



Lantern

ACADEMY

‘Where every child shines.’

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

2026 - 2027

Approved by: Governors

Review Date: July 2027

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1. Aims

This policy outlines the aims and principles for the Early Years Foundation Stage at Lantern Academy. All Early Years Staff are responsible for the successful implementation of this policy and will use this to evaluate and monitor good practice. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and

learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The learning and development requirements are informed by the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for good future progress. Early years providers must guide the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that children in their care complete the EYFS ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them.

Early year's teaching and learning at Lantern Academy follows the principles of the EYFS guidance and lays secure foundations for children's later learning. We intend to foster independence and confidence in every child.

At Lantern Academy we aim to ensure:

- The development of every child's communication and language skills is at the forefront of our daily practice, and we believe that planning to help every child to develop their language and emotional literacy is vital.
- That children 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.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- 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 [2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Our Principles

At Lantern Academy we strive to meet every child's entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best possible future life chances.

The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states four overarching principles which should shape practice in the Early Years.

These are:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

4. Intent:

The foundation stage is the start of our children's journey at Lantern Academy. It is a vital stage where the children develop into active, independent, imaginative, and creative learners who are school-ready. Throughout the foundation stage, children will develop an awareness of the wider world and the confidence to reach their full potential within it.

In our Early Years Foundation Stage, we aim to:

- Provide engaging and ambitious learning experiences that considers the needs and interests of children in each cohort.
- Teach the children the knowledge and skills they need to succeed at our school and in their future life.
- Give our children a thirst for knowledge and a desire to learn.
- Encourage the children to recognise and value cultural diversity.
- Provide a stimulating, language-rich learning environment which promotes effective communication and a love of reading.
- Promote and instil Lantern Academy's values to enable children to become polite, caring, and respectful citizens of the future.
- Work with all stakeholders to make children's start to school positive so that they are happy and healthy.

Our curriculum is carefully designed to lay the foundations to enable the children to successfully progress through each year at school. Our curriculum begins at 3 and is progressive from the foundation stage to year 6. The curriculum has been designed with our

school and community in mind. We aim for our children to leave the Foundation Stage with a keenness to know more and remember more.

Implementation:

Our foundation stage begins at 3 years and ends in the child's reception year. At Lantern Academy we strongly believe children learn best when they are actively engaged and ready to learn. Positive relationships with both parents and children set solid foundations for a partnership in learning.

In our Early Years Foundation Stage, we implement our intent through:

- Equipping the provision with a wide range of resources for children to access which develops their learning across the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum.
- Providing challenging, structured and unstructured activities to children throughout the day.
- Extending children's experiences and vocabulary through the topics, themes and stories we plan for.
- Regularly assessing children through observations and interactions to swiftly identify any children who may need their knowledge extending or consolidating. Summative assessments are carried out termly to track children's progress against our curriculum outcomes supported by Development Matters. These outcomes are monitored and moderated through our Trust to ensure consistency. All children are discussed and targeted during termly pupil progress meetings and next steps are identified and reviewed.
- Early identification of specific children who may need support and targeted interventions.
- Trained adults to deliver regular, high-quality interventions to support children's communication and language and gross motor skills. Interventions used include: Talk Boost, Colourful Semantics, Attention Bucket, Sensory Circuits.
- Adults supportively scaffolding learning to develop engaged, confident and independent children.
- Adults promoting effective communication through open-ended questions which model rich vocabulary.
- Liaising with all stakeholders both at the start and throughout the child's journey at Lantern Academy to ensure everyone is working together to meet the needs of each child.
- Delivering daily phonics sessions through the Little Wandle programme with additional targeted support for children, where needed. Termly phonics pupil progress analysis takes place using the Little Wandle heatmaps to identify the children needing additional keep-up sessions. When children begin to take part in reading practice sessions, the books that they read are carefully matched to the both the Little Wandle programme and the child's ability.
- Daily maths sessions using the White Rose Maths scheme and opportunities to develop their number sense throughout the day.

At the end of their reception year, each child is assessed against the early learning goals to provide a profile of their achievements and abilities. These profiles are shared with the next class teacher to ensure that these foundations are built upon in year 1.

