



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

September 2025

Policy owner	Senior Leadership Team
Author	Carla Payne, EYFS Lead

Approved by

Consultation Group	Senior Leadership Team
Approval Committee	Academy Committee
Implementation Date	September 2025
Review Date	September 2027

Version Control

Version	Summary of Changes	Consultation Group	Effective Date
1.0	New Policy - no changes	Senior Leadership Team	September 2025

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a secure foundation for learning, development and 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
- A close working partnership between staff and 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 [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#), effective from 1 September 2025.

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

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Upwell Academy, our EYFS accommodates children from the age of 4 to 5 years. In our academy, we have one Reception class which has capacity to educate 30 children. The Reception class has a full-time qualified teacher, one full-time teaching assistant and one part-time teaching assistant.

4. 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 children's 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 children in 4 specific areas which help strengthen and develop the 3 prime areas, and ignite the children's curiosity and enthusiasm:

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

4.1 Planning

At Upwell Academy we provide a calm, nurturing, and well-organised environment where children feel safe, valued, and free to explore at their own pace. Our approach is rooted in love, respect, and the belief that every child deserves a warm and caring foundation for learning.

We use a continuous provision model both indoors and outdoors, enabling children to revisit, extend, and deepen their learning through open-ended, meaningful play experiences. Our setting is thoughtfully arranged to promote independence, curiosity, and a sense of calm, with natural tones, soft lighting, and carefully selected resources that invite exploration and reflection.

Planning is flexible and responsive, led by the children's interests and developmental stages. Observations are used to inform enhancements to provision, identify learning opportunities, and support each child's unique journey. Practitioners skilfully interact with children, offering gentle guidance and extending thinking through open-ended questions and sensitive support.

Our expectations for planning and provision include:

- A calm, enabling environment that supports emotional security and positive relationships.
- Continuous indoor and outdoor provision that is consistent, accessible, and engaging.
- Regular enhancements based on children's interests, developmental needs, and seasonal changes.
- Observations that inform planning and next steps in a natural, unobtrusive way.
- A focus on emotional well-being, with love, nurture, and connection at the heart of all we do.

We believe that a peaceful, predictable environment helps children to feel secure and ready to learn. Our team works closely with families to ensure each child is known, understood, and supported holistically. Through this approach, we create the conditions for deep-level learning, emotional resilience, and joyful discovery.

4.2. Teaching

Teaching in our setting is grounded in strong relationships, emotional connection, and a deep understanding of early child development. We recognise that children learn best when they feel loved, secure, and confident, and our teaching reflects this through nurturing, responsive interactions that value each child as an individual.

Our practitioners act as guides and facilitators, tuning into children's play and interests to extend thinking and introduce new ideas in a sensitive and respectful way. We do not rush, or interrupt play unnecessarily; instead, we look for moments to scaffold learning through modelling, questioning, commenting, and providing meaningful challenges.

Key aspects of our teaching approach include:

- **Child-led learning:** We follow the child's interests and ideas, building on them through well-timed interventions and resource enhancements.
- **In-the-moment teaching:** Practitioners observe, assess, and respond in real time, offering support and challenge during play.
- **Outdoor learning:** The outdoor environment is used as an extension of the indoor space and offers daily opportunities for exploration, risk-taking, and sensory engagement. Nature is a key part of our provision, with children encouraged to connect with the seasons and the world around them.

- **Holistic development:** Teaching supports not only the prime and specific areas of learning, but also emotional regulation, resilience, independence, and a strong sense of self.
- **Consistent routines with flexibility:** While the day follows a calm and predictable rhythm, we allow flexibility to follow children's fascinations and extend learning when engagement is high.
- **Respectful communication:** Adults model positive, respectful language and actively listen to children, promoting communication, emotional expression, and social connection.

Our teaching is intentional, yet unobtrusive - guided by a belief that meaningful learning happens through play, relationships, and real experiences. We are committed to creating a space where children feel empowered to explore, express themselves, and grow into confident, capable learners.

As the children 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 children prepare for Key Stage 1.

5. Assessment

At Upwell Academy assessment is a natural and meaningful part of our everyday practice. We believe that children's development should be understood in the context of their play, relationships, and emotional well-being. Our approach to assessment is calm, respectful, and deeply rooted in knowing each child as an individual.

