Mill Lodge Primary School
Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

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"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up... It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life." Statutory Framework for EYFS, September 2021.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. They begin attending full time school in Reception, at the beginning of the school year in which they turn 5 years old.

There are four guiding principles which shape practice in Early Years settings;

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults**
- **Learning and Development**

A Unique Child

At Mill Lodge Primary School we recognise that every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All

children at Mill Lodge Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.
In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

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.

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe and feel safe at school. We aim to educate children on 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. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Policy).

Welfare

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.
At Mill Lodge Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children and attend regular training.
- promote good 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.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At Mill Lodge Primary School we empower children to become strong and independent from secure, **positive relationships**. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents and carers as Partners

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

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

- visiting parents and children at home as part of transition, talking to parents about their child before their child starts
- the teacher visits children in their previous setting if requested, prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Stay and Play' mornings and afternoons;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the Summer term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and work, allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' both online via Tapestry and in the physical form in terms of their 'Learning Journey' books;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher/ TA if there are any concerns. There are two formal meetings for parents per year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Parent workshops, Sports Day, PSFA events (Parents, Staff and Friends Association), Christmas and Easter celebrations, Weekly achievement assemblies etc;
- encouraging parents to comment on their child's work and achievements, and to let school know about achievements at home by adding information on Tapestry.
- encouraging parents to celebrate achievements by inviting them to celebration assemblies.

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. At our school, the Reception and Nursery teachers act a 'Key Person' to all children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults

At Mill Lodge Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, where their individual needs are responded to. The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning and teaching challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. This also relies on practitioners at Mill Lodge Primary School effectively supporting children and forging positive relationships with parents and carers.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within EYFS follows broad topic areas linked to the seasons. Weekly Plans are derived from both these overarching themes and children's interests which are followed on a daily and weekly basis. These plans are used by the EYFS practitioners as a guide, however the teachers may alter these plans in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children, as they work 'in the moment.'

Teachers follow a rigorous '*assess, plan, do, review cycle'* where they make regular assessments and judgements of children's learning. This happens 'in the moment' to move learning forward there and then, and is also reflected in daily carpet inputs for phonics, maths and other Areas of Learning when appropriate. The information is utilised to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and is shared weekly amongst practitioners.

At Mill Lodge Primary School, we use the SIMS tracker to record judgements in each Area of Learning as either 'on track' or 'not on track' using the non-statutory Development Matters statements on a termly basis. In the final term of the Reception Year, children are assessed against the Early Learning goals as either 'expected' or 'emerging' to create the EYFS profile. In this final term of Reception, as well as submitting data to the Local Authority regarding children's level of learning, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's.

The Learning Environment

The Nursery and Reception classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely with appropriate, developmental challenges. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in flexible learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently to follow their own interests and also choose activities which have been planned for them to practise skills. Knowing the fundamental importance of outside play, the Nursery and Reception classes also have their own enclosed outdoor areas. 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 the chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Teachers plan activities and resources for the children to access both indoors and outdoors linked to the theme or children's interests, that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At Mill Lodge Primary School we recognise that **children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates**. Our provision covers the education and care for all children in the EYFS, including children with special needs and disabilities. We consider the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in our care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences for each child in all of the areas of learning.

Teaching and Learning Style

At Mill Lodge Primary School, Teaching and learning happens both through planned, teacher-led activities and purposeful child-led interactions 'In the Moment.' Effective teaching and learning in EYFS at Mill Lodge Primary school also depends upon:

- 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 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 adult support and interactions, which are shared with parents.

Play and Exploring

"Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. Play allows children to create and explore a world they can master, conquering their fears while practicing adult roles, sometimes in conjunction with other children or adult caregivers. As they master their world, play helps children develop new competencies that lead to enhanced confidence and the resiliency they will need to face future challenges. Undirected play allows children to learn how to work in groups, to share, to negotiate, to resolve conflicts, and to learn self-advocacy skills. When play is allowed to be child driven, children practice decision-making skills, move at their own pace, discover their own areas of interest, and ultimately engage fully in the passions they wish to pursue.

Through 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 uncomfortable experiences in controlled and safe situations." The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds, Jan 2007.

Active Learning
"Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements." *EYFS Statutory Framework September 2021*

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. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and Thinking Critically
"Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things." *EYFS Statutory Framework September 2021*

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

Areas of Learning
There are seven areas of learning and development that shape teaching and learning in early years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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
• physical development
• personal, social and emotional development.

In addition, there are 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.

EYFS practitioners are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively. The balance shifts towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play

which is guided by adults. Practitioners make an ongoing judgement about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. At Mill Lodge Primary School we respond to each child's emerging needs and interests through 'In the Moment Planning', guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children's development allows, the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning ready for Year 1.

Reporting EYFS

In the final term of Reception, each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals (ELG's). Practitioners indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels; 'emerging'. This is the EYFS Profile and is submitted to the local authority.

Whole School policies including Safeguarding, Welfare and Child Protection

At Mill Lodge Primary School, we endeavour to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. As the rest of the School, EYFS practitioners follow whole school policies including but not limited to safeguarding and child protection.