

The Rydal Academy

Early Years Policy

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Approving Body: Local Governing Body

Committee: LGB

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Introduction

The early years are a uniquely important and precious time in a child's life and should be valued as such. These years lay the foundations for all future learning providing the base on which everything else builds. This is a crucial period of time for children who are just beginning their educational life. We recognise that and value the importance of establishing and providing firm foundations for lifelong learning.

Mission Statement

We aim to combine excellence in teaching with enjoyment in learning through the provision of an inclusive, balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares children for the opportunities and responsibilities in later life.

Our standards of excellence underpin children's development through play, care and education.

Aims of the Early Years

We aim to provide an environment and curriculum that underpins our ethos and beliefs;

- Personal, social and emotional well-being is paramount. All children have a right to feel included, secure, confident and valued.
- Children's learning is holistic and children learn best through first hand experiences and practical play opportunities.
- Fostering positive attitudes towards learning leads to successful confident children who all achieve their individual potential.
- Developing social skills helps children to co-operate, work together harmoniously, trust, and develop their own set of values.
- 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 carers. This partnership impacts positively on children's development and learning and breaks down barriers to learning.
- Children develop and learn in different ways. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. They foster the characteristics of effective early learning – playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically.
- An inclusive ethos promotes equality of opportunity, respect for cultural and religious diversity and a strong self-image boosting self esteem.
- Strong links with the wider community will enrich the children's learning experiences and provide opportunities for the community to become involved directly with learning that takes place within the early years.
- To provide a curriculum that encompasses both adult-led activities and child-initiated activities.

Outcomes for the Early Years Child

By following our aims and leading on from the values we believe in, children will be encouraged to develop specific skills and desirable qualities. Some of the qualities we hope every child would achieve by the end of the early years are:

- To have independence

- To be confident
- To have a strong self-image
- To display high self-esteem
- To feel secure and valued
- To be a holistic learner
- To work harmoniously with adults and children alike
- To show a keen interest and enthusiasm in learning
- To show respect and courtesy
- To develop levels of engagement, perseverance and resilience
- To display high levels of knowledge, skill and understanding
- To have thoroughly enjoyed their time in the early years setting.

Outcomes for the Early Years Parent/Carer

By following our aims and leading on from the values we believe in, parents/carers will be involved in developing their children's specific skills and desirable qualities. We aim to fully involve parents/carers in every aspect of their child's education, and expect parents/carers to possess these basic qualities:

- To attend termly open evenings to look at their child's work and learning journal
- To become involved in their child's holistic learning – including out of school activities e.g. autumn walk, visits
- To show an interest in and contribute towards their child's assessment
- Maintain close communication with their child's key worker or teacher
- To work co-operatively with staff in relation to homework, home/school diaries
- To attend and actively implement issues raised at parent/pupil progress meetings
- To show a keen interest and enthusiasm in their child's learning
- To feel fully involved in every aspect of their child's education throughout the early years.

Principles for Early Years Staff

To ensure high quality of education and care in the early years in our practice we;

- Employ qualified and experienced staff who understand child development.
- Create an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Provide continuity between both early years settings, and work as a team to meet children's individual needs.
- Plan a relevant, rich, stimulating and carefully structured curriculum through implementing the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012 guidance.
- Observe, assess and review building on what individual children already know and can do.
- Plan around the child's interests, maintaining the same learning objectives.
- Plan efficient transitions between home and school.
- Use effective communication systems with parents, carers and other agencies.
- Value strong links with the community through engaging in various activities e.g. visits to the local library, open house mornings.
- Create an atmosphere of praise and positive encouragement.
- Plan and co-ordinate efficient transitions from Nursery to Reception, and from Reception to Year 1.

Summary

By applying the principles in our policy in a rigorous way we know that every child will receive the very best education and opportunities within a fully supportive partnership. We believe that every child will be fully prepared to move into successive stages of their educational career and to do so with increasing confidence, motivation, understanding and independence.