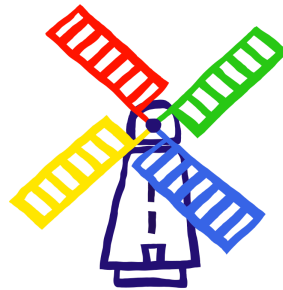


# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Unity  
Trust  
Courage  
Curiosity  
Respect  
Kindness

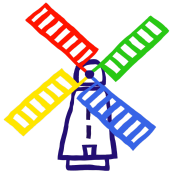


A community for learning. Raising expectations. Fulfilling high standards.

This policy was amended: **September 2026**

Headteacher: **Mrs Gemma Hillier**

This policy is to be reviewed by: **September 2027**



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“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.”

*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective from 1 September 2026*

### **1. Legislation and statutory requirements**

This policy is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026, and has regard to Development Matters and relevant current DfE guidance, including the Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance. It should be read alongside the school's safeguarding and child protection, health and safety, supporting pupils with medical conditions, SEND and other relevant policies. It is created using the most up to date 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE)' and Working Together to Safeguard Children' documents, currently September 2026.

### **2. Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

#### Structure of our EYFS

In Pre-School, we take children from the term after they turn 2. In Reception, we have a one class intake and can enrol up to 30 children in the class. The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

At Widmer End, we strive to meet the needs of every child through:



- The partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to feel secure and safe at school
- The understanding of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in the provision
- Building strong, positive relationships with every child by developing a deep understanding of their individual needs, backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, ensuring an inclusive and supportive environment for all
- A range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication
- Having a balance of child and adult directed activities, that help children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS
- Provision that builds on and extends children's interests, and develops 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors
- The identification, through observations and discussions, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents
- The strong relationships between our school and the other previous educational settings
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working in the EYFS

### Unique Child

We know that every child is different and develops in individual ways, coming from a variety of starting points. We are passionate about developing all children to be resilient, confident and self-assured. We know that children learn best when they are genuinely interested and engaged in their learning. Therefore, we make sure that our provision builds on and extends children's interests and develops their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. Planning is flexible and shows how all the curriculum areas can be developed in response to the children's interests and needs. Independence is an important aspect of our Early Years practice.



Our aims for developing children's independence are:

- Ensuring the way we store resources enables the children to access, select and use the equipment independently during their play
- Encouraging children to tidy up after themselves and to put things back where they belong
- Asking children to 'have a go' at dressing themselves before an adult helps
- Developing the children's understanding of their own health and hygiene. For example, reminding them to wash their hands regularly during the day, knowing when they feel cold and independently selecting fruit and milk or water when they feel hungry or thirsty (fresh drinking water will be available and accessible to children at all times).

Adults support children to develop self-regulation by helping them manage emotions, make decisions, sustain attention, remember instructions and become increasingly independent learners.

### **3. Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do within our Early Years provision. We recognise that children can only learn effectively when they feel safe, secure and valued. We are committed to providing an environment where children are protected from harm, their welfare is promoted and they are supported to develop positive relationships and resilience.

The school complies with all safeguarding and welfare requirements within section 3 of the current EYFS statutory framework. Detailed procedures are contained within the relevant whole-school policies and procedures listed in Appendix 1.

All staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and are trained in accordance with statutory requirements. Staff remain vigilant to indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and any factors that may place children at risk. Any concerns are reported immediately in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We work in partnership with families and external agencies to ensure children receive timely support. Our practice is underpinned by the principles of early help, professional curiosity and information sharing, ensuring that the needs and voice of every child remain central to decision-making.



#### **4. Safer Sleep and Unexpected Sleep**

At Widmer End, children do not routinely have scheduled sleep periods as our Pre-School provision is for children from the term after their second birthday. However, we recognise that children may occasionally fall asleep unexpectedly. All sleeping arrangements will comply with the current EYFS statutory framework and safer sleep requirements.

Any child who sleeps will have their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface appropriate for their age. Children will not be left sleeping on sofas, armchairs or other soft or unsuitable surfaces. Children will always remain within sight and hearing of staff and will be checked frequently while sleeping.

Children will be protected from overheating or becoming too cold and their head and face will remain uncovered. Sleep spaces will be kept clear of unnecessary items, loose bedding, pillows, toys, bumpers, wedges or other items that could present a suffocation or entrapment risk.

