues or transitions.

Curriculum

- Learning outcomes based on the Differentiated Early Years Outcomes (DEYO) and early learning goals.
- Tasks are broken down, through task analysis using forward and backward chaining.
- Learning targets written for each child at the start of the year. These are reviewed twice a year, and parents are encouraged to work on these areas with their child at home.
- Opportunities for the children to explore the wider environment through trips or walks to develop social or behavioural skills. Parents sign permission sheets for local trips, and the use of photos before your child starts at Ravenswood.
- See-saw or emails are used, where each day a member of the class team will write to inform you of what your child has done that day. Parents are encouraged to add comments or questions for the class team to read or respond to.
- Weekly swimming sessions at local swimming pool from KS1.



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Safeguarding

At Ravenswood School we ensure that we comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025. Please see the school's safeguarding policy for more information.

Staff supervision

Rationale

The Early Years' Foundation Stage Framework places an increased emphasis on welfare and safeguarding standards, stipulating that regular staff supervision is now a statutory requirement. As we strive to improve outcomes for all children and families, and narrow the gap in achievement of vulnerable children, safe systems and the effective management of staff performance and well-being are of prime importance.

Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being
- Identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

Purpose

- To develop confidence, and increase skills, insight and courage when working with children, parents and communities.
- To establish and maintain a positive and co-operative working relationship between leaders and staff, built on trust, respect and a non-judgemental style
- To provide a reflective and safe space that encourages a dynamic interaction to address issues and dilemmas experienced by staff members in their work roles
- To reduce stress-related absences, and increase confidence in dealing with complex safeguarding and other dilemmas.
- To ensure organisational and staff accountability and development, thereby promoting reflective, creative, ethical and safe practice.
- To ensure staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and that their practice is consistent with setting's values, policies, procedures and quality standards
- To monitor progress in relation to appraisal objectives
- To identify and review personal development needs and activities for staff that relate to their roles and the needs of the setting
- To model a preferred way of working and relating, which can be transferred to other working relationships



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What does this look like in practice?

- Each member of staff will have a supervisor – this will usually be the Class Teacher (for support staff) or a School Leader (Teacher).
- Supervision will be in addition to Performance Management, be face-to-face, and take place in a setting private and free from disturbance.
- Support staff supervision, (including regular volunteers) will be a termly group session (1:1 sessions can be requested).
- Class Teacher supervision will be a termly 1:1 session and additional external supervision, coaching sessions will take place three times per year.
- During every supervision meeting, it is essential that both the supervisor and supervisee make a note of decisions made and actions required, and these actions are formally agreed at the end of the meeting.

Roles and responsibilities

Supervisors need to:

- Ensure that staff members receive the appropriate amount and regularity of supervision. This may vary according to roles and hours worked
- Avoid postponing supervision sessions. Where cancellation is unavoidable, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to arrange an alternative time as near as possible to the original time.
- Arrange a suitably private venue free from disturbances.
- Be prepared to challenge and to give and receive constructive feedback.
- Supervisees need to:
- Value the importance of supervision and contribute to an effective process.
- Prepare for, attend and actively contribute to supervision meetings.
- Act on decisions made in supervision.
- Be open to challenge and to receive and give constructive feedback.

Training and Development

Supervision training will be completed by all members of staff and will include general supervision skills and information for using standards and documentation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Supervision practices will be quality assured by the Deputy Headteacher.

Supporting Documents and Policies

DFE Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage September 2025.
DFE Develop Matters Sept 2023 (Revised)



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Birth to Five Matters – from Early Years Coalition 2021

DFE Guidance on Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People 2019
Safeguarding Policy. Intimate Care Policy.

Differentiated Early Years Outcomes (DEYO) Aligned to Birth to 5 Matters (Updated September 2021)

History of Document

Previous versions now deleted from system. New issue:

Issue No.	Author	Date Reviewed	Approved by Governors on:	Comments
6.	School	Sept 2016	04/10/16	
7.	School	Feb 2017	22/3/17	Referenced to 2017 guidance
8.	School	Sept 2017	04/10/17	
9.	School	March 2018		
10.	School	Sept 2018	10/10/18	
11	School	Oct 2019	16/10/19	Still awaiting government changes to policy
12	School	Oct 2020	07/10/2020	Added school end of EYFS outcomes
13	School	Nov 2021	01/12/2021	Updated information related to changes to the EYFS Updated changes to assessment process
14	School	Nov 2022	30.11.2022	Updated information related to changes to the EYFS Updated changes to assessment process
15	School	Nov 23	22/11/2023	Change of working Behaviour support plans replacing CHPs.
16	School	Nov 24	04/12/2024	Added EYFS staff supervision to the policy
17	School	Nov 25		Added EYFS staff as Paediatric first aiders
18	School	Nov 25		Added further details about principles of high-quality play and adults' roles within this.
19	School	Nov 25		Updates relating to eating.