

Eaton House Belgravia Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

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Aims

This policy aims to ensure that children in the Early Years at Eaton House Belgravia:

- Access a broad, balanced, and stimulating curriculum that provides a secure foundation for learning, development, and good progress through school and life.
- Benefit from quality and consistency in teaching and learning, so that every child makes progress.
- Are supported through a close working partnership between staff and parents/carers.
- Are included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Eaton House Belgravia benefits from EYFS exemption, which allows us to go beyond the statutory framework while still embracing the best of its principles. We place a strong emphasis on the prime areas of learning — communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development — while also providing extended opportunities in literacy and numeracy from Kindergarten onwards. This combination ensures that children enjoy a secure foundation in wellbeing and executive functioning, while gaining early confidence in key academic skills.

Structure of the EYFS

Early Years provision at Eaton House Belgravia spans Nursery (Cubs and Bears) through to Kindergarten (KG), before pupils transition into Year 1.

Nursery (Cubs and Bears)

- Children typically join from the age of 2.
- Cubs gradually build stamina for longer sessions, beginning with shorter mornings and extending to full mornings and optional afternoons as appropriate.
- Bears progress towards full-day provision earlier, with a rich mix of play, outdoor learning, and early specialist subjects such as music, PE, and French.
- The emphasis in Nursery is on wellbeing, security, and executive functioning skills, ensuring that children learn how to learn and develop the confidence to explore and interact.

Kindergarten

- From age 4, children enter KG where the day becomes more structured.
- While the prime areas remain central, KG pupils also benefit from a heightened allocation of hours in English and Mathematics, building early literacy, numeracy, and reasoning skills.
- Outdoor learning, creative subjects, and cross-curricular exploration continue to be integral, ensuring balance across academic, personal, and social development.

Our 3-Tier Educational Framework

Eaton House Belgravia follows a distinctive 3-tier model of provision:

- Wellbeing – ensuring children are happy, confident, and secure.
- Executive Functioning Skills – nurturing independence, resilience, and the ability to focus, collaborate, and problem-solve.

- Academics – once these foundations are embedded, pupils access an accelerated curriculum that enables them to make above-average progress.

This structure allows for what we term Compound Learning: the step-by-step accumulation of skills and knowledge which, like compound interest, grows exponentially over time. By the age of 7, our pupils are exceptionally well-prepared both academically and socially.

Curriculum

As an EYFS-exempt school, Eaton House Belgravia has the flexibility to design a curriculum that goes beyond the statutory framework while continuing to uphold its best practice. We remain committed to the EYFS's emphasis on children's wellbeing, safeguarding, and the prime areas of learning, and enhance this provision with an enriched focus on English and Mathematics from the Bears onwards into Kindergarten.

Our Early Years provision is guided by the principles of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, September 2025), ensuring that children experience a broad and balanced start to school life. At Eaton House Belgravia, this is enriched by our distinctive approach, which places strong emphasis on the prime areas of learning while also providing extended opportunities in English and Mathematics from Kindergarten onwards.

The EYFS framework identifies seven areas of learning and development, all of which are interconnected. Three prime areas form the foundation for early development:

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

These are further strengthened by four **specific areas**:

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

Planning

Planning across the Early Years is ambitious, engaging, and responsive. In the Nursery, the focus remains on the prime areas alongside the development of executive functioning skills, enabling children to build secure foundations in wellbeing, social confidence, and independence. In Kindergarten, this balance naturally shifts, with pupils receiving a heightened allocation of hours in Literacy and Mathematics, ensuring fluency in phonics, vocabulary, handwriting, number sense, and reasoning. Throughout, planning is adapted to reflect the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child. Where additional support is required, staff work closely with parents and, where appropriate, external professionals to ensure every child makes strong progress.

Teaching

Teaching reflects the **three characteristics of effective learning**:

1. **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate, experience, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active Learning** – children concentrate, persevere, and take pride in achievements.

3. **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children develop ideas, make connections, and solve problems.

- 4.

Staff guide development through warm, positive interactions, ensuring that every child feels confident, valued, and inspired to learn. Outdoor learning, creative exploration, and specialist subjects such as music, PE, art, and mindfulness enrich the daily experience, providing breadth and balance. As children progress through Kindergarten, teaching increasingly emphasises early academic skills, ensuring that pupils are well-prepared to access the accelerated curriculum in Year 1 with confidence and enthusiasm.

