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 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026), while reflecting Eaton House Belgravia's EYFS exemption where applicable. We ensure that the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS are fully met and that our curriculum remains ambitious, broad, balanced, and responsive to the needs of our pupils.

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.

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**,** who is responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of EYFS provision.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Eaton House Belgravia is Mariam Asadi**.** Lisa McNeill is the designated safeguarding lead for the EYFS provision**,** working closely with the school DSL on safeguarding matters relating to children in the EYFS. Dr Christopher Halls, Headteacher, is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
- The DSL, Headteacher/DDSL and EYFS safeguarding lead work closely with the wider safeguarding team to ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements are implemented effectively and consistently across the school, including within the EYFS.
- All EYFS staff receive appropriate induction, safeguarding training and ongoing professional development to ensure that they understand their responsibilities and remain confident in implementing the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework and the school's safeguarding procedures.

They will:

- Ensure all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training in line with the current EYFS statutory framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, with updates provided as required.
- 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.
- Required pre-employment safeguarding checks, including the appropriate enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and barred list checks where applicable, must be completed before a new employee begins work. Volunteers are checked in accordance with the current statutory requirements and the school's safer recruitment procedures.
- 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 in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Low-Level Concerns / allegations procedures. Concerns about the Headteacher are reported through the route set out in the current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 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 and volunteers, we follow the current EYFS framework, KCSIE 2026 and the school's Selection and Recruitment Policy. No new employee begins work until the required enhanced criminal records check has been received. The school also considers the September 2026 removal of the supervision exemption when determining regulated activity and eligibility for barred list checks.

- Obtaining references for staff and volunteers before recruitment, directly from an appropriate employer, training provider or education setting and from a person with suitable authority.
- Recording required information about qualifications, identity checks, vetting processes, references and suitability in the appropriate central records.

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, Mariam Asadi, or the DDSL, Dr Christopher Halls. The DSL follows the school's current safeguarding procedures and liaises with the relevant statutory children's services and safeguarding partners as appropriate. Child-specific social care referrals are made to the local authority responsible for the child's home address.

- In emergencies, the police will be contacted.
- Allegations or concerns about adults are managed in line with KCSIE 2026, the EYFS statutory framework and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including referral or notification to the relevant external authority where required.

Process for managing concerns:

1. The concern is recorded promptly and the DSL/DDSL considers the information in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.
2. The DSL/DDSL decides the appropriate safeguarding response, including immediate referral to children's social care or the police where required, and seeks advice from the relevant external safeguarding authority when the concern relates to an adult.
3. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis, while ensuring that the person who raised the concern understands that it has been taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.
4. Safeguarding decisions, referrals, advice and agreed actions are recorded in the appropriate safeguarding record and followed through to completion.
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.
  - Undertaking DSL training and updates in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and the current EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Absence

- The school's attendance procedures are shared with parents/carers and set clear expectations for reporting absence. Any unexplained absence is followed up promptly.
- If parents/carers cannot be reached, the school will attempt to contact all emergency contacts provided.
- Patterns, trends, prolonged absence and unexplained absence are considered from a safeguarding perspective. Where there is a concern for a child's safety or welfare, the DSL considers referral to the relevant local authority children's social care service and, where appropriate, a police welfare check.

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.

Safer Sleep

Where children sleep or rest during the school day, arrangements follow the safer sleep requirements in the EYFS statutory framework. Staff take account of each child's age and individual needs, ensure sleeping children are appropriately supervised and checked, and maintain a safe sleep environment. Any sleep arrangements are agreed with parents/carers and reviewed where a child's needs change.

Children's Screen Use

In line with the EYFS framework effective from 1 September 2026, the school has regard to the Department for Education's guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. Screen use is purposeful, age-appropriate and linked to a clear learning or developmental benefit. It does not replace high-quality adult interaction, physical activity, play, outdoor learning, conversation, books or hands-on experiences. Staff consider the content, duration and context of screen use and support children to develop healthy digital habits.

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.
Registered early years childcare will not be provided from premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present, in line with the EYFS requirements effective from 1 September 2026.

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, Dr Christopher Halls, 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, Mariam Asadi, monitors safeguarding and welfare compliance across the school, supported by the DDSL, Dr Christopher Halls, and working closely with the EYFS Lead, 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, and sooner where statutory guidance or school procedures change.