If a child falls asleep in a car seat or other equipment while travelling, they will be transferred to an appropriate separate sleep space as soon as they return to the setting. Coats, hats and excess clothing will be removed or adjusted to prevent overheating.

Should the setting ever care for a child under two years of age, the specific statutory EYFS safer-sleep requirements for children under two will be followed. This includes placing the child on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm, flat surface. Babies aged 12 months and under will only be placed to sleep in a cot, carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot. Appropriate firm, flat, waterproof mattresses and suitable lightweight bedding will be used. Babies under six months will have an adult in the same room for every sleep.

Staff will take account of each child's individual health and developmental needs and information provided by parents/carers. Unexpected or unusually prolonged sleep will be recorded and shared with parents/carers. If staff have any concerns about a child's breathing, responsiveness or wellbeing, first-aid and safeguarding procedures will be followed immediately.

#### **5. Safer Eating, Food Preparation and Choking Prevention**



At Widmer End, we are committed to keeping children safe when eating and to following the current EYFS nutrition and safer eating guidance. Food provided by the school will be healthy, balanced and nutritious and will be prepared in a way that minimises the risk of choking.

All children will be **supervised while eating**, remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff, and be seated safely. At least one member of staff with a current full Paediatric First Aid certificate will be present and readily available at all times when children are eating. All staff involved in preparing or handling food will be competent to do so and will receive appropriate food hygiene training. Food will be stored, prepared and served hygienically in accordance with the school's food safety procedures.

Food will be prepared appropriately for the child's age and developmental stage. In particular:

- **Grapes, cherry tomatoes and other small round foods** will be cut lengthways and into quarters.
- **Hard fruit and vegetables**, such as raw apple and carrot, will be cut into thin slices rather than small chunks.
- **Large fruit**, such as melon, will be cut into manageable slices.
- **Sausages**, where provided, will be cut into thin strips rather than chunks and skins removed where appropriate.
- **Cheese** will be cut into strips rather than chunks.
- Stones and pips will be removed from fruit and bones removed from meat and fish.
- **Whole nuts and whole seeds will not be given to children under five.**
- Popcorn, hard sweets, marshmallows and raw jelly cubes will not be provided due to choking risk.

Staff will check that food is prepared safely before it is given to children and will be alert to individual dietary requirements, allergies and intolerances. Parents/carers will be asked to prepare food appropriately when providing packed lunches or snacks from home.

All staff will know how to respond to a choking incident and will follow their Paediatric First Aid training. Any choking incident requiring intervention will be recorded and parents/carers informed.

Before a child starts at the setting, parents/carers will be asked to provide information about any special dietary requirements, food preferences, allergies, intolerances and relevant health requirements. This information will be recorded, kept up to date and shared with all relevant staff. Where a child has a known allergy or intolerance, staff will work with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop an appropriate allergy action plan. Staff will be made aware of the symptoms



# Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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and treatment of allergies and anaphylaxis and understand the distinction between an allergy and an intolerance.

At every mealtime and snack time, a designated member of staff will be responsible for checking that the food and drink provided to each child meets their individual dietary requirements and has been prepared in a way that minimises choking risk. Children will always remain within sight and hearing of staff while eating and, where possible, adults will sit facing children so that choking, food sharing and unexpected allergic reactions can be identified promptly. Staff recognise that choking can be silent.

Any choking incident requiring staff intervention will be recorded, including where and how the child choked, and parents/carers will be informed. Choking records will be reviewed periodically to identify any patterns or common features and appropriate action will be taken to reduce identified risks.

Further detailed food preparation guidance is available to staff through the school's food safety procedures and the current **DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition and Food Safety guidance**.

### 6. Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2026. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. 3 areas are known as the prime areas, seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Our ambitious EYFS curriculum has been carefully designed to build the knowledge, skills and vocabulary children need for future learning. It is sequenced to ensure children revisit and build upon prior learning, while remaining responsive to children's interests and individual starting points. Through high-quality interactions, purposeful play and carefully planned teaching, we prepare children not only for Year 1 but for lifelong learning. We place a strong emphasis on the explicit teaching of vocabulary. New words are carefully selected, modelled and revisited throughout the curriculum so that children develop the language needed to communicate effectively and access future learning.