Impact:

Our aim is for children to make more than expected progress and leave the foundation stage school-ready, equipped with a curiosity about life, learning and the wider world. Through a carefully designed, broad and balanced curriculum the children will leave Lantern Academy's foundation stage with:

- A deep understanding of our school values and how they can demonstrate these in everyday life through their behaviours and relationships.
- Improved communication skills
- A good knowledge of stories and the language used within these.
- The ability to blend and read with improved automaticity.
- Improved gross and fine motor skills.
- Increased numerical abilities appropriate for their age.
- An ability to express themselves creatively

With this in place, a solid foundation for the child's journey through school is built.

Children will leave reception and continue their journey at Lantern Academy with the resilience, self-belief, and enthusiasm to be the best they can be.

4. Learning and Development

In the EYFS at Lantern Academy we support every child's learning and development through:

- The seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes. The areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.
- The early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year.
- The assessment requirements (when and how practitioners must assess children's achievements, and when and how they should discuss children's progress with parents and/or carers).

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas and four specific areas of learning:

Communication and Language: we believe that the development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Thus, children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. We comment on what our children are interested in or are doing, and echo back what they say with new vocabulary added, to ensure that we are building children's language effectively. We read frequently to children, and engage them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then provide them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, to give our children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from our teachers and

support staff, and through sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, our children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development: we believe that children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. We provide our children with strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults as they enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. We know children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development: we believe that physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. We know that gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, our staff support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. We understand that gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional wellbeing. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. We provide our children with repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from our staff, to allow our children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy: we understand how crucial it is for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. We know that it only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics: we understand that developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. We know that children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships

between them and the patterns within those numbers. We provide frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will then develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that our curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. We feel it is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World: we know understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. We ensure that the frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, we ensure that our children are listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems to foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design: we know that the development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. We feel it is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through the characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and Exploring- children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active Learning- children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and Thinking Critically- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

5. Structure of the EYFS

Life in Early Years at Lantern Academy is fun and filled with exciting, playful, and enjoyable learning opportunities. Our school motto: "Where every child will shine" lies at the very heart of our Early Years curriculum offer. We are a large learning community across Reception and Nursery, but every child is known as an individual, instilling a sense of real belonging. We work closely with our parents and carers and build strong relationships with them from the onset to ensure that each child is happy, safe and learning as much as they

can. Our EYFS unit is led by an experienced qualified teacher who immerses our children in their learning whilst providing them with the Early Reading, Phonics and Mathematics skills to prepare them for their journey into school.

The development of every child's communication and language skills is at the forefront of our daily practice, and we believe that planning to help every child to develop their language and emotional literacy is vital. The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. At Lantern Academy, we support children in their back-and-forth interactions from an early age as we know these form the foundations for language and cognitive development. We value the number and quality of the conversations our children have with adults and peers throughout the day and understand that a language-rich environment is crucial. Staff use a variety of strategies to build children's language effectively, to ensure that children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures. We also ensure that our daily practice allows and encourages

all our learners to use their full linguistic repertoire in order to empower them and help them to realise their full potential. We actively encourage our children to speak, write and/or translate to and from their first language or any language they speak, as well as English, to support their learning.

In both Nursery and Reception, we use the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021' and 'Development Matters 2020' to inform our unique curriculum offer, which is deeply rooted in early childhood development and supports all of our children who we know develop and learn at different rates. The framework sets out the three prime areas of learning that underpin everything in our early years: Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development. The four specific areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. At Lantern Academy we understand that all of those areas of learning are connected together. The characteristics of effective teaching and learning weave through them all. That is because children in the early years are becoming more powerful learners and thinkers. These characteristics develop as they learn to do new things, acquire new skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become better communicators. We use these areas of learning to: underpin our broad and balanced curriculum offer; to ensure that our children's social and emotional needs are being met; and their wellbeing is being nurtured.

Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. 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.