We use ongoing observational assessment on Tapestry (a secure, web-based platform and online learning journal used to document and track a child's development) to understand children's learning and development across all areas of the EYFS. Our practitioners carefully watch, listen, and reflect on what children say and do during their play. These observations are used to identify progress, plan next steps, and respond sensitively to children's interests, needs, and developmental stages.

Our key principles for assessment:

- **Assessment is continuous and formative:** We do not rely on one-off observations or tests. Instead, we build a holistic picture of each child over time, through day-to-day interactions and involvement in their play.
- **Child-centred and strengths-based:** We focus on what children can do, celebrating their achievements and unique ways of learning, rather than measuring them against narrow expectations.
- **Responsive to development, not deadlines:** We understand that children develop at their own pace. Assessment is used to support—not pressure—children’s learning journeys.
- **Embedded in practice:** Assessment is not a separate task but an integral part of quality interactions and teaching. We observe and assess while engaged with children, ensuring they remain at the centre of the process.

How assessment works in our setting:

- **Reception Baseline:** Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the reception baseline assessment (RBA).
- **Weekly observations uploaded onto Tapestry.** Each child will receive at least 1x observation on Tapestry a week for parents to see.
- **Planning informed by assessment:** Observations are used to inform weekly provision enhancements, individualised support, and group planning.
- **Tracking progress:** We use Development Matters and Sonar (online assessment tracking tool) to monitor progress across the seven areas of learning. This tracking is developmental, not data-driven, and used only to support professional judgment and planning.
- **Termly reviews:** Practitioners meet to reflect on each child’s progress once a term, identifying any emerging needs or gaps in development early, so that support can be put in place sensitively and promptly.
- **Parent/carer involvement:** We work in close partnership with families, valuing their insights and contributions. Parents are encouraged to share observations from home, and we hold regular informal and formal conversations about their child’s development.

We are mindful to avoid unnecessary paperwork or assessments that take practitioners away from working directly with children. Our approach to assessment reflects our belief that every child’s learning journey is unique and should be supported with care, attentiveness, and joy.

In the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches age 5, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child (before 30 June in that term). Each child 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 the child's year 1 teacher. This helps to inform a discussion between reception and year 1 teachers about the child's stage of development and learning needs, and helps with planning activities in year 1.

The academy shares the results of each child's 'progress check' and EYFS profile (but not the reception baseline assessment) with their parents and/or carers.

In exceptional circumstances, after discussion and only in agreement with parents and/or carers, a child might stay in EYFS provision beyond the end of the academic year in which they turn 5. In these exceptional cases, we will continue to assess the child throughout their time in EYFS provision and complete their profile at the end of the year before they move into year 1.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. We submit EYFS profile data to the local authority on request.

6. Working with parents and carers

At Upwell Academy, we recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most important educators. We place great value on building strong, trusting relationships with families from the very beginning, ensuring that we work together to support each child's development, well-being, and learning journey.

We believe that effective communication, mutual respect, and shared understanding between home and setting are essential to helping children thrive. Our setting fosters a warm, welcoming atmosphere where parents feel listened to, respected, and included in every aspect of their child's early years' experience.

Our approach to working with parents and carers includes:

- **Strong relationships from the start:** We begin building connections with families during the settling-in process, taking time to understand each child's routines, interests, family culture, and any additional needs.
- **Daily informal updates:** We value regular, informal conversations with parents to share highlights of the day, reassure families, and stay up to date on each child's well-being. These can include quick chats at the door, brief notes, or photos shared Tapestry.
- **Celebrating learning together:** Parents are encouraged to share their child's achievements, interests, and experiences from home, which we incorporate into our planning and provision. We believe that children benefit most when home and setting work in partnership.
- **Parent consultations:** We hold termly parent meetings where we share progress, discuss development, and jointly agree on next steps. These conversations are relaxed, collaborative, and rooted in mutual respect.
- **Stay and play sessions / events:** Families are regularly invited to join us for special sessions such as "Stay and Play" mornings, celebration days, or outdoor learning experiences. These offer opportunities to connect with staff, engage in their child's learning, and build a sense of community.
- **Supportive and inclusive practice:** We work closely with families who may need additional support, offering a non-judgemental, listening ear and signposting to external agencies where appropriate. We respect all family backgrounds and strive to be inclusive, sensitive, and responsive in our approach.

