Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (EYFS)

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1. Rationale

Futura Learning Partnership provides children with an **extraordinary Early Years education that values individuality and prepares children with the knowledge, skills, and values to become lifelong learners in an ever-changing world**. Children's natural curiosity is fostered through creative, active, and enquiry-based experiences that excite and challenge. Children have first-hand learning opportunities that enable them to be independent, resilient, and successful learners. The curriculum ignites a love of learning, inspires, motivates and expertly develops knowledge, skills and understanding. Early education will ensure all children are literate and numerate, recognising that a focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening and mathematics is fundamental alongside opportunities for purposeful play. Pupils will learn to be effective communicators, inquisitive investigators, problem solvers, challengers, and evaluators as they are immersed in an extensive academic curriculum accompanied by vast and varied enrichment opportunities. Strong partnerships with parents deepen and extend children's experience of school. By prioritising equitable learning experiences, every child in Futura will know the feeling of success. By recognising each child's unique and personal learning journey, we prioritise their needs and remain unwavering in our ambitions for them.

2. Aims

- The Trust will provide high quality, inclusive education for all pupils by providing a relevant curriculum led by practitioners who understand the specialist nature of early years' practice.
- Learning activities and opportunities value the inquisitive nature of the pupil and allow them to develop as autonomous learners, showing initiative and independence.
- A learning environment is created where emotional wellbeing is seen as paramount to successful learning.
- Past learning is valued and used as a basis to plan for future progress.
- Individual differences are acknowledged and all pupils treated equally, regardless of age, attainment, ethnicity, gender, language and special educational needs.
- Parental contribution is valued and used to establish an atmosphere of trust and respect between home and school.
- There is a flexible approach to learning which allows activities that encourage pupils to develop the characteristics of 'Exceptional Learners.'
- Observation and continuous assessment are used as planning tools for future learning.
- Opportunities are created to enable children to develop language skills i.e. fluency, coherence and understanding by providing opportunities to 'talk', as well as access to language through stories, songs and rhymes.
- The importance of play is recognised in all aspects of pupils' learning.
- A progressively sequenced and knowledge rich curriculum is provided which covers all areas of a pupil's development

3. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In Futura Learning Partnership (the trust) schools, for Reception, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. In the summer term before Reception children start school, there are a series of transition opportunities including, school visits, parent meetings with teachers, and discussions with Pre-School settings.

For Nursery and Pre-School children, session hours and times are agreed with individual schools. Where children are in receipt of the Early Years Funding, it is expected that they would attend the provision for a minimum of 15 hours a week.

5. A Unique Child

The trust recognises that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

6. Inclusion

The trust is fully committed to inclusive practice. All staff in the Futura Learning Partnership have the overwhelming belief that all pupils can succeed, irrespective of belief system, race, ethnicity, class, culture, gender, language, lifestyle or SEND and are fully committed to developing an equality based education for all. Through the persistent pursuit of excellence and outstanding teaching exceptional outcomes for all children will be achieved including for vulnerable learners and those with SEND or EAL. Teachers innovative approach and unwavering commitment to equality ensures remarkable progress is made by all students.

The trust treats each child fairly and with respect. All children and their families are welcomed to our community and are valued within each of our schools. The trust gives all our children every opportunity to achieve their full potential. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we have high aspirations and set challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the individual needs of every pupil and providing educational equity.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs

- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Safeguarding children's well-being and ensuring that they are kept from harm is of paramount importance. We aim to educate children about boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

7. Enabling Environments

The trust recognises that each setting's learning environment and staff plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

8. The Learning Environment

The EYFS setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and where they can rest.

The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Where possible, EYFS settings will have their own outdoor and covered area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children space to explore, use their senses and be physically active.

9. Learning and Development

The trust recognises that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

10. Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that teachers' have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school
- there will be a gradual increase over the Reception year of a more didactic teaching approach for certain sessions, in preparation for KS1.

11. Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through purposeful play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

12. Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. Play provides children with a sense of satisfaction and control as they take ownership of their learning.

13. Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children will be given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults will support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children are able to access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

14. The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and are interconnected. It is important to note that children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Therefore, opportunities for children to develop this will be evident in the seven areas. 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, the prime areas, are:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development, and
- Physical development.

