



Daneshill School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Updated: November 2021

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The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Daneshill Prep School operates in accordance with the school's general policies in addition to this specific policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Within this document, the term EYFS is used to describe children who are in our Reception and Nursery classes at Daneshill Prep School

At Daneshill we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences which enable children to become confident and independent. We strive to ensure our children are happy and energetic with a thirst and excitement for learning.

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

In order to provide this "best possible start" for our children we adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and shape our practice based on the four guiding principles of the EYFS:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates

(EYFS Statutory Framework, 2017)

## THE UNIQUE CHILD

Here at Daneshill we value and welcome all children as unique individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We recognise the important decision parents make when selecting their child's Nursery and school setting and support parents to make an informed decision. We actively encourage parents to visit our school through our Open Day events where they have the opportunity to meet with relevant staff and gain an insight into life at Daneshill School. Once parents have chosen to take up a place at Daneshill School, transition arrangements are put in place to ensure all children make a successful transition from home/nursery to school. Children are invited to attend introductory settling sessions to develop familiarity with the setting, practitioners and their new peers. The class teacher will also make contact with feeder nurseries/childminders to discuss individual children with their key workers to enable us to best support each child on their learning journey. Assessment and reporting information from previous settings is also considered to support our understanding of the child. Children in our Nursery have many opportunities to visit the Pre-Prep and to learn with the Reception children and staff, supporting the staff members' understanding of each individual child before they begin in Reception. The small class sizes and appropriate ratios allows staff to spend quality time with each individual, getting to know children's unique characters, quirks, likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses.

Additional support and contact with relevant bodies and agencies is put in place for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning, and become part of their learning experiences. Collaborative planning as a staff and shared discussion time at the end of each day provides opportunities to reflect upon the children's learning, development and emerging need and interests. These discussions inform future planning, allowing us to challenge all children and quickly move their learning forwards. This enables us to provide a secure foundation for each child's learning based around the needs and interests of the individual child. Regular assessment and observation supports the team to measure children's progress across all seven areas of learning, using a range of child development documents. This allows us to identify those children who not making appropriate progress from their starting point and to implement programmes of support and particular learning opportunities to ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child at the end of the EYFS, identifying whether children are 'Emerging' or 'Expected' in relation to each of the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Each child's learning is evidenced through Tapestry where all relevant persons involved with the child are encouraged to contribute to create a personalised learning journey.

## **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

At Daneshill we endeavour to ensure all children feel safe, happy and secure in their learning environment. We recognise that supporting children's emotional well-being and their subsequent ability to learn and prosper depends upon forging and maintaining strong and positive relationships with the children in our care and between the children themselves. Here at Daneshill, we invest time and effort into forming these relationships through:

- valuing all children as unique individuals;
- recognising that all children learn in different ways and at different rates;
- small classes;
- liaising with previous teachers, settings and parents to understand the child's development and personality;
- ensuring all staff spend regular time engaged and involved with the children during independent learning;
- supporting children to 'be themselves';
- developing children's self-confidence to express and communicate their needs and feelings appropriately to both children and adults;
- supporting children to develop their social skills and their ability to play and learn with others in harmony;
- and supporting children to develop care and respect for others irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender.

Additionally we know the importance of developing relationships between all parties involved in the child, including staff, parents and carers. We recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways. These include:

- running 'Stay and Play' sessions throughout the year, inviting parents to engage with their child in the setting and to see how their child learns in school;
- providing parent information sessions such as curriculum meetings to inform parents as to how they can support their child to learn;

- using Tapestry to record and evidence learning so that both school staff and parents can upload observations of children's learning and have 24/7 access to the children's learning;
- promoting an open door policy to encourage and welcome parents to share news about their child, raise concerns or generally ask questions and queries;
- offering formal parents evening appointments three times per year to discuss their child's learning and progress;
- and providing an end of year report, containing the statutory EYFS profile (Reception).

Working with other services, Early Years colleagues and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children.

Before children transition from Nursery to Reception, the Nursery teacher meets with the Reception staff to pass on relevant information on the child and to share assessment information. In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher meets with the Early Years staff and discusses each child's development against the Early Learning Goals and their style of learning in relation to the Characteristics of Effective Learning. This enables the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children, supporting a smooth and seamless transition for our children.