6. Our EYFS Curriculum

In both Nursery and Reception we use the Early Years Framework and Development Matters to underpin our broad and balanced curriculum offer and to ensure that all children are

provided with opportunities to find their talent and learn to respect the differences of others. Our staff collect observational evidence which is documented in the children's learning Journeys which are shared with parents and carers and regular intervals during the school year.

We follow 'Little Wandle' for Phonics at Lantern Academy. Nursery pupils will be introduced to Phase 1 phonics through small, focused groups and adult-led activities. This is through fun and engaging activities, for example singing Nursery Rhymes, going on a sound hunt and exploring with musical instruments. Where appropriate, teachers will introduce some children to the initial sounds from

Phase 2. All children in Reception have a daily phonics session of 20 minutes. Children are taught as a whole class, with further interventions taking place to target all children's needs. Reception children will be taught Phases 2, 3, and 4 phonics by the end of the academic year some children will begin Phase 5 phonics where appropriate. We encourage our children to apply their phonics learning through their play and promote mark making, the use of print within the environment and story scribing.

Throughout Reception our children will progress through a range of phonetically decodable scheme books. Reading is taught through 1:1 sessions and all reading books used in these sessions are linked directly to the phonic phases that children are currently focusing upon. Books are changed weekly

throughout this stage as children are expected to re-read and practice fluency and decoding skills. Our children are taught in an environment that is rich in reading opportunities and reading is rigorously promoted and planned across the Early Years. We provide an inclusive and enabling environment for reading which empowers and encourages children to read a range of genres both in and out of doors. Every day, the whole class shares texts, which are beyond their independent reading ability, often using an enlarged text. Story time is a special time where staff bring the books to life, thus providing a context for teacher modelling, teaching and applying reading skills. Children are encouraged to take home any of these books to share with an adult for pleasure, practise re-telling stories and to gain confidence in reading.

In our Early Years we aim to equip children with a sense of mathematics as part of their world, by providing them with opportunities for practical application of their understanding. In Reception at Lantern Academy, early mathematics is taught through daily Maths activities focussing on Number, Shape, Space and Measure. These sessions are used to introduce new vocabulary, ways of applying mathematical thinking or effective ways of using resources. We then encourage the children to continue to apply maths within their exploratory play and use this as a tool for mathematics as a whole. Our staff have given extensive consideration to how each area of our continuous provision is engendering mathematical understanding or rehearsal of skills taught in our focussed Maths sessions.

We want our children to bring their mathematical understanding into their experiences since this makes maths more real and more purposeful.

We value the importance of providing our children with exciting and stimulating experiences that further enhance our children's learning and development. During the year we visit places of interest and explore places within our local community, such as Hawkstone Park

Follies, Attingham Park, Denso Nature Garden, Telford Town Park and local shops. We also welcome visitors to school, for example, the exotic zoo and a variety of 'People Who Help us' such as the Police, the Fire service, our School Nurses and the NSPCC to provide our children with real life learning experiences and inspire them to become effective citizens. These visits also ensure that our children are encouraged to think about what makes them feel safe at school and outside of school.

7. The Enabling Environment and the Importance of Learning through Play

In the Foundation Stage the emphasis is on active learning both indoors and outdoors, with child initiated learning and adult-led learning taking place based on observations of the children's interests and teacher assessments linked to the EYFSP. We encourage all children to access their own resources and equipment for their activities. 'Risky play' equipment is also used, such as shovels, hammers and nails to engage the children and develop their gross and fine motor skills. This is carried out under close supervision of adults. We aim to create irresistible indoor and outdoor learning environments, thoughtfully enhanced with authentic objects for children to explore, including items from the natural world. These resources spark curiosity, imagination and bring a unique quality to their learning and play.

Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. We hope to inspire our little thinkers and develop their curiosity to know more and learn more. We value the importance of play and how crucial it is to all areas of a child's development. We give our children time to become deeply involved in their play and ensure that every detail of their school day is committed to knowledge and skills growth, with children applying their skills to situations and experiences, and opening up opportunities to develop new ones alongside them.