Assessment

Assessment is a continuous process at Eaton House Belgravia, designed to celebrate children's achievements, identify next steps, and ensure that every child makes strong progress. Teachers and key persons use careful observation and interaction to build an accurate picture of each child's development across all areas of learning. This process is holistic, recognising wellbeing, executive functioning skills, and social confidence alongside academic attainment. Parents are seen as essential partners, and their insights are valued in shaping assessment and planning.

Our assessment framework includes:

- **Ongoing assessment** – daily observations inform planning and allow teachers to respond quickly to each child's needs and interests.
- **Progress check at age 2** – parents receive a short, written summary of their child's development in the prime areas, highlighting strengths and identifying areas for support.
- **Kindergarten Baseline Assessment** – completed within the first six weeks of Kindergarten, providing a clear starting point for long-term progress tracking.
- **EYFS Profiling** – completed at the end of the each Nursery School year Cubs and Bears; assessing children against the 17 Early Learning Goals and indicating whether they are "emerging" or "expected" in each area.
- Within the Cubs and Bears, ongoing formative assessments are made and shared with parents/carers using ArcPathway.

Due to our exemption, EYFS profiles are not completed in Kindergarten using ArcPathway. We will use our personalised methods of assessment detailed in our assessment overview. Parents receive two termly reports (Autumn and Summer terms) that offer comments on each pupil's progress in each area of learning. Parent meetings are held in the Autumn and Spring terms.

Working with parents and carers

We believe that children learn best when parents and staff work together in a genuine partnership. At Eaton House Belgravia, we place a strong emphasis on fostering open communication with families, recognising that parents are children's first educators and play an essential role in supporting their development. Daily conversations at drop-off and collection times allow staff to share successes, observations, and any small concerns, ensuring that information flows freely between home and school. More formal channels of communication include parents' evenings, written reports, and curriculum updates, providing families with a clear picture of their child's progress and next steps.

Each child is assigned a key person, who builds a close relationship with the child and family. The key person ensures that learning and care are tailored to individual needs and provides parents with a

trusted point of contact. They also offer guidance on how to support learning at home and, where appropriate, help families engage with specialist services.

Parents are invited to play an active role in school life, from attending workshops, assemblies, and performances, to supporting events organised by class representatives. This collaborative approach strengthens the sense of community and shared purpose that defines Eaton House Belgravia.

Staff

Our staff team is central to delivering high-quality Early Years provision. All adults working in the EYFS are suitably qualified, experienced, and committed to the wellbeing and progress of every child.

Leadership, Staff Training, and Development

- The EYFS Lead is Lisa McNeill, responsible for the day-to-day management of EYFS provision.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Ross Montague (Headteacher) and Lisa McNeill (Nursery Manager), supported by Deputy DSL, Mariam Asadi.
- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

They will:

- Train all staff in safeguarding and child protection in line with Annex C of the EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance.
- Refresh safeguarding training at least annually, or more frequently if updates are issued or concerns arise.
- Provide ongoing professional development, both internal and external, to ensure staff remain up to date with best practice.
- Carry out regular appraisal and supervision to maintain high standards of teaching and care.

Qualifications, Ratios, and Safer Recruitment

- Staff-to-child ratios meet or exceed statutory requirements.
- All staff hold appropriate qualifications, and at least one member of staff with a current paediatric first aid certificate is on site at all times.
- Specialist teachers in music, PE, and art enhance the curriculum.
- All staff undergo enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks before appointment.
- Safer recruitment practices are followed in line with statutory guidance and the school's Recruitment Policy, including references and identity checks prior to employment.

Staff Conduct, Accountability, and Whistleblowing

- All staff follow the school's Staff Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy.
- Staff are accountable for maintaining a safe and nurturing environment, upholding the school's ethos and values at all times.
- All staff are made aware of whistleblowing procedures and are encouraged to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice.
- Where a concern relates to a member of staff, it should be reported to the Headteacher. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, it should be reported to the School Principal, Alison Fleming.
- Concerns raised in good faith will always be taken seriously. Where an allegation is found to be malicious or deliberately false, disciplinary action may be taken against the person who made it.

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

Please also see a separate Selection, Recruitment and Disclosure Policy

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 therefore provide a welcoming, safe, and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

Responding to Allegations or Concerns

Any concern about a child's safety or welfare is reported immediately to the DSL (Ross Montague or Lisa McNeill) or, in their absence, the Deputy DSL (Mariam Asadi). The DSL follows local safeguarding procedures and liaises with statutory children's services and safeguarding partners as appropriate.

- In emergencies, the police will be contacted.
- Allegations against staff are managed in line with KCSIE and the school's safeguarding policy, with oversight from the Headteacher and Principal, Alison Fleming.

