



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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1. Purpose and scope

Redway School admits children from the age of two, although most children join at the age of three. This policy covers Nursery and Reception provision through to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It sets out how we will provide a safe, nurturing and ambitious early education for children with special educational needs and disabilities, including severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex medical conditions.

Our approach reflects the school's ethos of **Belong Believe Become**. We want every child to feel secure, build trusting relationships, communicate in ways that work for them and take an active part in learning. We recognise progress in small, meaningful steps and work with families to understand what matters to each child.

2. Principles

We recognise each child as a unique learner. Development may be uneven, and skills may emerge differently across situations. A child's physical access, sensory needs, communication, health and emotional security shape how they participate. We maintain high expectations while giving children the time, specialist support and repetition they need.

Positive relationships, an enabling environment and responsive teaching underpin our provision. Care routines, play, movement, shared attention and everyday interactions are valuable opportunities for learning. Children will have opportunities to initiate activity, make choices, explore interests and experience success.

3. Framework and related policies

This policy is informed by the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from September 2026, current EYFS assessment guidance and the SEND Code of Practice. The school will keep its practice aligned with current safeguarding, equality and data protection duties.

This policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding and child protection, SEND, curriculum and assessment, attendance, behaviour and restrictive practice, intimate care, medical needs and medicines, moving and handling, health and safety, online safety, educational visits, complaints and data protection policies. These contain the detailed procedures staff must follow.

Admission and relationships

4. Admission and relationships

Admissions and planning before entry

Admission is coordinated through the school's agreed admissions arrangements and relevant local authority processes. Before a child starts, the EYFS team will gather information from parents or carers, previous settings and relevant professionals. This will include strengths and interests, communication, developmental needs, family priorities, health, allergies, feeding, mobility, personal care and any safeguarding information requiring secure transfer.

Where applicable, the team will review the child's Education, Health and Care Plan and professional advice. Essential care plans, equipment, staff training and risk assessments must be in place for safe attendance. The school will work promptly with the family and relevant agencies to resolve barriers to admission and participation.

Settling in and phased starts

Transition will be planned with parents or carers and may include visits, photographs, objects of reference, familiar adults and shared information about home routines. Children will be introduced to people and spaces at a pace that supports their security and participation.

Where a phased start is agreed, the school will record its purpose, hours, support, review date and intended progression. Arrangements will be reviewed with the family and will not continue by default. Any reduced timetable for a child of compulsory school age must follow the school's attendance procedures and relevant local authority requirements.

Key person and family partnership

Every child will have an identified key person, whose name and role will be shared with the family. The key person will help the child form a secure relationship, coordinate information about care and learning and maintain contact with parents or carers. Familiar staff will provide continuity when the key person is absent.

Parents and carers are essential partners. We will listen to their knowledge of the child and share achievements, concerns and next steps in an accessible way. Families will be offered opportunities to discuss progress and contribute to planning. Interpreting, translated information or other communication adjustments will be arranged where needed. Significant changes in health, sleep, eating, medication or behaviour will be shared promptly through agreed channels.

Partnership with other professionals

Teaching and support staff will work with the partners in the EYCAN forum and relevant health, therapy, and social care professionals. Agreed advice will be translated into everyday practice, with clear responsibilities. Staff will seek clarification where advice conflicts or cannot safely be followed. Information will be shared securely and lawfully; safeguarding information will be shared when necessary to protect a child.

5. Curriculum, teaching and assessment

Curriculum entitlement

All children will have access to the seven EYFS areas of learning. Planning will connect these areas through meaningful play, routines and experiences. The three prime areas are communication and language, personal social and emotional development, and physical development. The four specific areas are literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, and expressive arts and design.

How we will teach

Adults will combine responsive play with purposeful adult guidance. They will notice children's responses, model actions and communication, allow processing time and repeat experiences so children can anticipate, participate and build understanding. Teaching will support playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically in ways accessible to each child.

Learning may include sensory stories, songs, movement, outdoor exploration, cause and effect, shared books, pretend play, early number experiences, creative activities and encounters with the wider community. Adults will adapt materials, positioning, pace and interaction to support meaningful participation. Sensory activities will have a clear purpose and will respect individual preferences and aversions.

Communication and participation

Every child will have a means of expressing preferences and influencing what happens to them. Staff will use the child's agreed communication approaches, which may include speech, facial expression, body movement, objects, photographs, symbols, signing, switches or other augmentative and alternative communication. Communication equipment must be available and accessible throughout the day, including care routines.