Continuous Provision forms the foundation of our curriculum. Carefully planned indoor and outdoor environments enable children to revisit learning, practise new skills, apply knowledge independently



and follow their own interests. Adults enhance provision in response to observations and children's next steps.

### **The prime areas of learning are:**

#### Communication and Language

We give children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

#### Physical Development

We provide opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their coordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food and oral hygiene.

#### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We help children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, allowing them to form positive relationships. We support them to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, understanding relevant behaviours in different situations.

### **The specific areas are:**

#### Literacy

We teach children to read and write alongside our RWI phonics scheme. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest and we prioritise story time in our daily activities. We strive to provide a language rich environment, both indoors and outdoors as reading is at the heart of our curriculum. Children enjoy high-quality texts every day through story time, Drawing Club, rhymes, poetry and opportunities to revisit favourite books, fostering a lifelong love of reading.

#### Mathematics

We provide children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting and manipulating numbers. They learn how to spot patterns and use mathematical language in their everyday lives.



### Understanding the World

We guide children to make sense of their world around them and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places and the environment.

### Expressive Arts and Design

We enable children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

We consider the needs, interests and stage of development of each child and use this information to plan ambitious and enjoyable experiences for the children in all of the areas of learning and development. Examples of our rich and stimulating learning experiences include cooking, going out on trips and inviting visitors into the school.

### The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe **how** children learn. They are central to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and underpin all areas of learning and development. The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate, explore, and have a go.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate, persevere, and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children develop their own ideas, make links between experiences, solve problems, and choose ways to do things.

At Widmer End, we promote these characteristics through a stimulating, child-centred environment that encourages curiosity, independence, and resilience. Children are provided with meaningful opportunities to explore, investigate, take appropriate risks, make decisions, and learn from mistakes. Adults engage in sustained shared thinking, extending children's ideas through careful questioning, modelling language and encouraging children to explain, predict and problem solve.

### 6.1 Use of Screens



We have regard to current DfE guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. Screen-based technology is used purposefully and appropriately to enhance children's learning and is not used as a replacement for high-quality adult interaction, physical activity, play, communication or first-hand experiences. Staff consider the age and developmental needs of children when deciding whether and how screen-based technology is used.

### 7. Cultural Capital

We are committed to providing rich and varied experiences that broaden children's knowledge of the world beyond their immediate experiences. Through visits, visitors, books, celebrations, outdoor learning and meaningful experiences, we develop children's curiosity, vocabulary and understanding of the diverse communities in which they live. We ensure that children see themselves, their families and the wider world positively reflected through books, resources, celebrations and learning experiences that value diversity and promote belonging.

### 8. Positive Relationships

#### Role of adults

We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating their children. Our EYFS staff:

- Make home visits where they see appropriate for children with SEND and other needs
- Make setting visits with their previous setting (if attended), prior to their starting school;
- Provide the children with the opportunity to spend time in school before starting;
- Offer parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Pre-School and Reception;
- Encourage parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal parent's evening meeting in the Autumn and Spring term. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- Arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between the child, school and parents. For example, stay and play events, class assemblies and Sports Day

At Widmer End we believe that all adults in the school make a significant contribution to the well-being and development of all children. We recognise that children learn best when they feel emotionally secure, valued and understood. Therefore, positive relationships underpin all aspects of learning. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. They learn best when they



have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. Adults in the EYFS classes always ensure that they are sensitive and responsive to the needs, feelings and interests of all children.

- We seek to know and understand each individual child and their development
- We show enthusiasm and celebrate with children their interests and achievements
- We scaffold children's learning through talk, discussing strategies and ideas, suggesting possibilities and modelling approaches
- We encourage and support children to persevere through difficulties, take risks, ask questions and problem-solve
- We identify and support next steps in learning
- We are play partners within child-initiated activities following children's agendas and extending play

### Key Persons

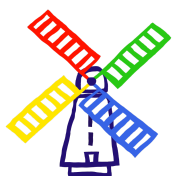
In our Reception class, there are two members of staff, working as a close team, who are the main key persons for the children in that class. In Pre-School, there are 2 key people who are responsible for the children in the class. This ensures there are good opportunities for children to experience frequent and consistent interactions and expectations. This helps children transition between home and school where the environment and routine is very different.