At Upwell Academy, we are committed to building meaningful partnerships with parents and carers, grounded in love, trust, and shared purpose. When families and educators work together, children feel secure, valued, and confident—ready to learn and grow.

7. Staff

7.1 Staff training

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of care and education by investing in the ongoing training and professional development of all staff. We believe that well-

supported, knowledgeable, and reflective practitioners are key to creating a nurturing, high-quality early years environment in which children can flourish.

Our calm, child-centred approach to early years education requires staff to be not only skilled in early childhood development, but also emotionally attuned, responsive, and confident in supporting learning through play. Regular training ensures that our team stays up to date with current guidance, research, and best practice, while also deepening their understanding of the unique ethos and values of our setting.

Our approach to staff training includes:

- **Induction and mentoring:** All new staff receive a thorough induction, including training on safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour guidance, and our setting's philosophy and expectations. New team members are supported through mentoring and regular check-ins.
- **Ongoing professional development:** Staff take part in a rolling programme of training across the year, covering areas such as:
 - The EYFS framework and statutory guidance
 - Safeguarding and child protection (updated annually)
 - Supporting emotional well-being and attachment
 - Observing, assessing, and planning for learning
 - Inclusive practice and supporting children with SEND
 - Outdoor learning and risk assessment
 - Behaviour as communication
 - Speech, language, and communication development
 - Working in partnership with parents
- **Reflective practice:** We promote a culture of continuous reflection. Staff regularly take part in team discussions, planning meetings, and peer observations to share good practice, reflect on children's needs, and develop their approach together.
- **Specialist training:** Where specific needs are identified—such as supporting a child with additional needs, English as an Additional Language (EAL), or medical conditions—we ensure staff receive targeted training relevant to their role.
- **Leadership development:** We support staff at all levels to grow professionally, including those aspiring to leadership roles. Opportunities include attending external training courses, accessing online CPD platforms, and engaging in collaborative projects with other settings or professionals.
- **Well-being and support:** Staff well-being is prioritised within our calm and nurturing environment. We recognise that emotionally available adults are essential for

emotionally secure children. Time is made for reflection, peer support, and maintaining a positive team culture.

Our team is passionate, committed, and always learning. We believe that investing in staff development not only improves outcomes for children but also contributes to a thriving, motivated, and confident workforce.

Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will:

- Provide ongoing support, advice and guidance to all staff
- Attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework
- Liaise as needed with local statutory children's services agencies and our local safeguarding partners

7.2 Safer recruitment

When recruiting staff, we will follow the procedures set out in the latest EYFS framework guidance on checking the suitability of new recruits, including:

- Obtaining a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited
- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references

See our safeguarding policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures.

7.3 Whistleblowing

We make sure that all staff are aware of our whistleblowing procedures; feel able to raise concerns about any poor or unsafe practice; and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

In the event that a member of staff feels that they need to blow the whistle on misconduct, they should report their concern to the principal - Chris Harris. If the concern is about the

principal or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to Valerie Cook- Chair of Governors.

See our whistleblowing policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures and more detail on our procedures for handling whistleblowing.

7.3.1 Malicious or vexatious allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith, but investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that 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. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives at home or elsewhere.

See our child protection and safeguarding policy for more information.

8.1 Responding to allegations or concerns

If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will immediately notify our local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures. In emergencies, we will also inform the police.

If any allegation is made of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises or elsewhere, e.g. on a visit, we will inform Ofsted within 14 days of the allegation being made. We will also inform them of any action we have taken in response to the allegation(s).