Staff will respond to subtle communication and recognise refusal, distress and requests for a pause. Children will not be required to use speech or make eye contact to demonstrate engagement. Home languages will be valued, and language difference will not automatically be treated as a learning difficulty.

Personalised learning and access

Individual priorities may include regulation, shared attention, anticipation, choice making, mobility, exploration or early independence. For children with profound and multiple needs, an achievement may be a consistent response to a familiar person or increased involvement in an activity. Staff will consider pain, fatigue, positioning, sensory impairment and fluctuating health when interpreting responses.

Therapy and care will support access to learning through agreed routines. Staff will implement programmes only within their training and competence. Independence means having greater agency and participation; it does not require a child to complete tasks without assistance. No child will be excluded from an experience because they cannot use conventional materials or movements.

Provision for children aged two

Two-year-olds will receive age-appropriate care alongside developmental adaptation. Staff will provide familiar routines, comfort, opportunities for exploration, rest and responsive interaction. Planning will recognise their chronological age as well as their individual developmental profile. The team will consider the demands of travel, separation, group activity and the length of the session.

Before entry, the EYFS Lead will establish whether the progress check at age two has already been completed. Where a child is aged between two and three and a check is required, staff will agree a useful time with parents or carers to meet and discuss strengths, identify support needs and set out strategies and appropriate professional involvement.

Ongoing assessment

Staff will use everyday interaction, observation, family information and professional advice to understand learning. Records will be proportionate and useful. Adults should spend their time engaging with children; an extensive portfolio of photographs or written observations is not necessary.

The school's agreed assessment approach will describe meaningful small steps, the support provided and how learning is used in different contexts. Reviews will consider communication, engagement, wellbeing, physical access and individual outcomes as well as curriculum learning. Where progress slows or a child loses skills, staff will explore possible causes and agree a response with the family and relevant professionals.

Reception assessment and reporting

The Headteacher and EYFS Lead will follow current Reception Baseline Assessment requirements, including the six-week assessment window, permitted adaptations and

procedures for exceptional non-participation. Decisions will be individual, special school placement alone will not be treated as an exemption.

The EYFS Profile will be completed for eligible children in accordance with current requirements. Teachers will assess the 17 early learning goals using the statutory judgements and follow local authority submission arrangements. SEND does not itself provide an exemption.

An emerging judgement will be accompanied by a meaningful account of the child's strengths, progress and next steps. Statutory outcomes will be considered alongside personalised assessment so that small but significant achievements remain visible. Early learning goals will not be used as a day-to-day curriculum checklist or as a ceiling on learning.

6. Safeguarding and wellbeing

Safeguarding and children's voice

All staff must follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures. Young children and children who communicate without speech may rely on adults noticing changes in movement, expression, interaction, behaviour or physical presentation. Staff must remain alert to abuse, neglect and unmet need and must not assume a concern is explained by disability or a medical condition.

Staff will report concerns to the designated safeguarding lead without delay and record them on MyConcern in line with school procedures. Immediate danger requires immediate protective action and emergency help where necessary. Concerns about adults, including low-level concerns, allegations and whistleblowing, must follow the school's separate reporting routes. Staff must not investigate concerns themselves or promise confidentiality.

Visitors, collection arrangements and access to the provision will be managed securely. Children will only leave with an authorised person or through agreed transport arrangements. Missing child and uncollected child procedures must be understood by all staff.

Attendance and absence

Parents or carers should notify the school promptly when their child will be absent. Staff will follow up unexplained or concerning absence through the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures, including for children below compulsory school age. Patterns will be considered alongside health, family circumstances and professional information.

We will work with families to address barriers to attendance and support access to education and essential services. Children's medical needs will be understood without allowing repeated absence or missed support to pass without review. Compulsory school age begins at the prescribed date following a child's fifth birthday; it does not automatically begin on entry to Reception.

Emotional regulation and behaviour

Staff will use consistent, nurturing responses, predictable routines and individual communication and sensory support. Distress will be understood in context, including possible pain, fear, fatigue, frustration or overload. Adults will help children regulate and repair relationships, rather than expecting skills they have not yet developed.

Intimate care and bodily autonomy

Children will receive personal care respectfully, following individual plans and the school's intimate care and moving and handling procedures. Staff will explain what they are doing through the child's communication approach, notice assent and distress and offer choices wherever possible. Privacy must be balanced with safe, accountable practice.

Toileting support will reflect readiness and health needs. Continence will not be a condition of admission or participation. Staff must use agreed equipment and seek advice if care becomes painful, difficult or unsafe. Unexplained marks or injuries will be recorded and reported through safeguarding procedures.

