

The Darent Federation of Schools

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



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Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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1. Aims

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at the Darent Federation aims to provide a secure, inclusive and high-quality foundation for learning which supports all children to achieve their full potential.

We aim to ensure that:

- Children experience a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum rooted in the EYFS statutory framework.
- Teaching and learning are consistent, high quality and responsive so that all children make strong progress from their starting points.
- Children develop the characteristics of effective learning: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted and no child is disadvantaged or discriminated against.
- We develop strong partnerships with parents and carers to support children's learning and development.

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2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy complies with and reflects the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, dated 13 July 2026, effective from 1 September 2026).

It is informed by the following statutory and local guidance:

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework (DfE, 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- SEND Code of Practice
- Kent Safeguarding Children Partnership (KSCP) procedures
- Kent County Council Early Years and Inclusion guidance

In this policy, 'must' identifies a legal requirement where it describes the EYFS framework. 'Should' identifies guidance or recommended practice. Where the Federation adopts a more demanding local procedure, this is identified as Federation practice.

3. Structure of the EYFS within the Federation

- **Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School** operates a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
- **Kemsing Primary School** operates a stand-alone Reception class.

In both schools, EYFS provision is carefully planned to ensure that Reception-aged children receive full entitlement to the EYFS curriculum while supporting effective transition into Year 1.

4. Curriculum

4.1 Curriculum Intent

In line with the EYFS statutory framework (DfE, 2026), the Darent Federation provides an ambitious, inclusive and developmentally appropriate curriculum that secures children's learning, development and care throughout reception.

Our curriculum:

- Prioritises communication and language development, recognising spoken language as underpinning all seven areas of learning.
- Is rooted in high-quality interactions, sustained shared thinking and adult modelling.
- Is play-based, while becoming increasingly structured across Reception to prepare children for Key Stage 1.
- Reflects the four overarching principles of the EYFS: the unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments, and learning and development.

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4.2 Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS curriculum consists of seven inter-connected areas of learning, as required by the statutory framework.

Prime areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The prime areas are prioritised, particularly for younger children, as they form the foundation for success in all other learning.

4.3 Educational Programmes

Educational programmes set out what children must be taught and experienced in each area of learning. Staff ensure:

- A language-rich environment with frequent high-quality back-and-forth interactions
- Explicit vocabulary development through stories, non-fiction, rhymes and conversation
- Regular opportunities for physical development indoors and outdoors
- Systematic early reading and phonics teaching aligned with statutory expectations
- A strong grounding in number, numerical patterns, mathematical vocabulary and spatial reasoning through practical experiences.

4.4 Planning and Teaching

Staff plan and deliver learning that:

- Is informed by ongoing formative assessment and professional judgement
- Reflects children's interests, developmental stages and individual needs
- Includes a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning

As children move through Reception, there is a gradual increase in adult-directed teaching to support readiness for Year 1, as outlined in the statutory framework.

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5. Assessment

Assessment in the EYFS is purposeful, proportionate and integral to teaching and learning, in line with Section 2 of the EYFS statutory framework (DfE, 2026).

Assessment:

- Is primarily formative, based on day-to-day observations and interactions
- Does not require extensive written or photographic evidence
- Informs planning, teaching and support

5.1 Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

The Reception Baseline Assessment is administered within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception, in accordance with statutory requirements.

- The RBA assesses early literacy, communication and language, and mathematics
- It is not used as a diagnostic or formative assessment
- Schools do not receive numerical RBA scores. Parents are informed that the assessment will take place, and the child's RBA narrative statement is shared with them if they request it. RBA outcomes are not used to label or group children.

5.2 EYFS Profile

The EYFS Profile is completed for every eligible child in the final term of Reception and submitted to Kent County Council no later than 30 June.

- Children are assessed against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs)
- Judgements are made as Expected or Emerging
- Assessment is holistic and based on practitioner knowledge and professional judgement

EYFS Profile outcomes are:

- Shared with parents and carers
- Supported by internal professional discussion and, where useful, peer discussion with local schools
- Submitted to Kent County Council
- Shared with Year 1 teachers to support transition.

6. Inclusion and SEND

We are committed to early identification and inclusive practice.

- Children with SEND are supported through a graduated approach: Assess, Plan, Do, Review.
- Reasonable adjustments and targeted interventions are used to ensure access to the curriculum.
- We work closely with parents, the Federation Inclusion Leader, and external professionals where appropriate.

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7. Working with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are recognised as children's first educators.

We support partnership working through:

- Regular communication and meetings
- Sharing learning and progress
- Transition meetings and workshops

Parents are encouraged to contribute to assessments and support learning at home.

8. Safeguarding and Welfare

Children's safety and wellbeing are paramount. Safeguarding and welfare arrangements fully reflect Section 3 of the EYFS statutory framework (DfE, 2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.

8.1 Safeguarding

In line with KCSIE 2026, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff take a child-centred and coordinated approach.

- Each school has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and appropriately named deputies.
- The DSL has sufficient time, authority and resources to fulfil the role description in KCSIE 2026.
- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction and at least annually, including updates relating to online safety, and are supported to understand and implement the Federation's safeguarding procedures in practice.
- Staff know how to recognise indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and understand their responsibility to act immediately on concerns.

8.2 Reporting and Recording Concerns

- All safeguarding concerns are reported to the DSL (or deputy) without delay.
- Concerns, actions and decisions are recorded promptly, accurately and securely, in line with KCSIE expectations.
- Information is shared appropriately to safeguard children, recognising that data protection legislation does not prevent information sharing where safeguarding is concerned.