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

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

All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expected level of development for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. The trust recognises that the Early Learning Goals are assessment indicators for staff to make their best fit judgements against and that the school curriculum will be much broader than these 17 statements alone.

In planning and guiding children's activities, adults will reflect upon the different ways that children learn. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and are encouraged to 'have a go'
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties; they enjoy their achievements, and
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

15. EYFS Curriculum

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, our Futura EYFS curriculum is enriching, meaningful and active so that our children can become fully immersed in their learning. The children will learn through a series of well-planned 'themed enquiries' to engage children in their broad range of learning opportunities.

Also influencing the delivery of the curriculum are the 4 themes of the EYFS: The Unique Pupil, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environment, Learning & Development.

16. Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Planning within the EYFS follows the Futura EYFS Curriculum and Toolkit recommendations to develop schools' Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. EYFS Teachers will use the Futura EYFS Toolkits, progressively sequenced curriculum to support with planning for the key knowledge and skills children will be learning. While the presentation of planning is not centrally dictated, it will clearly indicate learning intentions linked to the seven areas of the EYFS.

Types of Planning

- ***Long term:*** This provides a overview of a year's work within the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- ***Medium term*** - This provides a more detailed description of each term's opportunities. The learning objectives are taken from Areas of Learning and Development in the EYFS Curriculum Progression Document detailed in the Futura EYFS Toolkit.
- ***Short term*** – Short term plans consist of weekly plans. Weekly plans give details of adult directed and guided learning opportunities. Guided group learning opportunities and continuous provision are used to enable child led learning and times for observation opportunities.

All adults who work in the Early Years have a duty to be:

- ***Facilitators*** – to support learning in all areas.
- **Observers** – to check on children's learning and progress in order to plan next steps.
- ***Challengers*** – to enable children to meet their full potential

- There is a clear curriculum progression document in the Futura EYFS Toolkit for the expectations for children in the EYFS. This is used alongside Non-Statutory Government guidance (Development Matters) as a guide to plan learning opportunities.
- Children's individual interests will influence planning opportunities.
- At the start of each enquiry topic (usually the start of a term) an 'Learning Intentions and Opportunities Plan' is completed and shared with all EYFS team members and parents.
- A weekly short-term plan is completed covering all areas of the EYFS Curriculum.
- Planning incorporates opportunities for inside and outside learning experiences.
- Teachers structure their day in accordance with the Futura EYFS Toolkit recommended timetable.

17. Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

18. Communication, Language and Vocabulary Teaching

All schools in the Futura Learning Partnership follow the Futura EYFS Communication and Language Strategy. This details the deliberate way children are explicitly taught to develop their vocabulary and communication skills. This includes:

- Teaching and modelling vocabulary
- Teaching and modelling language
- Interactive reading
- Talking through collaborative talk
- Teaching and modelling social communication.

Strategies to develop children's language and communication will be delivered through using evidence informed teaching approaches including;

- Word of the week
- Word Aware
- Time to Talk

- Talk Boost
- Talk for Writing in the Early Year
- Team Talk

19. Phonics Teaching

The teaching of phonics is central to the development of reading. A systematic, synthetic phonics programme gives the children the skills needed to decode and build fluency in word reading. The trust's preferred approach is a total alignment with Read Write Inc for phase 2 and above in the Reception year. This will be implemented if there are concerns with outcomes in phonics. This will require a rigorous and consistent tracking system that enables early identification and intervention when a child fails to make the expected rate of progress. In addition, all classrooms will be literature rich, exposing the children to a range of narratives, modelling what good readers do, developing their vocabulary and extending their comprehension of a range of texts.

20. Maths teaching

- All children in Nursery, Pre-school and Reception will receive daily direct teaching of maths in addition to opportunities to apply and extend their mathematical learning in the continuous provision.
- EYFS teachers plan for the teaching of mathematics using the White Rose Maths Scheme and NCTEM Mastering Number Scheme.
- Children in Reception classes have a minimum of 5 whole class maths teaching sessions per week.
- Children in Pre-School classes have a minimum of 5 whole class / group maths teaching sessions per week.
- In both Pre-School and Reception there are daily opportunities to access mental maths through songs and games.
- Children in Pre-school and Reception classes complete a maths guided activity a minimum of once a week.
- Continuous provision in Pre-School and Reception provides opportunities for children to practise and reinforce maths skills.