The role of the key person is:

- To help the child become familiar with the setting and provision within the setting
- To offer a settled relationship for the child
- To build relationships with the child's parents
- To ensure the child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs
- To engage and support parents in guiding their child's development at home
- To have a deep knowledge and understanding of the child
- To help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate

### Parental Involvement

At Widmer End we know that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education. Parental involvement in education leads to better results for children in the early years and beyond. We ensure that parents are fully involved in their child's education by:



- Gathering information from parents/carers before a child starts
- Ensuring photographic evidence/children's work is displayed around the setting, in wow books and on Class Dojo for parents to see
- Giving parents/carers the opportunity to take part in educational visits and share their interests and expertise
- Talking to parents about their child after school and maintaining an open door policy
- Offering parents/carers the opportunity to record their child's response to experiences and to share achievements on Class Dojo
- Delivering workshops to share our practice, ethos and ideas with parents/carers
- Involving parents in the development and building of the curriculum, listening to their views, and incorporating their ideas

Throughout the summer term we work closely with parents and Year 1 staff to ensure a smooth transition. Information about children's learning, interests and next steps is shared to support continuity of learning.

### **9. Enabling Environments**

At Widmer End, we know that a rich environment has an immediate effect on the quality of children's learning and development. An enabling environment encourages children to play and learn because they feel secure. When children feel emotionally safe they are able to explore and find out about the world around them. The outdoor and indoor spaces are seen as one, with activities flowing freely. There are areas where children can be active, be quiet, be creative, be imaginative and much more. We ensure that both the indoor and outdoor areas contain print (such as displays, books, labels and questions) so that children begin to understand that print conveys meaning and they develop those important early literacy skills.

### **10. Learning and Development**

At Widmer End, we recognise 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.

#### Equal Opportunities

In line with the inclusive ethos of our school, all children are given equal opportunities to learn and have access to the curriculum, irrespective of differences. Children are encouraged to develop self-respect and respect for one another.



### Special Needs

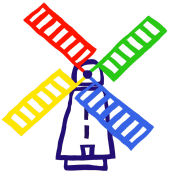
All children receive provision and support that is appropriate to their individual needs with reference to the revised SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Code of Practice. Children with special educational needs are provided with a broad, balanced and relevant education to meet their particular needs. Children with special educational needs are provided with the support necessary to ensure that they achieve their full potential at Widmer End. Children with SEND may work alongside outside agencies if necessary to provide better targeted support.

### **11. Planning and Assessment**

At Widmer End we believe that the quality of planning is integral to the quality of teaching and the impact on learning. When planning, we are continuously striving to ensure that the needs and interests of all pupils are being met and that learning opportunities are engaging, interesting and meaningful. All planning is used flexibly and as a guide in order to also follow the children's interests and foster their curiosity as well as providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Assessment is used to identify children's strengths, recognise any gaps in learning and inform future teaching and provision. It is not used to create unnecessary workload but to ensure every child makes the best possible progress.

We observe children to identify and recognise their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. Our observations then feed into our future planning, to ensure our curriculum is built around the children. When children arrive in Reception, we take a baseline assessment within the first six weeks using the EYFS areas of learning and complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This ensures that we are aware of children who may be vulnerable to low achievement and put into place interventions for them to achieve well.

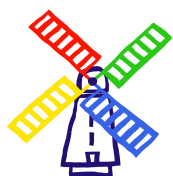
In Pre-School, all children have a Class Dojo online learning journey which is updated frequently. Parents have access to view observations, make comments and upload photos from home. The children in Reception have a 'Wow Book', which is shared with parents at parents evenings and sent home at the end of the year. These both document their progress and achievements throughout their time in our Foundation Stage. In the EYFS, we also have a class floor book that documents our learning throughout the year and incorporates key vocabulary and comments from children, allowing them to revisit prior learning.



At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS Profile (EYFSP) for each child. Teachers report to parents on all of the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels

The children are also assessed on whether they have achieved a 'Good Level of Development'. In order to achieve GLD, they will need to achieve the expected level in the first 12 areas of learning.



# Widmer End Community Combined School & Pre-School

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### Appendix 1: List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

| 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 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                                |