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8.3 Safer Recruitment and Suitability

- The Federation ensures that all adults working with children are suitable to do so and that required recruitment, identity, qualification, reference, criminal-record and barred-list checks are completed in accordance with statutory requirements, KCSIE and the Federation's safer recruitment procedures.
- Staff and prospective staff are required to disclose any information that may affect their suitability to work with children, including relevant information arising during their employment.
- Before any adult starts work or volunteering in EYFS, the Federation completes the checks applicable to their role under KCSIE, the EYFS framework and its safer recruitment procedures. Any arrangement involving an occasional supervised volunteer is assessed against the applicable requirements before they have contact with children.

8.4 Staff Ratios and Supervision

- Reception classes, including the mixed Reception and Year 1 class, are subject to infant class size legislation: ordinarily no more than 30 pupils per school teacher during an ordinary teaching session, subject to permitted exceptions. Teaching assistants do not count as school teachers for this limit. Staffing is also planned around children's needs and safety.
- Children are always within sight or hearing of staff.
- Additional adults are deployed responsively to meet children's needs.

8.5 Paediatric First Aid

- At least one person with a current full-course paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises and available whenever EYFS children are present and accompanies children on outings.
- The Federation also arranges for a member of staff with this qualification to be in the room whenever EYFS children eat.

8.6 Health, Oral Health and Hygiene

We promote children's health in line with statutory expectations, including:

- Oral health education
- Healthy eating and hydration
- Hand hygiene and infection control

Full safeguarding arrangements are detailed in the Federation's Child Protection Policy.

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8.7 Safety of Premises and Animals

- The Federation ensures that EYFS premises, environments and equipment are safe and suitable for children.
- Banned dog breeds, as defined by Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, including XL Bully types, must not be kept or present on school premises at any time.
- Where other animals are present as part of school provision, appropriate risk assessments and supervision arrangements will be in place.

8.8 Sleeping and Rest Arrangements

- Where an EYFS child requires sleep or rest during the school day, staff will ensure that appropriate, safe and supervised arrangements are provided in accordance with the EYFS statutory framework.
- Children who are sleeping will remain within sight and hearing of staff and will be checked appropriately.

8.9 Use of Technology in EYFS

- The Federation has regard to the DfE guidance on children's screen use in early years settings, as required under paragraph 3.94 of the EYFS framework.
- Screen use within EYFS will be limited, purposeful and carefully planned, with a clear learning or developmental purpose. Screens will not routinely replace play, physical activity, outdoor learning, books, conversation or high-quality adult-child interaction.
- Children will not access digital content independently without appropriate adult oversight. Content used will be age-appropriate and checked by staff. Screens will not be used simply to occupy children during transitions or to manage behaviour. Staff may use short, pre-checked educational songs, such as tricky-word or counting songs, when children actively join in and an adult uses them to reinforce learning. The screen will be turned off when the activity ends.
- Appropriate adjustments may be made for children with SEND where screen-based assistive technology supports communication, access, participation or learning.
- Federation practice derived from the DfE guidance: Children in EYFS will not ordinarily use generative AI or AI-enabled tools directly unless their use has been specifically assessed as developmentally appropriate, safe and necessary for an identified purpose.
- The use of devices, images, video and online content will also comply with the Federation's Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Acceptable Use Policy, Child Protection Policy and Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy.

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9. Safer Eating in EYFS

The Federation's safer eating procedures fully reflect the food, drink and safer eating requirements within Section 3 of the current EYFS statutory framework.

Key principles include:

- Children are always supervised while eating
- A paediatric first aider is present during all meal and snack times
- Food is prepared in a developmentally appropriate way to reduce choking risk
- Staff are trained in food hygiene, allergy awareness and choking response
- Before admission, dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances and relevant health needs are obtained and shared with staff who prepare or handle food
- A named adult checks that food and drink meet each child's requirements at every meal and snack
- Allergy action plans are developed with parents and, where appropriate, health professionals, kept current and shared with staff
- Fresh drinking water is always accessible, and the Federation has regard to the DfE EYFS nutrition guidance.

As Federation practice, all choking incidents and near misses are recorded, shared with parents and reviewed; this includes the EYFS expectation to record and review incidents requiring intervention.

10. Behaviour and Relationships

We promote positive behaviour through:

- Clear routines and expectations
- Positive relationships and consistent boundaries
- Teaching emotional regulation and social skills

Behaviour management aligns with the Federation Behaviour Policy and supports children's self-regulation and wellbeing.

11. Transitions

We support smooth transitions:

- Into Reception (from pre-school or nursery)
- Within the EYFS
- From Reception to Year 1

This includes information sharing, transition visits and collaboration between staff.

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12. Monitoring and Review

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for monitoring EYFS provision across the Federation.

This policy is:

- Reviewed annually
- Shared with the Governing Body
- Updated in response to national or local guidance.

Appendix 1: Related Federation Policies and Procedures

Requirement	Federation Policy
Administration of Medicines	Medical Needs Policy
Allergy Safety/Food and Drink,	Allergy Safety Policy
Children's Screen Use	EYFS Policy / Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Acceptable Use Policy
Child Protection	Child Protection / Safer recruitment procedures
Complaints	Complaints Policy
Generative Artificial Intelligence	Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
Mobile Phones, Cameras and Smart Devices	Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Acceptable Use Policy
Online Safety and Acceptable Use	Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Acceptable Use Policy
Safer Recruitment and Staff Suitability	Child Protection / Safer recruitment procedures
SEND and Inclusion	SEND Policy / Inclusion Strategy
Staff Conduct and Allegations	Staff Code of Conduct / Child Protection Policy