21. Talk for Writing

- All Children in Pre-school and Reception classes have a daily 'Talk for Writing' lesson.
- Books used for 'Talk for Writing' lessons will be from the 'Pie Corbet' reading spine.
- TFW lessons will follow the TFW teaching sequence – 'imitation, innovation, invention.
- Following the TFW whole class lesson, children will be given the opportunity to explore the story in guided groups.
- Weekly guided and independent TFW learning opportunities will be planned and directly taught.

- Reception children will be taught early writing skills.
- Pre-School and Reception children will use the 'Word Aware' programme daily to enhance children's vocabulary.
- In Pre-school, children will be taught early writing skills through 'dough disco' and write dance'.
- In Reception children will be taught handwriting daily.
- Children will have daily access to TFW continuous provision.

22. Interventions

- A range of interventions will be offered to children based on their attainment against age related expectations (ARE).
- Where children are not meeting ARE, the class teacher, SENDCO and EYFS lead will discuss the intervention options available.
- Interventions for children include Talk boost, number / shape recognition**,** Numicon, maths games, Mathletics, phonics, word aware and A to Z writing, Precision teaching.
- The SENDCO will timetable and plan interventions along with the class teacher.

23. Home learning

- Children in Pre-school will have no formal homework, however the 'Rhyme of the Week' will be sent home weekly along with a story book to read with parents.
- In Reception two reading books from the schools phonic scheme will be sent home weekly.
- Handwriting and spelling opportunities will be sent home weekly for Reception children.
- Children in Reception will have access to learning apps at home for example 'doodle maths', interactive reading apps, Seasaw etc.

24. Assessment

All children in their reception year will undertake the RBA (Reception Baseline Assessment) within their first six weeks of schooling.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journey' books and/ or using Seasaw software. These sources also contain information provided by parents.

The trust uses the non-statutory guidance, Development Matters and Birth to Five document to support judgements against the EYFS Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from the Early Learning Goals. Assessments for Reception will be recorded on Insight/Bromcom at Baseline, mid- year and end of year assessments for Reception.

All trust schools will use, Seasaw for recording observations linked children's development in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goals to enable more meaningful moderation and collaboration across settings. From Term 2 onwards moderation will be a standing item for all EYFS cross trust meetings.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report for parents. The written report provides a summary of each child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and assessment scales. We provide regular opportunities for the parents / carers to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

25. Welfare - please read alongside the trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

"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."

The trust recognises and understands that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children and take all the necessary steps to keep them safe and well.
- Promote good health, including oral health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children and share these with relevant parties in line with the Data Protection Act.

26. Positive Relationships

The trust recognises that children learn independence from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families.

27. Parents / Carers as Partners

We recognise that parents / carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents / carers have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents / carers about their child before their child starts in our schools
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with the teachers and EYFS staff before starting school such as during 'Stay and Play' afternoons or shared story times
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting before their child starts school
- Offering parents / carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class and allowing regular access to the children's 'Learning Journey' books and/or SeeSaw records
- Encouraging parents / carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent / carer discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents / carers receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Reception year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourages collaboration between child, school and parents / carers: School trips, Concerts, Sports Day etc.
- Providing space in the children's 'Learning Journey' booklets and/or SeeSaw records for parent / carer to leave comments relating to the children's achievements.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. The EYFS teacher acts as a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistant, who provides interventions for their key children.

We have good links with our local pre-schools if we do not have one in school.. The EYFS teacher meets with pre-school staff to discuss new intake children. Staff and children from main feeder pre-schools are regularly invited to school events (Christmas productions, Concerts and Sports Day, etc.). Transfer documents, with assessment information for individual children are passed from our Nursery to Reception teachers and are requested from local pre-schools.

28. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Futura's EYFS School Improvement Lead every year. At every review, the policy will be shared with the board of trustees.