8. Planning

We believe that children have a natural desire to learn, explore, discover and succeed. Our caring teachers and support staff plan a wide range of learning opportunities and use exciting provocations within the environment to ensure that children are motivated and deeply engaged in their learning. Our dedicated team listen to and observe our children closely to identify and follow each child's interests. By doing this, we recognise and take the opportunity to extend our children's interests and learning further, by facilitating key teaching opportunities and planning for our children's next steps.

Our team 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 experiences. 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, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. We teach thematically and use high

quality, engaging stories to enhance the children's learning. Our themes include: You Me Us, Celebrate, Around the World, Hoppity Hoppity, What's at the bottom of the garden and Under the Sea.

9. Assessment and Record Keeping

All of our Early Years Team are actively involved in the assessment and monitoring process. Monitoring of Early Year's practice is undertaken regularly to ensure the requirements of the EYFS are planned for and carried out effectively and the needs of all the children are fully met. We start this process before the child joins the Nursery, by listening to parent's accounts of their child's development and interests and note any concerns. This is collated into a baseline report with individual next steps for staff to consider during teaching.

Within the first 6 weeks of Reception, all pupils will complete the Reception Baseline Assessment which provides 'an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created.' (Reception Baseline Assessment Framework, February 2020) Each child will receive a series of narrative statements to describe their baseline performance, staff will use these statements to inform their practice when planning and observing individuals.

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their age and stage, interests and next steps needed, and then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, they respond to day-to-day observations about children's progress, and observations that parents and carers share.

All children have a Learning Journey to keep a record of independent evidence. The evidence is linked to the child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), which is available for parents to view and comment on during Parent's Evenings as well as being readily available upon parent's request. In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.

Staff make ongoing assessments of the children and their progress is discussed regularly at

Foundation Stage progress meetings, based on any evidence that has been collected as well as the teachers' knowledge of the children. Our Reception team write 'parent friendly' reports which provide a more rounded picture of individual children three times a year and hold Parent meetings twice a year. In

Nursery we have focus children and each half term a member of our Nursery team will meet with each individual child's parent/carer to discuss their child's progress and set targets to further support their learning and development.

The final meeting is at the end of the child's time in the Nursery and is a discussion about the child's development in all seven areas of learning. All records are passed onto the child's Reception teacher. In Reception our staff then continues these records and makes judgments based on the evidence at the end of the Foundation Stage. The judgments are then moderated with the Early Years Leader the Head Teacher. The children's FSP judgments are then submitted to the Local Authority.

10. Admissions and Transition at Lantern Academy and Nursery

We welcome children into our Nursery the term after their 3rd Birthday. The children will attend Nursery under the universal offer of 15 hours per week. Our children enter Nursery from pre-school provision, voluntary or private or straight from home. Admission to the Nursery follows guidelines set out by Telford and Wrekin. The Nursery has capacity for a total of 30 children per session.

Children enter their allocated Reception class in September if this is the parent's wishes. All children can start school in the September of the year in which they are 5 years old. Again strict procedures pertaining to admissions prevail and follow the Telford and Wrekin guidelines. Appeals by children wishing to secure a place at Lantern Academy when the class is at capacity are organised by Telford and Wrekin and decisions are given to the Head in writing after the appeal is heard. Parents have the right to defer entry to the Reception class before the age of 5 years old- in consultation with the Headteacher.

Our Early Years staff visit the children at home during the half term prior to them starting in both Nursery and Reception, as we feel this is an excellent way to build a strong partnership between our staff, children and their parents/carers. Home Visits allow us to get to know each child personally and gain a clear understanding of their backgrounds and starting points.

Reception children and parents/carers can expect:

- Our Early Years Team, Pastoral Team and SENDco make contact with our children's prior settings or providers to discuss essential information. We visit as many pre-school providers as possible to meet children in a familiar setting. Our staff also use any written information provided by pre-schools to inform early planning.
- 'Welcome to Reception at Lantern Academy' meeting in September- which provides our parents/carers with relevant information around our school prospectus and what to expect from their child's Early Years' experience at Lantern Academy. This meeting gives our

parents/carers the opportunity to hear from our Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Early Years Leader, and our Pastoral Team.

