

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Policy document provenance

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Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Should no substantive changes be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.	
Related policies and documents:	MARK Education Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy MARK Education Trust Health & Safety policy MARK Education Trust Complaints policy Hailsham Academy Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy Hailsham Academy Intimate Care policy

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The trust's mission

MARK Education Trust's aim is to provide the best possible education for our students, preparing them for life in the 21st century, so they can stand alongside their peers, locally, nationally and globally. This is underpinned by the trust's ambitious vision and clearly stated values. Please see [MARK Education Trust website](#).

1. Aims

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Hailsham Academy, we believe that all pupils are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, to enable them to develop their full potential and succeed in the future.

We aim to support each pupil's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- recognising that all pupils are unique and special
- understanding that pupils develop in individual ways and at varying rates
- providing a safe, secure and caring environment where pupils feel happy and know they are valued by the staff looking after them
- fostering and nurturing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community
- teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- encouraging pupils' independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes
- developing pupils' understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously
- supporting pupils to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ to their own
- understanding the importance of play in pupils' learning and development
- providing learning experiences which reflect pupils' interests to encourage and develop their natural desire, excitement and motivation to learn
- providing experiences which build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development
- providing effective learning opportunities in the whole environment, both inside and outside

2. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their reception year (age 5). At Hailsham Academy we accommodate pupils from the age of 2 to 5 years old (pre-school and two reception classes).

The pre-school is managed by the Early Years Leader. Working within the pre-school room is a deputy manager 4 full time pre-school assistants and a part-time preschool assistant all of whom hold a level 3 or above qualification.

In pre-school we comply with the legal adult-to-child ratios with a ratio of 1:8 for 3-4year olds and 1:5 for 2year olds.

There is a key person system in place within the pre-school where each pupil is assigned a staff member who builds a secure, one-to-one relationship with the pupil to support their learning, care, and development. They

act as a familiar, consistent point of contact for the pupil and their family, help the pupil settle in, and ensure their individual needs are met and communicated to other staff.

We offer places for the full range of Government funded childcare support, subject to eligibility and availability. Funded sessions available are 8.30am-11.30am, 11.30am-2.30pm and a fully funded day 8.30am-2.30pm. Parents/carers have the option of extending an afternoon session or full day by an extra hour finishing at 3.30pm but this hour is charged at £6. There is also a £6 hourly charge for any unfunded hours.

Reception is also lead by the Early Years Leader. In reception there are a maximum of 60 pupils split into two classes. We exceed the legal requirement of one adult to 30 pupils and have a teacher and teaching assistant in each class. Reception and pre-school staff will interact with all pupils within EYFS.

3. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that we must teach. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for building pupils' capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

We also support the pupils in 4 specific areas which help strengthen and develop the 3 prime areas, and ignite the pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Communication and language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. 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. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added; practitioners will build children's language effectively.

Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

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. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities and to develop resilience to persist and wait for what they want. 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

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, coordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility.

Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional wellbeing. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye coordination, which is later linked to early literacy. 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 adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy

It is crucial 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. 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

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. 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. By providing 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 develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built.

In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. 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

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. 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, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will 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

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. 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.

4. Learning through play

Experiences and activities planned will reflect the different ways that pupils learn. At Hailsham Academy we support pupils in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are:

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

Staff respond to each pupil's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As the pupils grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more focus on teaching essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning, to help the pupils prepare for Key Stage 1.

5. Assessment

At Hailsham Academy, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their progress, development, and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers and keep them up to date with the pupils progress and development. Staff will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

When a pupil is **aged between 2 and 3**, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the pupil's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a pupil is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed. It also focuses on any areas of possible concern, which may indicate a disability, special educational need, or developmental delay. The progress check will describe the activities and strategies that the school intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns, involving parents and/or carers and other professionals as appropriate.

Within the first 6 weeks that a pupil **starts reception**, staff will administer the reception baseline assessment (RBA).

In the final term of the academic year in which the pupil reaches age 5, staff complete the EYFS profile for each pupil (before 30 June in that term). The level of development pupils' should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs). The ELGs support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a pupil's development, and their readiness for year 1. When forming a judgement about whether an individual is at the expected level of development, teachers will draw on their knowledge of the pupil and their own expert professional judgement. This is sufficient evidence to assess a pupil's individual level of development in relation to each of the ELGs.

Each pupil is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development

- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

We share the EYFS profile with the pupil's year 1 teacher. This helps to inform a discussion between reception and year 1 teachers about the pupil's stage of development and learning needs and helps with planning activities in year 1.

The school shares the results of each pupils 'progress check' and EYFS profile (but not the reception baseline assessment) with their parents and/or carers. The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment of judgements. We submit EYFS profile data to the local authority on request.