8.2 Investigating the concern

When a concern is received by the principal, Chris Harris– referred to from here as the ‘recipient’ – they will:

- Meet with the person raising the concern within a reasonable time. The person raising the concern may be joined by a trade union or professional association representative or another accompanying person
- Get as much detail as possible about the concern at this meeting, and record the information
- Establish whether there is sufficient cause for concern to warrant further investigation. If there **is**, then:
 - Arrange a further investigation into the matter, involving the chair of trustees. if appropriate. In some cases, the recipient may need to bring in an external, independent body to investigate. In others, they may need to report the matter to the police
 - Inform the person who raised the concern about how the matter is being investigated and give an estimated timeframe for when they will be informed of the next steps

8.3 Outcome of the investigation

Once the investigation – whether this was just the initial investigation of the concern, or whether further investigation was needed – is complete, the investigating person(s) will prepare a report detailing the findings and confirming whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred.

The report will include any recommendations and details on how the matter can be rectified and whether or not a referral is required to an external organisation, such as the local authority in line with local reporting procedure, or police.

They will inform the person who raised the concern of the outcome of the investigation, though certain details may need to be restricted due to confidentiality.

Beyond the immediate actions, the headteacher, governors and other staff, if necessary, will review the relevant policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences of the same wrongdoing.

While we cannot always guarantee the outcome sought, we will try to deal with concerns fairly and in an appropriate way.

8.4 Staffing ratios

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff to child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

- We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils

8.5 Paediatric first aid (PFA)

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

8.6 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

We also have a DSL who has lead responsibility for safeguarding children. They are also responsible for:

- Liaising with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSPs (local safeguarding partners)
- Providing support, advice and guidance to all other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Attending a safeguarding training course that complies with the criteria set out in annex C of the latest EYFS framework

8.7 Absence

We're required to promptly follow up on absences.

If a child 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.

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

8.8 Oral health and tooth brushing

At Upwell Academy, we recognise the importance of promoting good oral health as part of supporting children's overall well-being. Healthy teeth and gums are essential not only for eating and speaking, but also for confidence, comfort, and long-term health. As part of the EYFS requirement to promote health and self-care, we take a proactive and age-appropriate approach to oral hygiene.

Our approach to promoting oral health includes:

- **All About Me topic (Autumn 1):** At the beginning of the academic year, we introduce our *All About Me* topic, which includes a strong focus on self-care and healthy habits. During this theme, we explore brushing teeth, eating healthy foods, visiting the dentist, and caring for our bodies. This helps children make personal connections and begin to understand the importance of looking after themselves.
- **Dentist visits:** We invite a local dentist or oral health professional into the setting to speak with the children about looking after their teeth. These visits are fun, engaging, and educational, often involving role play, story time, and hands-on activities such as practicing brushing techniques on model teeth.
- **Healthy eating messages:** We promote healthy snacks and drinks in line with our healthy eating policy. Children are encouraged to drink water and milk, and we talk about how sugary snacks and drinks can affect their teeth. These conversations are gentle, positive, and always linked to helping children make good choices.
- **Play-based learning:** We use stories, songs, role play, and visual resources to support children's understanding of oral health. Our home corner may be enhanced with dentist-themed resources, and we include books and puppets to make learning about brushing teeth engaging and fun.

By embedding oral health education into our daily routines and early curriculum, we help children build positive attitudes towards self-care from a young age. Our approach is gentle, consistent, and tailored to the developmental level of each child, ensuring they feel confident and supported as they learn to care for their teeth and overall health.

8.9 Safer eating

While children 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 children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating, and seated safely in an appropriate chair or highchair and, where possible, 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 child.

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 consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate.
 - We will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, we will record details of the incident and make the child'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.

8.10 Accident or injury

We keep a first aid box (which contains appropriate items for children) always accessible.

We keep an online, written record of accident or injuries and any first aid treatment.

We will inform parents or carers the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, of any:

- Accident or injury sustained by the child

- First aid treatment given

We will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of any child while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable.

8.11 Safety of premises

We make sure that our premises, including overall floor space and outdoor space, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children we care for and the activities provided on the premises.

We comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.

8.12 Toileting and privacy

We make sure that there are:

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children
- An adequate supply of towels and spare clothes
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

During toileting, we will balance children's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership Team every two of years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the Academy Committee.

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

This isn't an exhaustive list of policies and only includes policies specific to the EYFS. For a full list of our policies, see [Upwell Academy - Policies](#)

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/carer 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