11. Partnership working with parents and carers

At Lantern Academy we believe that a child's education is shared commitment between dedicated teachers, motivated learners and enthusiastic parents with high expectations. Parents are our children's first and most enduring educators and we ensure that we use the information provided by our parents/carers to support children's development and progress.

Parents of Nursery children will be met at the EYFS blue gate at drop off and at the top gates when collecting their children. A member of the EYFS team are available before and after Nursery sessions to discuss children's needs and all parents are made to feel welcome and valued.

In Reception, we encourage the children to come in on their own to develop their independence. Our EYFS Team are always available to discuss any issues with parents at the end of the school day, longer appointments can be made through the school office.

Our Early Years Team use a variety of ways to keep parents fully informed about the curriculum and activities on a regular basis:

- All termly overviews can be found on our website and are displayed in our classroom.
- Weekly updates of the children's learning is displayed on DOJO and updated weekly.
- Regularly updated lists of forthcoming events with dates in a parent friendly format.
- Regular letters to inform parents of trips and meetings.
- Curriculum information letters.
- Early Years Team parent/carer meetings to explain the principles of the stage and how it affects their child in Nursery and Reception as required.
- Phonics, Early Reading and Mathematics workshops to enable parents to support their child at home.
- Use of our school's Instagram page to share activities, events and children's work across the curriculum.

In the Reception class the above statements are used to keep parents informed as well as:

- Reading diaries are used to communicate between school and home.

12. The Early Years Team and Working in Partnership

Our EYFS Team consists of an experienced Early Years Teacher and two Learning Support Mentors.

We place highly the benefits of working in partnership have a huge impact on the effectiveness of our EYFS setting. We value our partnerships and endeavour to actively maintain these by sharing information, ideas, expertise and our knowledge within our team and with parents, carers, colleagues and other professionals.

Within our role of enabling partnerships we:

- meet weekly as an EYFS team to discuss assessments, planning, individual children and research.
- work closely with our cluster schools: Hadley Learning Community – Primary Phase, Crudgington, Allscott Meads and Wrekin View to moderate work and share examples of good practice.

Our Early Years Team welcomes students and has built up strong relationships with local Further Education institutions and local schools. We also welcome parents who wish to volunteer in our Early Years setting.

All adults who work regularly in school are police DBS checked and their records are kept in school.

13. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

At Lantern Academy we ensure that children's unique needs are met and that they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We provide an environment which is welcoming, safe and stimulating.

We safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in our care. We adhere to Lantern Academy's child protection procedures and use CPOMs to record any safeguarding incidents which are then followed up by our Designated Safeguarding Leads. All staff undertake regular Child Protection training and Safeguarding is part of new staff induction.

14. Food and Nutrition for EYFS Children

At Lantern Academy, we are committed to supporting children's health, development, and well-being through the provision of nutritious, balanced, and age-appropriate food. We follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the updated 2025 Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers to ensure the food and drink we provide is safe, developmentally appropriate, supports children's health and wellbeing.

Providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:

- Get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.
- Develop positive eating habits early on. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.

The early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health.

Principles:

- Promote lifelong healthy eating habits from an early age.
- Provide meals and snacks that meet children's nutritional, cultural, and dietary needs.
- Ensure compliance with the EYFS 2025 statutory framework and nutrition guidance.
- Prevent choking and allergic reactions through safe food preparation and supervision.
- Partner with families to support and respect children's individual food requirements.
- Encourage a positive, inclusive, and sociable dining experience.

We provide:

- Healthy, balanced meals and snacks based on the four food groups: fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, proteins, and dairy.
- Age-appropriate portion sizes.
- Water freely available throughout the day, and milk at designated snack times.
- Menus that rotate every 2-3 weeks and are reviewed termly.

We avoid:

- Foods high in sugar, salt, or saturated fats.
- Artificial sweeteners and sugary drinks.

Our food provision reflects the guidance in 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings' and supports healthy growth and development.

Cutting food safely

We will make sure to cut food to a size that's right for a child's size, age and stage. This helps avoid choking. We will prepare food in accordance with the EYFS 2025 guidance to reduce choking risks.