7. Safe care and the environment

Health medicines and emergencies

Children with medical needs will have agreed plans identifying routine support, emergency action, consent, equipment and staff competencies. Staff must know how to access help and follow the school's procedures for medicines, accidents, illness and infection prevention. Medicines must be stored securely while remaining promptly accessible to authorised adults in an emergency.

Care arrangements will include relevant needs such as seizures, oxygen, enteral feeding, allergies or respiratory support. Staff must not undertake clinical tasks without the required training and authorisation. Parents will be informed of significant incidents and any required statutory notifications will be made by the responsible school leader.

Eating drinking and oral health

Food and drink arrangements will reflect allergies, swallowing safety, cultural needs and individual feeding plans. Staff will check information before offering food, including during cooking and sensory activities. Prescribed textures, positioning, pacing and supervision must be followed. Children must remain within sight and hearing of an adult while eating, with staff deployed to respond immediately to choking or distress.

Only staff with the necessary competence may provide specialist feeding support. Children will not be pressured to eat or take part in food exploration. Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible in a way consistent with the child's plan. Oral health will be promoted through suitable learning and partnership with families, with any direct mouth care governed by consent and care arrangements.

Rest and sleep

Rest will be available according to individual need. Where a child sleeps, staff will follow current safer sleep guidance and an agreed plan covering the sleep space, positioning, bedding, supervision and checks. Sleeping children will be checked frequently and checks recorded. Specialist positioning or equipment requires appropriate professional advice and risk assessment. Sleep will not be used as a behaviour management strategy.

Staffing and professional support

Leaders will maintain the applicable age, qualification and staffing requirements and plan additional support around the children's assessed needs. For two-year-olds, the EYFS minimum is one adult to five children, with the associated qualification requirements; this is a minimum rather than a recommended staffing model for Redway. Staffing must also cover care, breaks, absence, transitions and emergencies safely.

At least one person with a current full paediatric first aid certificate will be available on the premises whenever children are present and accompany outings. Leaders will ensure sufficient cover for the layout and needs of the cohort. Recruitment, induction and ongoing suitability checks will follow school procedures. Staff will receive safeguarding updates, relevant specialist training and supervision that supports reflection on children's development and welfare.

Accessible spaces and safe experiences

Rooms and outdoor spaces will provide safe routes, accessible resources, appropriate hygiene facilities and opportunities for movement, quiet and exploration. Staff will check equipment and consider mouthing, choking, entrapment, falls, sensory overload and access to exits. Outings and specialist activities require suitable planning, staffing and individual risk assessment. Emergency evacuation arrangements will identify support and equipment needed by each child.

8. Transition and accountability

Digital technology and images

Technology will be used purposefully to support access, communication or learning. Staff will consider current guidance on screen use and each child's needs, balancing digital experiences with interaction, movement, rest and exploration. Assistive communication technology will remain available when needed.

Photographs and recordings must follow school policy and be stored and shared securely. Staff must not use personal devices to photograph or film children or upload school images or recordings to personal social media. Parental permission does not override school safeguarding rules. Concerns about misuse must be reported immediately through the appropriate school route.

Transition within and beyond EYFS

Transitions will be planned early with the child, family and receiving staff. Information will include communication, preferred interactions, sensory needs, learning priorities, care plans, equipment, risk assessments and what helps the child feel safe. Receiving staff must have the training and information needed before taking responsibility for care.

Movement into Year 1 will preserve approaches that help the child participate while extending learning through an appropriate curriculum. Continued use of developmental or play-based approaches does not automatically mean a child remains in EYFS.

Leadership and review

The governing board will oversee the quality and safety of EYFS provision and ensure leaders have appropriate resources. The Headteacher is responsible for implementation, staffing and compliance. The EYFS Lead will coordinate curriculum, assessment, transition and staff development and will support provision and multi-agency coordination, and the DSL will lead safeguarding practice.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for implementing agreed plans, maintaining safe practice and sharing concerns promptly. Leaders will review the quality of interactions, access to learning, children's progress and wellbeing, family feedback, attendance and safeguarding patterns. Evaluation will recognise the needs and starting points of the cohort and use individual evidence to inform improvement.

Parents or carers may raise concerns with the class team or EYFS Lead and use the school's complaints procedure. Safeguarding concerns will be directed immediately to the appropriate safeguarding route. This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if requirements or provision change.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually.

At every review, the policy will be shared with and approved by the school governing board.