Process for managing concerns:

1. The DSL meets with the person raising the concern to gather and record details.
2. The DSL establishes whether further investigation is warranted and, if so, coordinates next steps (e.g. referral to external agencies, internal review, or involvement of the Principal or Safeguarding Governor).
3. The person raising the concern is updated on how the matter will be investigated and given an indicative timeframe.
4. Once the investigation is complete, findings are recorded, actions agreed, and policies reviewed to prevent recurrence.
5. Where allegations are unfounded but made in good faith, no action will be taken against the person raising them. Where allegations are shown to be malicious, disciplinary procedures may apply.

Staffing Ratios

We ensure that staff-to-child ratios meet or exceed statutory requirements:

- **Nursery:**
 - Age 2 years: 1 adult : 5 children.
 - Age 3 years and over: 1 adult : 8 children (at least one with a Level 3 qualification, and at least half of others with a Level 2 qualification).
- **Kindergarten and Reception (Independent School Classes):**
 - For classes where the majority of pupils turn 5 within the school year, ratios comply with the Independent School Standards: maximum class size 30 with a qualified teacher.

- For classes of younger children, we maintain at least 1 adult : 13 children, with a suitably qualified teacher or early years specialist.

Paediatric First Aid

At least one member of staff with a current full paediatric first aid certificate is present on the premises and available at all times, including eating and outings.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

- Responsibilities include:
 - Liaising with statutory children's services and safeguarding partners.
 - Providing support, advice, and guidance to staff.
 - Attending safeguarding training consistent with Annex C of the EYFS framework.

Absence

- Any unexplained absence is followed up promptly.
- If parents/carers cannot be reached, the school will attempt to contact all emergency contacts provided.
- Prolonged or unexplained absence may be treated as a safeguarding concern and referred to external agencies where appropriate.

Oral Health

We promote oral health through teaching children about:

- The effects of eating and drinking too much sugar.
- The importance of brushing teeth twice a day.

We do not currently operate supervised toothbrushing in school but support families to establish good routines at home.

Safer Eating and Hydration

- Children are always within sight and hearing of staff while eating.
- At least one supervising adult present at mealtimes holds a current full paediatric first aid qualification.
- Information on allergies, intolerances, and dietary needs is collected before entry and kept up to date.
- Allergy action plans are developed in collaboration with parents and, where appropriate, health professionals.
- Food is prepared to prevent choking and is consistent with the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance.
- Any choking incident requiring intervention is recorded, reported to parents, and reviewed to identify preventative improvements.
- Pupils have access to water throughout the day – within each classroom the children drink from individual cups topped up by members of staff or their individual water bottles, if they choose.

Accidents or Injury

- A fully stocked first aid box is accessible at all times.
- A written record is kept of all accidents, injuries, and first aid treatment.
- Parents are informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

- Serious accidents, injuries, illnesses, or deaths will be notified to the appropriate authorities (DfE/local authority/ISI) without delay.

Safety of Premises

The premises, including floor space and outdoor provision, are risk assessed regularly to ensure suitability for the age and needs of children. We comply with all relevant health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.

Toileting and Privacy

- Adequate, clean, and hygienic toilets and hand basins are available for children.
- Separate toilet facilities are provided for staff.
- Hygienic nappy changing facilities are available where required.
- Children's privacy and dignity are respected during toileting and nappy changing, while safeguarding principles remain paramount.

Monitoring arrangements

We are committed to ensuring that our Early Years provision remains of the highest quality and in line with statutory requirements. Monitoring is ongoing and multi-layered, involving leaders, staff, parents, and governors.

- **Leadership oversight**
 - The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the effectiveness of EYFS provision.
 - The EYFS Lead (Lisa McNeill) oversees daily practice, curriculum planning, and assessment to ensure consistency and high standards.
 - The DSL (Ross Montague) monitors safeguarding and welfare compliance for whole school, supported by the DSL (Lisa McNeill) .
- **Staff reflection and evaluation**
 - Staff engage in regular self-evaluation and team discussions to review practice and share best approaches.
 - Lesson observations, planning reviews, and work scrutiny contribute to continuous improvement.
- **Parent partnership**
 - Parent feedback is actively sought through informal conversations, parent meetings, and annual surveys.
 - Information from parents informs both individual planning and whole-setting development.
- **Governance**
 - Governors receive regular reports on the quality of EYFS provision, including updates on safeguarding, pupil outcomes, and resourcing.
 - Policies are reviewed annually by the governing body or earlier if statutory guidance changes.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, DSL, and EYFS Lead.