Assessment will not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with pupils, nor require excessive paperwork or collections of evidence. Parents and/or carers will be kept up to date with their child's progress and development via Parent Consultations and opportunities to visit the setting. Observations of pupil's achievements are also collated in their own personal, online 'Tapestry' Learning Journal. Parents/carers receive a notification when an observation has been added, and they can then view this observation and any related photographs/videos and assessments.

6. Inclusion

We value all our pupils as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual pupil supporting and challenging them appropriately in order for them to reach their full potential.

We strongly believe that early identification of pupils with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the pupil the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers, the schools SENCo (special educational needs coordinator) and outside agencies.

We meet the needs of all our pupils through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend pupil's knowledge, experiences and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on pupil's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support pupils and to help them to learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all pupils is valued.
- Using resources that reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging and appropriate activities for pupils.
- Monitoring pupil's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

7. Partnership with parents/carers

We recognise the importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a pupil's learning.

We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child during a meeting before starting pre-school.
- Talking to parents about their child during a home visit before starting in reception.
- Preschool pupils meeting their key person before starting.

- Reception pupils having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school via carefully planned events.
- Supporting pupils through the transition from Nursery to Reception with a staggered intake of pupils within the first two weeks. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child’s teacher or key person if there are any concerns.
- Sharing information about what pupils are learning in school/pre-school and sharing pupils next steps with parents/carers.
- The progress check part 2 will be completed for 2-year-olds to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities.
- Parent consultations during the year where the teacher/key person and the parent/carer can discuss the pupils progress.
- At the end of their time in pre-school parents/carers will receive a summative assessment and reception parents will receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of the year.
- Allowing parents access to their child’s learning journey and assessment records through the online package “Tapestry” and at parents’ evening for reception pupils parents are invited to look at their child's books.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Nativity, school trips, sports day and the summer and Christmas fayre.

8. Behaviour for learning

The trust’s principles underpin the school’s behaviour policy and are designed to ensure that expectations are clear.

Guiding principles

The trust expects everyone within its community to make their MARK by having great:

M – Manners

A – Acceptance

R – Respect

K – Kindness

And expects students to demonstrate being:

M – Motivated

A – Articulate

R – Resilient

K – Knowledgeable

This means the trust expects:

1. All staff, students, trustees, local governors, parents and carers to work together in order to ensure high standards of behaviour both in and around our schools/pre-school.
2. Our schools/pre-school to provide a stable and high quality, inclusive and stimulating environment to promote and support our students to develop responsibility for their own behaviour.
3. Our schools/pre-school to pro-actively engage with the wider community and outside agencies to promote consistent support for students who need it.

4. Stakeholders to be involved in developing, reviewing and upholding our behaviour expectations.
5. Decisions to be considered, consistent and fair.
6. Suspension to be used proportionately and permanent exclusion to be used as a very last resort.

Primary phase school rules

In the Primary Phase pupils, staff, parents and visitors will be expected to follow the school rules:

- Safe
- Respectful
- Ready

Together we learn

These rules will form the basis of restorative conversations staff will have with pupils.

Rewards

We love to celebrate and reward the pupils for good attitudes towards learning! Some of our rewards include:

- Positive praise
- Stickers
- Dojo points
- End of term rewards
- Certificates
- Celebration assemblies

Please see the Hailsham Academy Behaviour Policy for more information.

9. Safeguarding and welfare

It is important to us that all pupils in school are 'safe'. We aim to educate pupils on boundaries, rules and limits and help them understand why they exist. We provide pupils with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Pupils should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all pupils. (See our Safeguarding Policy)

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. The safeguarding and welfare requirements, specified in this section, are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence".

Statutory Framework for EYFS September 2025

At Hailsham Academy, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the New Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage September 2025

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of pupils by adhering to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

- Ensure our Safer Recruitment procedures referenced in our policies meets the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework September 2025
- Ensure clear procedures are in place to check the suitability of new recruits working in early years settings in the Trust. Our Safer Recruitment Policy clarifies our expectations regarding collecting references, and these robust standards extend to all Early Years settings.
- Ensure annual safeguarding training is provided for all staff including Early Years staff and regular updates are provided throughout the year.
- Ensure there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and expectations of their role extends to all Early Years settings.
- Ensure the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures incorporate all Early Years settings and staff are trained annually in our Whistleblowing Procedures.
- Ensure pupil's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting in all our Early Years settings.
- Promote good health, prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action when pupils are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the pupil's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the pupils or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every pupil receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe and efficient management of the setting in order to meet the needs of the pupils.

Pediatric first aid (PFA)

All pre-school staff and the two reception teaching assistants hold a current pediatric first aid (PFA) who are available at all times, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

Absence

All absences are promptly followed up, and individuals are discussed at weekly attendance and safeguarding meetings.

If a pupil is absent for a prolonged time or if their parents/carers haven't told us about the absence, we will attempt to contact the parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts. Where possible, we will hold at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil.

Any concerns are referred to local children's social care services.