Choking can happen with any food, but we will do everything we can to minimise the risks. When preparing food, we note that it is important to avoid round shapes as these are a choking hazard. We will cut small fruits lengthways and then halve again (quarters).

These fruits include:

- grapes
- raspberries
- strawberries
- cherry tomatoes.

We will avoid whole nuts for children under 5.

Paediatric first aid

A qualified paediatric first aider will be present at all times in the room during all snack and meal times.

Supervision when eating

An adult will always supervise children closely when they are eating. Staff will sit facing children while they eat to monitor choking hazards, prevent food sharing and quickly identify any allergic reactions. Children will be sat upright at tables or on the carpet, with expectations explained to children. Healthy eating and keeping ourselves safe are both key areas of our EYFS curriculum.

Special Dietary Needs and Allergies

- We maintain a current list of children's allergies, intolerances, and cultural dietary needs, this will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- This information will be shared with all relevant staff, including food handlers.
- Allergen information is displayed and followed in food preparation areas.
- All staff will ensure clear labelling and separation of allergen-free meals
- All staff receive training in allergy management and emergency response.
- We work closely with parents and healthcare professionals to develop individual care plans as needed.

Staff Training

All staff working with EYFS children will receive training on:

- ✓ Food hygiene and safety
- ✓ Allergy awareness
- ✓ Choking prevention
- ✓ EYFS Nutrition

Paediatric First Aid Training will be delivered by competent, regulated providers and kept up to date for all staff working with EYFS children.

Learning and Mealtime Environment

- Mealtimes are a key learning opportunity and are used to teach children about healthy food, hygiene, and manners.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods and take part in preparing simple snacks or meals.
- We support children to serve themselves where appropriate, promoting independence.
- Positive role modelling and discussions about food and health are encouraged.
- Mealtimes are social, inclusive, and calm.
- Children sit together with staff who model positive eating behaviours.

Independence is promoted by encouraging children to serve themselves where age appropriate.

Guidance for children aged 1 to 5 years

A healthy plate

We encourage children to eat a balanced diet containing a wide variety of foods. We plan meals and snacks that include a variety of food and drinks from the 4 main food groups every day. The more children try new foods, the wider the range of nutrients they will get from their meals. We will have children eat together in our setting. This encourages them to try foods that they might not try at home. For example, children who won't touch broccoli at home might happily try some if they see their peers eating it.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

- Lunchtime and snack menus are shared regularly with families and feedback is welcomed.
- We provide information on healthy lunchbox choices (for children bringing food from home).
- Families are consulted about dietary needs, food preferences, and cultural or religious requirements.
- We signpost parents to external guidance and support where appropriate.

Sustainability

- We aim to reduce food waste and promote recycling in food-related activities.
- Our menus favour seasonal, locally sourced, and sustainably produced ingredients where possible.

Cooking with Children

- Cooking and food preparation activities are part of our curriculum.
- These activities promote fine motor skills, math, science, and cultural learning.
- Health and safety guidelines are always followed.

Celebrations and Special Occasions

- We celebrate in healthy and inclusive ways.
- Families are encouraged to share culturally significant foods that meet our nutrition and allergy guidelines.

Cultural and Dietary Preferences

- We respect and accommodate dietary needs related to religion, culture, and ethical beliefs.
- Parents are consulted to ensure inclusive meal planning.

Key References for Food and Nutrition for EYFS aged children:

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2024, effective September 2024)
- Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Providers (DfE, 2025)
- Example Menus for Early Years Settings (Public Health England, 2025)
- Food Standards Agency: Safer Food Better Business
- Eat Better, Start Better (Public Health England / Action for Children)
- Start for Life – NHS

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved annually by all Early Years Staff and will be updated by the Early Years Lead and Headteacher and shared with all staff. Learning walks, lesson studies and monitoring will take place regularly involving all Early Years Staff.

The Early Years Leader, Senior Leadership team and Governing Body will monitor practise on a regular basis to ensure practice consistently reflects this policy.

All staff access CPD as part of the school's CPD priorities.
 At every review, the policy will be shared with staff and School Governors.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy
Information regarding Healthy Eating	See Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance See Healthy Eating Policy