## **ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

At Daneshill we believe in providing a learning environment that will inspire and engage all our children to support them to maximise their learning potential. We provide an environment that belongs to the children where they are provided with the opportunities to select and choose resources and equipment for themselves, developing resourcefulness. Both our indoor and outdoor environment provides children with stimulating learning opportunities and areas linked to the seven areas of the curriculum.

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

### **Communication and Language**

Children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.

### **Physical Development**

Children will be provided lots of opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement on both a gross and fine motor scale.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

We will help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others. They will learn to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings and understand appropriate behaviour; and become confident in their

own abilities. Children will learn to take care of their bodies and to make good healthy choices, including in relation to oral health.

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

### **Literacy**

Children will be taught to link sounds and letters and begin to read and write. These skills will be taught through the systematic synthetic phonics scheme, Read Write Inc. (RWI). They will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.

### **Mathematics**

Children will have lots of opportunities to develop and improve their use and understanding of number and counting to support solving problems involving addition, subtraction, doubling, halving and sharing. They will be taught to describe shapes, spaces and measures and to use shapes, objects and equipment appropriately and purposefully.

### **Understanding the World**

Children will be guided to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places and the environment. Children will be exposed to and will engage with different forms of technology to support their wider learning.

### **Expressive Arts and Design**

Children will explore and play with a wide range of media and materials as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

Throughout the day children have the opportunity to engage and learn in the classroom environment through:

- Continuous provision: a wide selection of opportunities, equipment and resources which children have free access to choose and select to support and develop their learning. This provision remains constant over time and is linked to the seven areas of learning and the different areas of the classroom.
- Enhanced provision: learning opportunities and activities which have been enhanced, developed and adjusted by staff to meet the arising interests and needs of the children.
- Directed teaching: learning which has been carefully planned by staff and taught to either an individual or group of children to support the understanding and application of a particular skill or learning objective.

Whilst children are provided the varying forms of provision, teaching and learning is underpinned by a play-based approach, recognising that children learn best through adult supported play:

*'children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults'*

We recognise the important role of the adult during children's play to interact purposefully with children to extend and further children's learning. The EYFS staff do this through:

- engaging and becoming fully involved with the children and their play;
- using thoughtful questioning to develop children's ideas and thoughts;
- guiding and supporting children to make choices and decisions;
- providing resources linked to children's emerging interests and needs.

As children move through the EYFS, focus on the seven areas of learning becomes more balanced. The three prime areas are of particular focus in Nursery with greater time allocated to the specific areas as children move through Reception.

## **DEVELOPING AND LEARNING IN DIFFERENT WAYS AND AT DIFFERENT RATES**

At Daneshill, we recognise that all children are unique individuals and, therefore, learn in different ways. In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework we consider the way in which children learn, using this information to guide and inform planning, learning opportunities and provision. Following guidance from the EYFS Profile Handbook, we support children's development through and within the Characteristics of Effective Learning, recognising "these factors play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner (2017)." We recognise that it our role as staff to support children to learn through play where they are able to explore and learn through their own preferred learning style.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning include:

### **Playing and exploring – engagement**

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

### **Active learning – motivation**

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

### **Creating and thinking critically – thinking**

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

At Daneshill we consider 'how children learn' and their ability to recognise this for themselves to have significant impacts on their achievements and potential to learn. This process begins in the Nursery through adult questioning and discussion. As children move into Reception, they are encouraged to reflect on their learning through the use of child friendly language linked to CBEEBIES characters which has been developed in relation to the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

We further recognise that children learn at different rates and use our ongoing observation and assessment of the children's learning to measure progress and inform planning to move all children's learning forward to enable them to reach their full potential. See the 'Unique Child' for more information.

### **PAEDIATRIC FIRST AID**

The EYFS at Daneshill follows the same policies and procedures for First Aid as the rest of the school. There is a separate policy in relation to the administering of medicine within the EYFS. All class teachers within the EYFS are qualified paediatric first aiders.

### **SAFEGUARDING**

At Daneshill we recognise the necessity to ensure the absolute safety and welfare of our children. Within the EYFS at Daneshill, we create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety and adhere to the school's wider safeguarding and child protection policies. The Deputy Head, Angus McDonald is the DSL for the whole school, including the EYFS and the Head of Pre-Prep, Sarah-Jayne Glenn, is the DDSL based in the EYFS and Pre-Prep.