See our attendance policy on our website for more on this, including our expectations of parents/carers to report child absences.

Health and Safety

At Hailsham Academy, there are clear procedures for assessing risk, which include procedures for keeping pupils safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. We ensure pupils health and safety needs are met as follows:

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Pupil's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required;

- First aid equipment is accessible at all times, a record of accidents and injuries is kept on Meditracker and parents/carers are informed if a pupil has sustained an injury and first aid treatment has been given.
- First Aid will be administered by trained staff only.
- A health and safety policy and procedures, which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards, and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.
- An Online Safety Policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst pupils are in the setting. Cameras used in school must not be used for staff's own personal use.
- Appropriate clothing. Staff are expected to wear clothing that supports them in getting to a pupil's level and playing and engaging with pupils at floor level and within the outdoor area.
- We will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to any pupil while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Safer eating

While pupils are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All pupils will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating and seated safely in an appropriate chair in a designated eating space.

Before a child joins our setting, we will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

We will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At each mealtime and snack time it will be clear which staff member is responsible for checking that the food meets all the requirements for each pupil.

We will make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time.

We will prepare food in a way that:

- Prevents choking
- Meets each pupil's individual developmental needs
- Is in line with the DfE's [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of the incident and make the pupil's parents/carers aware. We will periodically review the records to identify whether we can change anything in our practice to make eating safer, and then take action as appropriate.

Lunchbox policy

We ask for parents/carers not to overfill their child's lunchbox and to consider portion sizes to prevent food wastage. We also ask that no confectionary such as chocolate bars or sweets to be included in lunchboxes along with any high sugar soft drinks/fizzy drinks.

Lunchboxes should contain at least one portion of fruit/vegetable. Grapes, cherries, tomatoes to be halved and cut lengthways so they are not a choking hazard.

We are a nut free school so no foods containing nuts are to be brought into school/pre-school.

Nappy changing

- Parents will supply nappies, wet wipes and nappy sacks.
- Pupils wearing nappies will be changed mid-way through each session to keep them comfortable and avoid nappy rash. They will also be changed as necessary if they have soiled or are over wet or uncomfortable, as and when the pupils need.
- A pupil will never be changed by anyone who has not provided an enhanced DBS.
- When changing a nappy, staff members must wear disposable gloves which are to be removed after every nappy change, disposed of and new ones worn for the next nappy change. Nappy changing stations are to be cleaned with disinfectant spray between changes.
- Pupils to never be left unattended on the changing table.
- Pupils are encouraged to use the steps to reach the changing mat, staff not to lift heavy pupils onto the changing table.
- Dirty nappies are to be disposed of in a nappy sack in the Sanagenic bin provided which is emptied regularly.

Toilet Training

Our staff will help parents decide if their child is ready for toilet training, Pupils are positively encouraged to use the toilet or a potty, depending what stage they are with potty training. For the pupils that are just out of nappies, staff will ask throughout the session if the toilet is needed. A pupil will never be forced on to the toilet or potty if he or she is unwilling to try.

Good hygiene practices are always followed at the Pre-school, and the pupils are shown how to use the toilet and how to wash their hands each time they have used the toilet. 'Accidents' will be dealt with calmly, sympathetically and in a way that does not make the pupil feel they have done anything wrong.

Feedback on progress will be daily with the parents / carers and plans adapted as and when necessary.

During nappy changes and toileting, we will balance a pupil's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs.

10. Transition

Transitions are carefully planned for, and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the pupil's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the pupil and other settings.

Parents/carers of pre-school pupils will be offered a meeting with their child's key person in the setting before starting. This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have.

Pre-school pupils will have at least one settling session before they start their regular hours. If needed they will have additional settling sessions. This will be based on a discussion between the parents/carers and the pupil's key person.

If pupils have previously attended another setting/childminder the key person may make contact, again the aim of this will be to support successfully settling.

Pupils new to reception will be invited to attend a Teddy Bear's Picnic with their parents/carers to develop familiarity with the setting and staff in July before they start. Our Reception staff will also visit or contact the local nurseries and preschools in return, to familiarise themselves with the children.

Reception parents/carers are also encouraged to take up the offer of a home visit (by the Reception class teacher and TA) or have the option to instead meet with staff in school.

To support our pre-school pupils moving into reception, pupils have frequent interactions with reception staff in the shared outside environment, and they are regularly invited into the reception classrooms such as

for story time. Reception teachers will also meet with each pupil's key person who will share the pupil's summative assessment.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teachers meet with the Year 1 teachers to liaise with them and discuss the individual pupil and their specific needs. This is so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Pupils will spend an afternoon a week in term 6 in their new classroom and have a transition day to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and are 'next year ready'.

At Hailsham Academy we strive to give every pupil the best possible start in their educational journey. We want all of our pupils to develop a positive attitude to learning in order to prepare them for the next stage of education, laying secure foundations for future learning and development.